

THE CHRIST OF PENTECOST

Sunday May 31, 2026

Acts 2:22–37 (NLT)

The baptism with the Holy Spirit was a powerful and life-changing moment for the 120 believers gathered in the upper room. The men and women assembled there could never have imagined the events that were about to unfold.

All they knew was that Jesus had instructed them to wait until they were endued with power from on high. Yet the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through the sound of a mighty rushing wind, tongues of fire resting upon them, and the supernatural ability to praise God in other tongues was far beyond anything they could have anticipated or imagined.

Not only were the believers overwhelmed by the experience, but the devout Jews and converts to Judaism who came running to investigate the source of the sound were equally bewildered. Expecting to find a mighty, violent wind, they instead discovered Galilean believers declaring the marvelous works of God in languages they had never learned.

The crowd was amazed, perplexed, mystified, and confused. They struggled to make sense of what they were witnessing. Yet while many were filled with wonder, others responded with skepticism, accusing the believers of being drunk.

What a moment! Peter, along with the other eleven apostles, was caught up in the significance of what was taking place. Having heard the accusations and seeing the confusion among the thousands gathered, he stood up and addressed the crowd.

Acts 2:14-18 (NLT) Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this.¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that. ¹⁶ No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy.

Peter makes it clear that what the crowd was witnessing was neither random nor strange. This was not an emotional outburst, nor was it the result of human excitement or intoxication.

Rather, it was the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken centuries earlier by the prophet Joel.

Notice that he points to the scriptures. He wants them to understand that God was realizing His redemptive plan. This was the beginning of a new era in God's relationship with His people.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon select individuals for specific purposes. Prophets were empowered to proclaim God's message. Kings were anointed to lead God's people. Certain leaders and craftsmen received special enablement to accomplish God's work. But the Day of Pentecost marked a dramatic shift.

Joel foretold when God would pour His Spirit on all people. No longer would the Spirit's activity be limited to a select few prophets, priests or kings. Instead, sons and daughters would prophesy. Old men would dream dreams and young men would have visions.

It wasn't determined by social status, economic standing, gender, age or position in society. Men and women alike would experience the empowering presence of God.

Peter has explained the phenomenon. He has shown that what they are witnessing is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. But now he turns from explaining the event to proclaiming the Person behind it all. The Spirit did not come to draw attention to Himself. The Spirit came to reveal Jesus.

Four things Peter points out about Jesus

1. Jesus Was Sent by God

Acts 2:22 (NLT) "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know."

Peter reminds the crowd that Jesus was "a man accredited by God" through miracles, wonders, and signs. These supernatural works were not performed merely to amaze people or draw attention to Himself. They served a much greater purpose. They were divine signs that authenticated His ministry and confirmed His identity.

As the Pharisee Nicodemus himself admitted.

John 3:2b (NASB) "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

News of Jesus' works had spread throughout Judea, Galilee, and beyond, making Him one of the most well-known figures of His day. Many of the men listening to Peter had traveled to Jerusalem regularly for the major Jewish festivals and had likely heard reports of Jesus' ministry. Some may have even witnessed His teachings, miracles, and acts of compassion firsthand.

Every miracle pointed to a deeper reality of who Jesus was.

- The blind received sight because Jesus was the light of the world.
- The lame walked because Jesus has authority to restore what was broken.
- The dead were raised because Jesus is the Resurrection and the life.

Peter's point is clear: Jesus' ministry was not hidden or done in secret. God had publicly testified through signs and wonders that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

The miracles provided undeniable evidence that Jesus had been sent by God.

If God had so clearly authenticated Jesus, then the obvious question becomes: How did Israel respond to Him?

2. Jesus was crucified by men

Acts 2:23 (NLT) But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him.

Peter makes it clear that sinful men like them who were responsible for the death of Jesus. Out of the evil and rebellion of their hearts, they rejected God's Son and handed Him over to be crucified.

Yet at the same time, Peter is careful to emphasize that the crucifixion was not an accident or an interruption to God's plan. Jesus was delivered up according to God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge.

This is one of the great mysteries of Scripture: human responsibility and divine sovereignty working together. The people who crucified Jesus freely chose their actions and were guilty for what they did, yet their actions fulfilled God's predetermined plan of redemption.

The cross was not a defeat for God; it was the means by which He would accomplish salvation for the world.

But the story does not end at the cross. If Jesus had remained in the grave, His death would have been the tragic end of another religious leader. Yet Peter boldly declares that God had the final word.

3. Jesus Was Raised by God

Acts 2:24 (NASB) But God raised Him from the dead, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Peter now focuses on the resurrection of Jesus. Death couldn't hold Him down.

Here were men who knew the Scriptures, especially the Messianic prophecies. So, the Holy Spirit uses Peter to point back to the words of King David.

Acts 2:25–29 (NLT) King David said this about Him: 'I see that the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. ²⁶No wonder my heart is glad, and my tongue shouts his praises! My body rests in hope. ²⁷For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave. ²⁸You have shown me the way of life, and you will fill me with the joy of your presence.'

²⁹ "Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn't referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us. ³⁰ But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David's own descendants would sit on his throne. ³¹ David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah's resurrection. He was saying that God would not leave him among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave. The resurrection validates everything Jesus said.

Anyone can claim to be a teacher, a prophet, or a leader, but only one walked out of the grave and that person was Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

Yet Peter is not finished. The resurrection explains why the tomb is empty, but it does not explain what is happening in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. For that, Peter points to one more truth.

4. Jesus Is the Exalted Lord

Acts 2:33-36 (NLT) Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. ³⁴ For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit in the place of honor at my right hand ³⁵ until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.'" ³⁶ "So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!"

Peter now comes full circle in his message. He makes it clear that everything the crowd is seeing and hearing is the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, made possible by the exalted Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Peter directs all attention away from the experience and toward Christ.

The Spirit's presence serves as proof that Christ's saving work has been completed and accepted by the Father.

The miracles of Pentecost were not meant to glorify the disciples but to point people to the risen, exalted, and reigning Savior.

Peter's sermon has now reached its climax. He has presented the evidence. Jesus was sent by God. Jesus was crucified by men. Jesus was raised by God. Jesus is exalted as Lord. Now the crowd must decide what they will do with Him.

The gospel always calls for a decision.

The men hearing Peter's sermon were not ignorant of who Jesus was. Many had heard about Him during His earthly ministry.

Some may have listened to His teaching, witnessed His miracles, or heard firsthand accounts of the extraordinary things He had done. Yet despite the evidence, many had rejected Him.

Others in the crowd may have celebrated His crucifixion, viewing it as the deserved end of another failed revolutionary or self-proclaimed messiah.

But now everything was changing.

They were witnessing a miraculous event they could not explain. The sound of the rushing wind, the supernatural praise in languages never learned, and the undeniable presence of God had captured their attention.

More importantly, they were hearing a message empowered by the Holy Spirit that confronted them with the truth about Jesus.

The same Jesus they had ignored, rejected, or dismissed was now being revealed as the promised Messiah and exalted Lord.

Acts 2:37a (NLT) Peter's words pierced their hearts...

This was more than an emotional reaction. It was the work of the Holy Spirit bringing conviction of sin and revealing their need for Christ.

The question today for you today is: what will you do with Jesus?

Will you ignore Him? Will you continue to keep Him at a distance? Or will you acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior and surrender your life to Him?

In just a few moments, we will come to the Lord's Table and receive Communion together. As we do, we are reminded that the exalted Christ Peter preached is the same Christ who gave His body and shed His blood for our salvation.

Today we do not come to this table remembering a dead religious leader. We come remembering a risen Savior. We come celebrating the One whom God raised from the dead, exalted to His right hand, and declared to be both Lord and Messiah.