

ACTS

Chapter 2

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested[a] on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

2:1-21 This text fulfills Jesus’ Acts 1:5 promise that the believers would be given the gift and Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In obedience to Jesus’ request, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem at their physical peril, for after Jesus’ crucifixion, the enemies of Christ in the Sanhedrin were still dangerous to the followers of the Savior. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

Pentecost was a Jewish festival day celebrating the gifts of God. The word *pentecost* literally means “fiftieth,” and the festival fell annually on the fiftieth day after Passover. Pentecost is also referred to in the Old Testament as the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Ingathering (Ex 34:22; Num 28:26–31). At this time of the year, between Passover and Pentecost, the wheat harvest was coming in. Thus the Feast of Ingathering (Pentecost) was like a Thanksgiving Day in the United States and likewise lasted one day. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

Pentecost was one of the three great pilgrimage festivals of Israel (with Passover and the Feast of Booths—Ex 23:17; 34:23; Deut 16:16) Many believe that Pentecost was even better attended than Passover because the weather for travel was better. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

There is some scholarly disagreement about where the Pentecost miracle took place and which disciples were there. In the matter of location, the disciples “were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1). Depending on the number of disciples meant, the upstairs room of a common Jerusalem house might not have accommodated them all. Robert Smith also believes it could not have been a location in the temple, because meticulous Luke would have told us this (Smith, *Acts*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia, 1970]). The reason why many believe the disciples were in the temple for the miracle of Pentecost is because of the large number of people present, and also because of the record of Lk 24:53, which asserts that the disciples, with great personal courage, were “continually in the temple.” So where did the miracle of Pentecost occur?

All we know is that the disciples were in Jerusalem and in a place where a great many pilgrims could hear the message. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

As to the number of disciples present, Lenski believes—along with Chrysostom (AD 347–404)—that the 120 disciples mentioned in Acts 1:15 were there (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Acts* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961], 57). But others believe that only the remaining original apostles plus Matthias were in the gathering, since all were recognized as Galileans. In v 14, “Peter, . . . with the eleven” is mentioned, lending support to the second view that only the Twelve were present. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

The above observation is made simply to encourage the preacher to look at the entire account. The fact is that some of the clearest Gospel material (including the real thrust of Peter’s sermon) is presented in the later verses and might well be offered also already this week, at least in a summary format. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

In these verses after our text, Peter pulls no punches and lays the death of Jesus at the feet of the people. This seems rather harsh considering that many of them may not have been in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Further, most of the crowd would not have been involved, even if present. As Paul Maier makes clear in his various writings, the crowd that shouted “crucify him” was nothing more than a rented mob staged by the priests and hardly represents the sentiments of the general public at the time. Yet, Peter’s recall of the crucifixion pricked the consciences of the people as extremely personal. This might seem curious to us. But what appears to have happened is that the crowd made the broader connection that all mankind, because of sin and unbelief, was responsible for Jesus’ death. Peter here is making great use of Law and Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

2:1 day of Pentecost. The 50th day after the Sabbath of Passover week (Lev 23:15–16), thus the first day of the week. Pentecost is also called the Feast of Weeks (Dt 16:10), the Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16) and the day of first fruits (Nu 28:26). (CSB)

Pentecost, also called the Festival of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest, was similar to the American/Canadian Thanksgiving Day, an agricultural festival celebrated seven weeks after the harvest began. The first fruits of the wheat harvest were presented to God. Crowds were swarming to the temple to watch the priests wave the loaves and sacrifice the lambs in worship to the Lord who had made the harvest possible. All Jewish males were required to worship in Jerusalem that day and were invited to join in an altar dance and song. (LL)

tēn hēmeran tēs pentēkostēs, “the day of Pentecost.” The first matter at hand is to make certain we have the events correctly in our minds. There are a couple possible trouble spots. The disciples gathered on a Sunday morning, fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. This is also the Jewish Feast of Pentecost. The significance of this is that the city of Jerusalem was full of religious pilgrims. This group that had gathered was likely the 120 or so followers of Christ who had assembled in Jerusalem (1:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

This is the Greek name for the important Jewish observance of the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16) or, as it was also called, the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22). Pentecost means “fiftieth;” the feasts that took place fifty days after the Passover Sabbath (Leviticus 23:11,15,16). Every pious Jew tried to be in Jerusalem for this Feast. Those who could not come to Jerusalem observed it in the synagogues throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. Freewill offerings were brought (Deuteronomy 16:9-11). (PBC)

Pentecost likely also commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai, as later rabbis attest. On this new day in Acts, God's people are publically formed through the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. They acquire the names "Church" and "Christians" in the NT but also stand in faith with the believers of the OT, who trusted in the coming Savior. Cf. Mt. 8:11. (TLSB)

arrived. Greek has sense of "fill up, complete" (cf. Luke 9:51; Gal. 4:4). (TLSB)

"When the day of Pentecost *arrived*" (emphasis added), *sumplērousthai*, literally "to be filled, drawn near." The passive voice would be expected for subjects of time. What makes this verb so interesting is the attachment of the prefix. Is the "arrival" or "filling" speaking of the time of the Festival or the fulfillment of Jesus' promise given to the disciples in Lk 24:49? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

they were all together. The nearest antecedent of "they" is the 11 apostles (plus Matthias), but the reference is probably to all those mentioned in 1:13–15. (CSB)

Possibly just the 12 apostles (cf 1:26; 2:14), though the fulfillment described in vv 17–18 hints that the 120 are meant. (Reference to the 120 is much more remote; 1:15.) John Chrysostom: "Was it upon the twelve that (the Holy Spirit) came? Not so; but upon the hundred and twenty. For Peter would not have quoted to no purpose the testimony of the prophet" (NPNF). (TLSB)

Evidently the disciples understood and obeyed Jesus' command to remain in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4–5). Perhaps, without the Holy Spirit, that's all they felt like doing, and were not bold enough to do anything else. Perhaps, without the Spirit's guidance, they had no idea yet of what they were to do. In any event, without the Spirit, they had no power to do otherwise (1:8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

in one place. Evidently not the upstairs room where they were staying (1:13) but perhaps some place in the temple precincts, for the apostles were "continually at the temple" when it was open. (CSB)

Continuing their practice of fellowship and worship. Setting unclear. Possibly the building containing the Upper Room (1:13), though how the apostles' message could reach the crowd (vv. 5–11) is unclear and never explained. This has led some interpreters to suggest the temple courts as a likely location. (TLSB)

2:2-4 The Holy Spirit is poured out on the gathered souls in a special manifestation. There was a sound similar to that of the wind, but it was very loud, could be heard throughout the city, and it was directional—leading the crowd to the place where the Christian congregation was worshipping. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Of special note: *ērxanto lalein*. The disciples "began to speak." The sense of this is that they began to make speeches or perhaps sing songs of praise. This is not something ecstatic or experiential. They began to speak, in normal human language, about the things God had done. A key to understanding this entire text is to realize that this was not at all the kind of speaking in tongues we see in modern Pentecostalism. Had there been linguistic professors present there to record the event, they would have been able decipher all the speaking as occurring in known human languages. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

We don't know who gets up to speak, whether it was the whole congregation or only the apostles. Only the apostles are mentioned as speaking. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

2:2-3 Just as God the Son left no doubt that he truly was risen, so now God the Holy Spirit leaves no doubt that he has come. The disciples knew immediately that this was what Jesus referred to when he promised he would send them another Paraclete (Jn 14:16) to “fill his shoes” during his physical absence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The “sound like the blowing of a violent wind” audibly conveyed that great things were about to happen, and grabbed the attention of the crowds (v 6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Throughout Scripture, wind and fire are tangible marks—signs more than symbols—of the Spirit's presence and activity (cf. Ezek 1:4; 3:12; 37:1–14; Mt 3:11; Jn 3:8). The Spirit is the Breath of God, the Breath of life (cf. Gen 2:7; Job 33:4). The Spirit sets the stage when he uses us to do God's work. He prepares things for us so that he can use us effectively. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The manifestations were indescribable because they revealed God's miraculous activity. (TLSB)

2:2 *mighty rushing wind*. Breath or wind is a symbol of the Spirit of God (see Eze 37:9, 14; Jn 3:8). The coming of the Spirit is marked by audible (wind) and visible (fire) signs. (CSB)

ēchos, “sound,” rather than audible words (as would be *hē phōnē*, “sound or voice”). The distinction is shown in Heb 12:19, where *ēchos* is connected with the sound of the trumpet but *phōnē* with the spoken word. *ēchos* in Lk 21:25 describes the sound of the waves. Here it is the sound the wind makes as it rushes by the ear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

A loud roar like a violent wind sounded in the sky, but there was no wind. Not a leaf on a tree moved. The sound grew in intensity and moved from the sky through the city to the house (or temple room) where the believers were gathered. It does not take much imagination to know what happened throughout the city. (LL)

enter house. May refer to the temple (cf. 7:47). (CSB)

Greek *oikos*. Luke usually uses this term to denote a private dwelling (or for the family as a “household”) but also uses it for the temple (Luke 6:4; 19:46; Acts 7:47, 49; cf. Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46). The setting for Peter's sermon (vv. 14-41) had to accommodate thousands of people. According to later Christian tradition, the house with the Upper Room was located on Mount Zion (southwest hill of Jerusalem) and would have been outside the city wall. (TLSB)

sitting – At the moment of the miracle, the entire assembly was sitting on the floor listening to one of the apostles. (LL)

2:3 *tongues*. A descriptive metaphor appropriate to the context, in which several languages are about to be spoken. (CSB)

diamerizomenai glōssai, “divided tongues,” provides the impression that the flame appeared initially as one but then divided with a flame resting upon each of them who were in the room. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Luke describes the scene with a comparison. The emphasis in the wording is on the mouth (“tongue,” “speak,” “utterance”), which may indicate where the “fire” appeared (see Moses appearance in Ex. 34:29). The fire appropriately appears as tongues of flame, since the Holy Spirit works through the apostles’ speech. In the OT, angelic spirits were described as fire (Ps. 104:3-4). Fire also represented the presence of God’s Spirit (Ex. 3:2-4). (TLSB)

Before they could catch their breath, the second miraculous sign happened. A large ball of fire that wasn’t fire entered the room and divided into individual tongues of flame that rested briefly on the head of everyone in the room – men, women, and children. These fire-like tongues are plainly a fulfillment of the prophecy that John the Baptist had made – that the Messiah would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11) – and are a clear symbol of the divine presence of the Holy Spirit. (LL)

fire. A symbol of the divine presence (see Ex 3:2 and note), it was also associated with judgment (see Mt 3:12). (CSB)

2:4 *they were all filled*. Could refer either to the apostles or to the 120. Those holding that the 120 are meant point to the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (vv. 17–18) as involving more than the 12 apostles. The nearest reference, however, is to the apostles (see note on v. 1), and the narrative continues with Peter and the 11 standing to address the crowd (v. 14). (CSB)

The sound roared indiscriminately through the whole house, but these tongues sat upon each individual in the room. The different Greek words Luke uses here and in verses 6 and 8 clearly indicate that Luke here means “on each single one,” not a single person excepted, men, women, old, young. The Holy Spirit fills every single believer in the church and equips all for the glorious task of making God’s love in Christ known to all people everywhere. In that sense Pentecost goes on and on. No, there are no tongues that look like fire, no roaring sound, no flashing neon lights or rockets going off – just the quiet miracle of Baptism through which He makes us His new creation. (LL)

filled with the Holy Spirit. A fulfillment of 1:5, 8; see also Jesus’ promise in Lk 24:49. Their spirits were completely under the control of the Spirit; their words were his words. (CSB)

eplēsthēsan, “were . . . filled,” from the root *pimplēmi*, occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament and fully nine times in Luke’s Acts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

The anointing with the Holy Spirit brings a startling transformation. The Spirit never become a personal possession but remains a heavenly gift, received by the repentant through faith. (TLSB)

Jesus, when tempted, used only words from Scripture to defeat the devil. In Ephesians 6:17 the Greek for “word” means God’s word in a literal sense. To do so means you need to know “the Word.” The word “know” in Greek means to mark, discern, to ascertain by examination, to understand, to be assured, to be skilled, to be master of a thing. In Matthew 28:20 the word “obey” means to teach in such a way that the entire character and life of a person is controlled and molded by God’s Word.

Began to speak - apophtheggesthai, “to speak, address.” A different form of this same word occurs also in v 14. It is obviously different from the normal words for speaking (*legō* and *laleō*) and may be attributed to the visible presence of the Holy Spirit. This cannot be pressed too far since the Holy Spirit is connected to the speaking of men without the use of this word in 2 Pet 1:21. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

in other tongues.† The Spirit enabled them to speak in languages they had not previously learned (see NIV text note). Two other examples of speaking in tongues are found in Acts (10:46; 19:6). One extended NT passage deals with this spiritual gift (1Co 12–14). The gift had particular relevance here, where people of different nationalities and languages were gathered. In Ac 2:4, 11 “tongues” is modified by “other” and “our own,” respectively; in 2:6 the word “language” (Greek: “dialect”) is used as equivalent in meaning. Hence the miracle at Pentecost involved known foreign languages. The contexts of Ac 10:46; 19:6 and 1Co 12–14 imply a different phenomenon, as does the fact that in these passages “tongues” appears without such modifiers as “other” and “our own”—a special spiritual gift that needs an interpreter. (CSB)

Miraculous ability to communicate in foreign languages the speakers had never learned (vv 7–11). Cyril of Jerusalem: “The Holy Spirit taught them many languages at once, languages which in all their lives they never knew” (*NPNF* 2 7:128). (TLSB)

They did not all speak at once, but each spoke as the ability was given. This was not babbling or incoherent speech: it was perfectly understandable to those who knew the languages. (PBC)

Every word of these foreign languages was an immediate gift of the Spirit. What this “began to speak in other tongues” means is interpreted for us in verse 6: “Each one heard them speaking in his own language,” and in verse 11: “We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” That the disciples spoke in foreign languages they had never spoken before is clearly attested to by those who heard them. What is also very clear is that both the tongues of fire and the ability to speak in a foreign language didn’t last very long on that morning. Rather than become bogged down in the endless debate about the gift of tongues, let’s look for a moment at the real message behind this speaking of foreign languages and the challenge for us today. As the disciples are speaking in these foreign languages, one cannot help but feel that this miracle is prophetic. It is the first full chord of that symphony of confession, testimony, prayer, and praise that was soon to come from the 6170 languages of all the nations of today’s world. (LL)

The Spirit as well as the disciples used the gift of tongues—the ability to proclaim the Gospel in foreign languages—to communicate to the people the love of God in Jesus Christ. This is always the Spirit’s purpose for giving us his gifts and enabling us to use them: to draw others to Christ so that they can experience God’s love and salvation in their lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

2:5-11 Scholars have debated over the years whether the miracle was in the hearers’ ears or the speakers’ mouths. V 4, “and began to speak in other tongues,” suggests that they were actually speaking in various languages, which they had not previously known. However, vv 6–11 could be understood as one person speaking in his own language and each recipient then hearing the message in his or own native language. This would seem more logical, particularly in light of Peter getting up to preach, though we have no indication whether this miracle continued into Peter’s sermon. The fact is, though, miracles often do not act logically. The matter is really not that important. What is important is that we have a miraculous reversal of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9), a text long associated with Pentecost. It is not used for Pentecost in Year A but is

the appointed Old Testament Reading for Pentecost in Year C and in the One-Year Series. Here we have perfect communication that comes only through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is opening up doors to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the fledgling Christian Church. The key here is the proclamation of the Word. The miraculous communication was not an end in itself. The Word proclaimed by Peter and the apostles is the Word that produces faith. The Holy Spirit by this miracle was simply facilitating the proclamation of the Word of Christ. The three thousand who came to faith that day did so because they heard about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for their sins. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

2:5 *Jews, devout men from every nation.* Devout Jews from different parts of the world but assembled now in Jerusalem either as visitors or as current residents (cf. Lk 2:25). (CSB)

Jews dispersed throughout the world who piously observed the Law, now in Jerusalem to observe the required feasts. (TLSB)

Because of wars and persecutions, also because of their business activities, Jews had been scattered throughout the Roman Empire and beyond it. They were known as Jews of the Diaspora, the “dispersion.” (PBC)

These were Jews who either lived and worked in foreign lands and were in Jerusalem for the feast days, or they had returned permanently to retire in Jerusalem. All of them, of course, knew and spoke Aramaic, because they obviously understood Peter when he preached. But they also knew well the language of the nation to which they would return or from which they had retired. (LL)

2:6-7 *tēs phōnēs.* The word shows that it does not refer back to the sound, *ēchos*, of the wind, but to the sound of speaking, *apophtheggomai*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

sunchuthē, “to be perplexed.” The wind and fire had most likely disappeared by this time (we have the aorist tense *ōphthēsan* in v 3), so the people were most likely perplexed by the foreign languages spoken by the Galileans, understood by many different nations. They were thus repeatedly amazed (*existanto*, middle imperfect) and kept wondering (*ethaumazon*, active imperfect) (v 7). Questions begin to circulate through the crowd. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

2:6 *speak in his own language.* Jews from different parts of the world would understand the Aramaic of their homeland. Also the Greek language was common to all parts of the world. But more than this was occurring; they heard the apostles speak in languages native to the different places represented. (CSB)

God brings the people together to hear His Word. These miraculous events are God’s extended appeal for Israel to receive Jesus as their Messiah and to become part of the new Israel, the Church. The hearers understood the proclamation neither in Aram nor in common Greek but in their local languages. (TLSB)

2:7-8 An obvious miracle. Working men from Galilee would hardly be accomplished linguists. (TLSB)

2:9-11 These groups, coming from all corners of the earth, point forward to the universal character of the Church. Twelve diverse regions signify all people. The Jewish Dispersion had spread to all these places. Greek diaspora, the scattering or “dispersion” of Jews throughout the

Near East and Mediterranean regions (i.e., outside of the region of Israel) after Jerusalem's fall in the sixth century BC. The mention of the capital city of Rome represents the empire, which encompassed the known world (1:8). Jews and proselytes represents all worshipers of the God of Israel, whether ethnic Jews or Gentile converts. Cretans and Arabians, has the sense of all from west and east, from island and mainland. (TLSB)

2:9-11 The list of nations may point to the promise of the ascending Lord: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

2:9 *Parthians*. Inhabitants of the territory from the Tigris to India. (CSB)

There were representatives from three continents included in this listing: Asia, Africa and Europe. The apostles were to go into all the world, but on this day people from all the world were gathering around them in Jerusalem. The confusion of tongues which resulted at Babel was reversed on Pentecost. It still occurs as Missionaries declare the gospel in new languages. (PBC)

Although every Jew could not be present for Peter's speech, the narrator does not hesitate to depict representatives of the Jews of every land as Peter's listeners. This feature shows a concern not just with Gentiles but with a gospel for all Jews, which can bring the restoration of Israel as a united people under its Messiah. The presence of Jews from every nation under heaven at Pentecost introduces a similar symbolic dimension into that narrative, suggesting first that it is the goal of the gospel to address all Israel, scattered throughout the world, and second that it must also address the gentile inhabitants of the lands from which these Jews come. (Tannehill)

Medes. Media lay east of Mesopotamia, northwest of Persia and south-southwest of the Caspian Sea. (CSB)

Elamites. Elam was north of the Persian Gulf, bounded on the west by the Tigris. (CSB)

residents of Mesopotamia. Between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. (CSB)

Judea. The homeland of the Jews, perhaps used here in the OT sense "from the river of Egypt to ... the Euphrates" (Ge 15:18), including Galilee. (CSB)

Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. Districts in Asia Minor. (CSB)

2:10 *Phrygia and Pamphylia*. Districts in Asia Minor. (CSB)

Egypt. Contained a great number of Jews. Two out of the five districts of Alexandria were Jewish. (CSB)

Libya. A region west of Egypt. (CSB)

Cyrene. The capital of a district of Libya called Cyrenaica. (CSB)

Rome. Thousands of Jews lived in Rome. (CSB)

2:11 *proselytes*. Gentiles who undertook the full observance of the Mosaic law were received into full fellowship with the Jews. (CSB)

Cretans. Represented an island lying south-southeast of Greece. (CSB)

Arabians. From a region to the east. The kingdom of the Nabatean Arabs lay between the Red Sea and the Euphrates, with Petra as its capital. (CSB)

we hear them declaring. Not a miracle of hearing but of speaking. The believers were declaring God's wonders in the native languages of the various visiting Jews. (CSB)

mighty works of God. Cf. Dt. 11:2; Ps.71:19; 105. Luther: "When God wanted to spread the gospel throughout the world by means of the apostles he gave the tongues for that purpose (2:1-11). Even before that, by means of the Roman Empire he had spread the Latin and Greek languages widely in every land in order that his gospel might the more speedily bear fruit far and wide" (AE 45:359). (TLSB)

ta megaleia, "the mighty works," translated in the NIV as "wonders." The word carries the sense with it that God's wonders are magnificent and glorious. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

2:12-21 *ti thelei touto einai*; "What does this mean?" The crowd is curious—and more than curious: *existanto . . . kai diēporoun*, "amazed and perplexed." This text is an excellent illustration of the nature of true miracles. Miracles always open up the possibility of the Word being proclaimed. They are never an end in themselves. Nor do miracles produce faith. If this were the case, the generation that left Egypt in the Book of Exodus would have been the most faithful generation ever. They saw the plagues, they passed through the Red Sea, and so forth. Yet we know that this generation that saw miracle after miracle was rebellious and was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. The whole context of Deut 8:3 ("And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD") was to show that the miracle of the manna was not what produced faith. Rather, the Word of God did. Most modern claims of miracles can be quickly discarded when this idea is kept in mind. One must only ask if the miracle leads people to sit down and listen to the Word, or does it create a frenzy around the supposed miracle worker? Now, we have heard reports of a sort of mini-Pentecost on the mission field when the Gospel comes to a new people in a new place. For a brief time there is a flurry of miracles. We cannot dismiss this out of hand, for that may indeed be serving to get people to listen to the Word. Likewise we have the stories of the early missionary tradition, as, for example, that Celtic kings listened to St. Patrick after he proved he was more powerful than the Druids. And so perhaps in these cases genuine miracles have occurred. But always we must keep in mind that a true miracle will always lead people to the Word, as it did on Pentecost. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Peter makes great use of the Word in drawing out the various passages from the Old Testament. The prophecy of Joel 2 is featured most prominently, but in the subsequent verses (2:22–36) many other passages are referenced. The point that needs to be considered here is that Peter is showing that this event was in fact part of God's plan. Further, Peter and the apostles are not starting something new but building on the foundations that God had earlier prepared. This would be a pattern throughout the Book of Acts, whether by Peter, Philip, Paul, or anyone else. There is a constant use of the Old Testament to proclaim and defend the work of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

2:12-13 There will always be two different reactions to the proclamation of God's great works. Some will desire more of the teaching, while others will ridicule the messenger. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

2:12 *what does this mean* - This extraordinary work of God needed explanation. (TLSB)

2:13 *others mocking* – Wine (or sweet wine) – The term suggests “new wine” and therefore a quick stimulus to drunkenness. (Sacra)

Just as some rejected the earthly Jesus, so mockers and skeptics have always dismissed the Church's message (cf. Mt. 10:22; John 15:18-20). Cyril of Jerusalem: “In truth the wine was new, even the grace of the NT; but this new wine was from a spiritual Vine, which had oftentimes (before) this borne fruit in Prophets, and had budded in the NT” (NPNF2 7:128). (TLSB)

2:1–13 The Holy Spirit descends as a gift, sounding forth one message in many tongues, showing that Israel will soon burst its ethnic bounds. Cynics of all eras belittle God's mighty deeds and explain them away. However, humility before the Holy Spirit is in order, along with sheer wonder that God gives Himself to people of all nations. • “Come, holy Fire, comfort true, Grant us the will Your work to do And in Your service to abide; Let trials turn us not aside.” Amen. (LSB 497:3) (TLSB)

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. **15** For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. **16** But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: **17** “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; **18** even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. **19** And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; **20** the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. **21** And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ **22** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— **23** this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. **24** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. **25** For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; **26** therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. **27** For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. **28** You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ **29** “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **30** Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, **31** he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. **32** This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. **33** Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and

hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.” 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

2:14–40 The pattern and themes of the message that follows became common in the early church: (1) an explanation of events (vv. 14–21); (2) the gospel of Jesus Christ—his death, resurrection and exaltation (vv. 22–36); (3) an exhortation to repentance and baptism (vv. 37–40). The outline of this sermon is similar to those in chs. 3; 10; 13. (CSB)

2:14 with the Eleven. The apostles had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and had spoken in other languages to various groups. Now they stood with Peter, who served as their spokesman. (CSB)

sun tois hendeka, “with the eleven.” This may imply that it is the apostles (as opposed to the entire 120, 1:15) who alone are consecrated to the public preaching of the Word as their office in the Church. We are told in v 43 of this same chapter that “many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Peter is always named first in lists of the apostles. His work is the focus of chapters 1-12. (TLSB)

give ear – Literally “let it be put in your ears.” (Sacra)

enōtisasthe, “give ear,” means to give full attention, more than just *akouō*, “listen.” A noteworthy problem in society today is that people do not exercise themselves in careful listening. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

2:15 only the third hour of the morning! On a festival day such as Pentecost, the Jew would not break his fast until at least 10:00 A.M. So it was extremely unlikely that a group of men would be drunk at such an early hour. (CSB)

This was the hour of prayer and sacrifice at the temple. (TLSB)

2:16 this was uttered – His best support is given by the application of messianic texts from Torah. Peter’s interpretation builds on a number of widely shared presuppositions: a) that the psalms were authored by David; b) that David was God’s anointed; c) that God had promised an eternal dynasty to David through his descendants; d) that the things spoken of in the psalms would refer therefore either to himself or to his descendant, the Messiah. (Sacra)

Peter’s real answer to the charge of drunkenness lay in his explanation of what was happening and why it was happening. The presence of the Holy Spirit was especially evident in the miracle of languages. Not everything else which Joel prophesied was going to happen in detail that day,

but the gift of speaking in other tongues was a sign that the entire prophesy would be fulfilled in God's good time and in his way. (PBC)

2:17–18 The prophecy teaches that the Holy Spirit comes on all flesh equally. Even though Peter and the Eleven stand to proclaim the message publicly in their office as apostles, the Spirit comes upon all who hear and come to faith, whether male or female, young or old. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

2:17 *last days*. See Isa 2:2; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1. In the passage quoted from Joel the Hebrew has “afterward” and the Septuagint “after these things.” Peter interprets the passage as referring specifically to the latter days of the new covenant (see Jer 31:33–34; Eze 36:26–27; 39:29) in contrast to the former days of the old covenant. The age of Messianic fulfillment has arrived. (CSB)

Peter quotes Joel's prophecy to state that the decisive stage and climax of history has arrived with Christ and the Church (cf 1Co 10:11; Heb 1:2; 1Pt 1:20). (TLSB)

Refers to the time after God sent his Son and his Son completed his redeeming work. (PBC)

pour out – This outpouring, which began on Pentecost, continues today wherever the gospel is preached. (PBC)

ekcheō, “to pour” (future active indicative). This word can also be connected to the pouring of the Spirit in Baptism (Titus 3:6). Another parallel is in Rom 5:5, where “God's love has been poured into our hearts.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

God gives His people not just things, but Himself in the Third Person of the Godhead. The promised Baptism with the Spirit was “poured,” showing that the term “baptism” was not regarded strictly as immersion (cf. v. 33). (TLSB)

on all flesh – God's salvation is universal in scope; He pours out the Spirit on all kinds of people. (TLSB)

visions...dreams – These are not utopian fantasies, but specifically prophetic modes. (Sacra)

2:18 Like Mary (Luk 1:38) and Paul (Rm. 1:1), all Christians are bond servants of the Lord. He gives them His Spirit, yet they belong to Him. (TLSB)

2:19 *wonders* – The references to wonders in heaven and signs on earth are reminders of the time when God delivered Israel from Egypt. (PBC)

Works that demonstrate the arrival of the last days, begun in the earthly life of Christ and continued here in Ac (cf v 43; 4:16, 22, 30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12). (TLSB)

At the same time Joel's prophecy speaks of Christ's second coming, his coming in judgment. Jesus spoke of it in similar language: “When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away...There will be...fearful events and great signs from heaven...There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars... The heavenly bodies will be shaken” (Luke 21:9, 11, 25, 26) (PBC)

above...below - Emphasizes the dramatic top-to-bottom change in creation that God enacts. (TLSB)

2:20 *day of the Lord* – When Christ returns in glory. (TLSB)

magnificent – Joel calls it the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Joel 2:31). Peter interprets that by calling it the glorious day of the Lord. It will be a dreadful day for those who have rejected the grace of God, but a glorious day for those who wait in hope. (PBC)

prin elthein hēmeran kuriou tēn megalēn kai epiphanē, “before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord” (author’s translation). Peter describes the world from the Day of Pentecost until the end of time. It will be marked by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the world (all flesh) through the message proclaimed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

2:21 *everyone who calls*. Cf. v. 39; includes faith and response rather than merely using words (Mt 7:21). (CSB)

hos an, “everyone,” which relates to unlimited atonement. “Calls” in the Greek is *epikalesētai*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 17, Part 2)

Though the Word is preached to the whole world and the Spirit works through that Word, only those who “[call] upon the name of the Lord” will be saved. *sōthēsetai* is passive; the Lord alone does the saving through his Spirit, through the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

A cry from the heart, lamenting sin and imploring mercy. (TLSB)

2:22-32 The setting is Pentecost, the middle of Peter’s sermon. The crowd “came together in bewilderment,” having heard the sound and the preaching in the language of each person (v 6). The crowd is mixed by language and geography, composed of “God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (v 5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Since Luke and Acts were conceived as one work and meant to be read sequentially, Luke’s prelude about writing a systematic and ordered account for the purpose of teaching (catechizing) is important (Luke 1:1-4). Luke was not one of the eyewitnesses spoken of in our text (2:32). Yet the Holy Spirit inspired him to research and order the account of the Acts of the Apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The events of our text occurred 50 days after the resurrection and 10 days after Jesus ascended to be with His Church more than ever. While His visible bodily presence had governed the first 40 days, the Holy Spirit now centers the church’s life on His invisible bodily presence. Jesus is still teaching and feeding His Church. What He began before His ascension (1:1), He now continues through His apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The text is a continuation of Peter’s sermon from Pentecost morning (Acts 2:1–21), but it stops just short of the burning question of the crowd, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (v 37) and the staggering response of 3,000 Baptisms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit was poured out as tongues of fire on the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, making it possible for them to address the international assembly gathered for the Feast of

Pentecost in the native languages of those who heard them, and to announce to them what God had accomplished for them and for the redemption of Israel. The crowds were amazed to hear the apostles speaking in their own tongues and wondered how this could happen (Acts 2:1–12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Speaking in the name of all the apostles, Peter announced that what they were proclaiming was the fulfillment of the prophecy given through Joel (Joel 2:28–32), and that, just as Joel had promised, those who took this proclamation to heart and called on the name of the Lord would be saved (Acts 2:14–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The words of Peter included in vv 22–36 have within them hard words, a strong articulation of Law, spoken clearly and boldly, without fear or hesitation: “This [Jesus] was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (v 23). For those who will receive these words and take them to heart, God offers hope through the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacraments, as we learn in the verses that immediately follow this text (2:37–39). It is perhaps unfortunate that they are not included in this preaching text, for the convicted sinner must not be left without the invitation to faith and new life, which faith in the Gospel brings. In our preaching we must proclaim that Gospel. However, we are not to attempt to turn the Law itself into Gospel, so as to deprive it of its power, or to preach from the assumption that the Law contains the heart of the Gospel within it. Let the Law retain its right, theological purpose, but do not slight the Gospel. The Law works death; the Gospel alone works saving faith and life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

2:22 Verses 17–21 prepare for the “miracles, wonders and signs” done by God through Jesus Christ, since these are the last days. The three terms for Jesus’ work do not distinguish the acts of Jesus into specific categories, since they are synonyms (cf. v 19). The signs, for example, are also miracles. The theological import of *sēmeion* is especially significant in John’s gospel (2:11; 4:48; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 12:37). The evidence of the signs become Peter’s point of entry for the introduction of Jesus into the sermon. The tongues are a continuation of the work God performed during Jesus’ earthly life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

men of Israel - Pentecost is a miracle of speaking and hearing. Just a few weeks earlier Peter had cursed and denied Jesus by saying, “I do not know the man.” Now he proclaims the crucified and risen Christ with courage and clarity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Theological critics may have trouble with the miracles of Jesus, but Peter had none. The reality of Jesus’ miracles wasn’t the issue, for Peter says, “as you yourselves know.” In fact, the wide knowledge of his life-giving miracles (Jn 11:45–48) was a major factor behind the efforts of religious leaders to crucify him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Not ethnic or geographical (v. 14) but a strictly religious form of address. (TLSB)

hear these words - *akousate* Peter calls on his hearers to “listen carefully,” as you would to evidence in a trial (Barclay Newman, Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* [London: United Bible Societies, 1971]) and know that Jesus was “approved” (proven, proclaimed) *apodedeigmenon* by God with *dunamesi* “miracles” (such as restoring sight to the blind and raising the dead), *teras* “wonders” (changes in the natural order of the universe, cf. Acts 2:19, “wonders in the heaven above”), and *sēmeiois* “signs” (a special indicator). The three

terms are used together in 2 Cor 12:12 to indicate the presence and power of an apostle. Peter sought to remind the crowd how unique Jesus was when he ministered among them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

attested..mighty works and wonders and signs. The mighty works done by Jesus were signs that the Messiah had come. (CSB)

God richly supplied Jesus' credentials in His works. (TLSB)

apodeideigmenon, from *apodeiknumi*, to show, to prove by arguments, to demonstrate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

To demonstrate or exhibit (Strong's). To be approved by a higher power.

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2:23 *lawless men.* The Gentiles were acting in an evil way. (CSB)

Men without the law (Romans) bloodied their hands, but "you" are the real doers of the deed. The priestly leaders and the excited mob of Good Friday, the men of Israel are indicted for murder in the first degree. Yet, Peter proclaims that it was all according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

you crucified – Not every Israelite had rejected or would reject the Messiah, but as a nation the Jews had done so. Yet not of this could have happened if it had not been in accord with "God's set purpose and foreknowledge." The men who crucified Jesus were responsible for what they did. They were not helpless robots. But their actions served God's purpose, which was to offer his Son for the sins of the world. (PBC)

Jesus' crucifixion occurred not only because of the will of sinful people and their corrupt leaders, *anomōn* (lawless, outside the law of Moses) but also because it was part of God's "plan" (*boulēi* and "foreknowledge" *prognōsei* (the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1934] 83). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

definite plan and foreknowledge - Paradoxically, God uses man's free work for His purposes. (TLSB)

The "set purpose" (*hōrismenē boulē*) and "foreknowledge" (*prognōsis*) indicate that God doesn't abandon his Messiah, but enacts the design which had been in place from eternity. *Prognōsis* is also used of the election/predestination of Christians in 1 Pet 1:2. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

lawless men - Jesus was handed over to the Romans, who were not under the yoke of Moses' Law. (TLSB)

crucified and killed - Distinction between mere death and accursed crucifixion. (TLSB)

2:24 *loosing the pangs of death* - lxx TRANSLATION OF Hebrew is “cord of Sheol” (cf. 2 Sm.22:6), which implies to death an image usually associated with giving birth. Because death’s pangs are terminal, not temporary, only God can overcome them. Luther: “(Christ) came back to life, and this became an opportunity for life, which before had been an opportunity for death. In this way death has become the door to life for us; disgrace has become the elevation to glory; condemnation and hell, the door to salvation. And this happened through Christ, who was sinless, etc.” (AE 19:31). (TLSB)

By means of the resurrection, *anestēsen* (to raise up, come back to life), God reversed the sentence that human judges passed on Jesus and which his executioners carried out (F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970] 70). If God ordained Jesus’ death, he also ordained his rising to new life. *The Pulpit Commentary* (A. C. Hervey, editor, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.] 52) notes that it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Jesus (1) because of the union of his two natures, (2) because the character of God will not allow anyone who trusts in God to ever be forsaken, and (3) because “Scripture cannot be broken.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

pangs of death – The word translated “agony” here is literally “birth pains.” Death was “in labor” while Jesus lay in the grave. It could not hold the Lord of life indefinitely and had to give him up. This, of course, is picture language. Death did not give life to Jesus as a mother gives life to her newborn. Rather, God raised him from the dead, and thus death could not hold him. (PBC)

“It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” When Good Friday ended in the bloody death and hurried burial of Jesus of Nazareth, there was no panic and no uncertainty in heaven. There was no question that Jesus would live again, for Jesus is life itself! When Jesus on the cross cried out, “It is finished,” he didn’t mean that the battle and the victory were half-finished. The crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord are really one event. When one is pitted against the other as if one is greater, serious harm is done to the Gospel. When an empty cross is seen as more fully heralding the Gospel than a crucifix, serious harm is done to the Gospel. Already on Good Friday death gave way to life as many came from their tombs (Mt 27:52, 53). The Lord of life tasted death fully for us sinners, including the punishment of the second death, the lake of fire. But make no mistake, “It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” So also it is impossible for death to keep its hold on those clothed (baptized) in Christ (Gal 3:27). See also Rom 6:3–4. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

krateisthai, from *krateō*, to become master, to hold fast. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

2:25-28 Quoting Ps 16:8–11, Peter states that the words cannot refer to David, for his flesh did undergo decay. This psalm rather refers to King Messiah, “great David’s greater Son,” whom David himself prefigured. The flesh of Jesus, wounded for our transgressions, is not dead but rather living and life-giving (Jn 20:27). We cannot see it as did Thomas, and Jesus does not instruct us to touch it with our hand. We can, however, receive it to eat in blest reality. As Jesus promised, “This is my body given for you” (Lk 22:19). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The teaching of the risen Christ in the first 40 days had opened Peter's mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45) and to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name. The Holy Spirit's inspiration continued Jesus' instruction that all the Old Testament Scriptures (Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms) testify of him (Lk 24:27, 44). As Peter strung Old Testament texts together like pearls (Joel 2:28–32/Ps 16:8–11/Ps 110:1), he gave radical application to his present day in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The lengthy quote from Psalm 16:8-11 is Peter's *apologia* ("apology," as in that of the Augsburg Confession) for the concept of the resurrection. Not only is the promise of a resurrection present in the OT, it is provided by none other than David. The quote is identical with the LXX except for the inversion of *mou kardia* in v 26. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

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David ("I") speaks in two dimensions. First, the king rejoices that God will not allow death to cut of David's or God's covenant people. Second, through David, Christ speaks prophetically of His own soul's deliverance and His body's escape from corruption. (TLSB)

2:25 *David say concerning him* – Now Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 in order to show his hearers that what happened to Jesus was in accord with their own Scriptures. (PBC)

David speaks for Jesus, his descendant. (TLSB)

I saw the Lord – Christ has always beheld God, His heavenly Father. (TLSB)

at my right hand – Helper from all distress. (TLSB)

2:27 *not abandon my soul to Hades*. David referred ultimately to the Messiah (v. 31). God would not allow his physical body to decompose. (CSB)

egkatalipseis, from *egkatalipō*, to leave helpless, to totally abandon and forsake. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Though David himself hopes for bodily resurrection, v. 27 is about Christ. (TLSB)

Holy One see corruption – Every Jew knew that that "descendant" was the promised Messiah and Peter was inviting them to conclude that the "Holy One" whose body would not see decay was the Messiah. (PBC)

diaphthoran, from *diaphthora*, the corruption that ensues when a dead body decays. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

2:29-32 Peter explains that David was obviously not writing about himself because David died, was buried, and his body remains in his grave "to this day" (Neh 3:16 mentions David's tomb as a matter of public record as well). Instead, David wrote as a prophet about the Messiah God

would send who would die but also be resurrected. To underscore his claim, Peter declares of himself and the others who preached by inspiration of the Spirit: “we are all witnesses of the fact” (v 32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

2:29 *with confidence* - Regarding “confidently,” “in all instances [in Acts] then, *parrēsia* might be rendered ‘candor,’ . . . the meaning is basically controlled by the situation of confession” (TDNT 5:882). Thus, KJV translates “let me freely speak unto you,” and the ASV “I may say unto you freely.” The NIV, on the other hand, emphasizes certainty: “I can tell you confidently.” “Courage” or “boldness” are the preferred translations in Acts 4:13, where the Jewish authorities are surprised by the *parrēsia* of the apostles, who were unschooled men. It is also the petition of Peter and John in their prayer within the fellowship (Act 4:29). (See Acts 9:27; 13:46; 14:3; 28:31 for uses of the verb form). “This power of bold and open speech, which is given by God and confirmed by the Lord, is in the situation of confession made possible for the servants of God, the apostles, only by the Spirit” (TDNT 5:882). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

parrēsias, from *parrēsia*, to speak frankly, openly, and with confidence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

his tomb is with us. The tomb of David could be seen in Jerusalem. It still contained the remains of David’s body. The words of Ps 16:8–11 did not fully apply to him. (CSB)

David’s tomb, like all tombs except Christ’s encloses a corpse. Only one tomb is remembered with joy because it was empty. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

David, the head of his dynasty, lasted in Judah for 422 years. Ranked with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (TLSB)

2:30-31 The first component of Peter’s confident telling is David’s death and entombment. Peter uses that fact to speak confidently of the resurrection of Jesus. As certain as the first is, so much more certain is the second, based on the very words of David. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

What a wondrous office the pastor of Jesus Christ possesses today. Even angels longed to look into the sufferings and glories of Christ that pastors are called to proclaim. David and other Old Testament prophets searched intently and with greatest care concerning the time and circumstances of what they predicted (1 Pet 1:10–12). This is the first sermon flowing from the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Through Peter, the Spirit unveils the Gospel in Psalm 16 and moves Peter to proclaim the fully revealed time and circumstances of the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

A theological debate has arisen regarding the hermeneutics of Peter’s use of Psalm 16. Is Peter saying that David’s words apply only to Christ’s resurrection, and not at all to David or other believers? Some interpreters say yes. Others, however, contend that the resurrection promise in the psalm applies first of all to Christ, then secondarily and in a future sense to all who are in Christ, that is, to all believers, including David. In Acts 2 Peter is arguing that the primary (but not exclusive) referent of the psalm must be Christ. In the psalm itself David appears to be rejoicing in God’s promise not to abandon him or any holy or faithful one (*chasidey*), and in fact some Hebrew texts (such as the Snaith edition) have in v 10 *chasideyka*, “your holy/faithful ones (plural),” applying the promise to all believers. The preacher can make use of this by stressing

that Christ's resurrection is the promise of our own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

2:31 *The Christ* - First use of the term in Acts. (TLSB)

2:32 *God raised up* – This was the heart of the message which the apostles preached in all the world and which they recorded in the pages of the NT. It is the foundation of our faith. (PBC)

witness - The role of the witness is critical as the pericope concludes. Two witnesses are required to establish the facts of the case (Dent 17:6; Mt 18:16; 1 Tim 5:19). This legal principle is addressed by Jesus as he points to his work and the testimony of the Father as his witnesses (in 8:13–18; 15:36–37). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

“We are all witnesses of the fact,” is the acceptance on the part of Peter and the other disciples of the role given to them in the upper room on Easter. “You are witnesses of these things” (Lk 24:48; the “things” are defined in vv 46–57). The term *martus*, “witness,” ties Luke and Acts together. Acts 1:8 puts the thought into the future tense. Throughout Acts appeals are made to the eyewitness role assigned to the disciples. Acts 3:15, 5:32, 10:39 all have variations of the wording. “Telling confidently” on the part of the disciples is done because they have seen the risen Lord with their own eyes. One of the criterion by which Matthias was chosen was his presence with them from Jesus’ Baptism to his Ascension (Acts 1:22). The witnesses are specially fitted for the task “They discharge the task by proclaiming both the facts and their significance as they have grasped this in faith” (TDNT 4:492). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

If the witnesses are restricted to include only the eyewitnesses of the resurrection, then in what sense are believers today able to consider themselves witnesses? To apply passages such as Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8, and 2:32 to all believers as witnesses isn’t appropriate, since the force of the confident telling done in these passages is rooted in the eyewitness nature of their testimony. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

This distinction can be noted in Acts 13:30–31, where Paul preaches in Pisidian Antioch. He refers to those who had seen Jesus alive after the resurrection. “They are now his witnesses to our people.” While here Paul doesn’t include Barnabas and himself among such witnesses, we do find him describing the commission he receives from Ananias in terms of being a witness (Acts 22:15, literally “witness to him,” since *autōi* is dative, not genitive). Strathmann explains: “Paul is not a factual witness in the same sense as the older apostles . . . He is, however, a witness to truth who seeks to propagate the Christian faith by confession. The result is that, when the term *martus* is applied to Paul, the second aspect begins to predominate over the first” (ID) VT 4:494). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

“God has raised this Jesus to life.” Modern theology may question the bodily resurrection of Christ, but not Peter and not the early church. In simple words he states its certainty: “We are all witnesses [eyewitnesses] of the fact.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

2:33 *right hand of God* – That is, Christ exercises the power of God and enjoys the honor of God. What he had from eternity according to his divine nature he now has and uses according to his human nature as well. He has the authority to send the Spirit whom he promised to send and he sent him. (PBC)

Jesus has equality with God the Father. (TLSB)

If Jesus is not in the tomb, where is he? Peter answers that he has been “exalted.” Lenski points out that the exaltation included both the glorification of Jesus’ body at the time it was resurrected and the ascension of his body into heaven (97). V 33 is an irrefutable reference to the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit). Peter makes clear that the triune God is working together for the salvation of all. At his Baptism, Jesus received the Spirit in a public inauguration of his ministry and, again, at the right hand of the Father in heaven so that he could impart (“pour out”) the Spirit on those he left behind to continue his ministry (Bruce, 72). Evidence of the Spirit could be easily verified by the things the crowd could “now see and hear” (cf. Acts 2:1–4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

has poured out. See v. 17; Joel 2:28. (CSB)

execheen presents a common image related to the Holy Spirit, one that provides an entrance into an understanding of how God works in and through us. In a variety of settings, the Holy Spirit is spoken of in terms of a fluid that can be “poured” out and “fill up” a container, the believer. Acts 2:4 says the disciples were “*filled with the Holy Spirit*” (emphasis added). Peter quotes a passage from Joel in which God twice promises, “I will *pour out* my Spirit” (Acts 2:17–18, emphasis added). See not only Joel 2:28–29 but also Acts 10:45 and Titus 3:6 for other examples of the Holy Spirit being “poured.” The water image of pouring and filling is also related to Jesus’ promise in Jn 7:38 about “rivers of living water” flowing from the heart of those who believe in him. John explicitly makes the connection between this overflowing water and the Spirit (Jn 7:39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Implicit in the imagery of pouring are several important dynamics. We are never the ones who pour; we are the passive vessels who receive the gift. Filling up also implies a purpose or an intended result. In Acts 2, the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the preaching of the Gospel and about three thousand new baptized believers. Though the text itself does not develop it further, the image of pouring and filling for a purpose can help us proclaim the work of the Trinity to save us and those around us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

2:34-35 David reverses conventional speech by addressing one of his descendants as his superior. Christ, David’s son, is David’s Lord. (TLSB)

Peter again quotes David, Ps 110:1, to show that the words of exaltation were written about Jesus, not David. Jesus used the words of Psalm 110 to identify himself and his mission and ministry (Mk 12:35–37; Mt 22:41–45; Lk 20:41–44). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

2:34 *David did not ascend* – Nowhere in the tradition is David believed to have ascended to God’s presence. Therefore, the text must apply to his messianic successor, who has ascended to the right hand of God. (Sacra)

The Lord said to my Lord. The Lord (God) said to my Lord (the Son of David, the Messiah). According to Peter, David addressed his descendant with uncommon respect because he, through the inspiration of the Spirit, recognized how great and divine he would be (Mt 22:41–45). Not only was he to be resurrected (vv. 31–32) but he was to be exalted to God’s right hand (vv. 33–35). And his presence there was now being demonstrated by the sending of the Holy Spirit (v. 33; Jn 16:7). (CSB)

2:36 *all the house of Israel* - Devout Israelites gathered for Israel's third great feast (Pentecost) commemorating the completion of the grain harvest (Lev. 23:15-21). They were fully taught (catechized) from Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. What they hadn't believed is the identity of the Christ whom they were expecting. The Spirit's Christ-centered emphasis is clear in Peter's preaching. "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

know for certain - *asphalōs*, from *asphalēs*, safely, assuredly; here "inescapably." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

made - Appointed to office. Through the resurrection, God clearly reveals Jesus' status as Son, Lord, and Messiah. (TLSB)

you crucified - Though only some people were directly responsible for Jesus' trial and murder. His death was required to remove the guilt of all people' sin. (TLSB)

Lord and Christ - The Church has always confessed that Jesus is God. (TLSB)

Bruce (73) says of this summary verse: "The gospel message has been proclaimed: the witness of the apostles and the testimony of prophecy have combined to give assurance of the truth of the proclamation. The attested facts point to one conclusion: 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.'" (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

kai kurion . . . kai Christon, "both Lord and Christ." Jesus' death not only makes him Savior, but also exalts him to the highest place and gives him authority over all as Lord. There is power in the blood of Jesus. Having his blood on you—being literally, metaphorically, and theologically implicated in his death—is the only way to life and salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:37 *cut to the heart*. Reflects both belief in Jesus and regret over former rejection. (CSB)

Deepest emotional wound. (TLSB)

To pierce thoroughly, to agitate violently, sting to the quick. (Strong's)

It is not a shame to be rightly cut to the heart! It is rather essential for faith and hope in God. Their sin was unbelief. So is ours! "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Pagan religions know about the evils of crime and hatred and selfishness, but fail to see unbelief in Jesus as a damnable sin (John 3:16-21). Amid the postmodern idols, the church is also sorely tempted to cover over the scandal of particularity and major in minors. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

brothers - Fellow Jews. Shows how Peter and the Spirit won the empathy of his hearers. (TLSB)

"Brothers, what shall we do?" The crowd looks to clear themselves of guilt by their works. Peter promises another way. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:38-39 “Repent and be baptized.” Peter proclaims forgiveness and life not by works but by changing their minds (*metanoēsate*) and passively being baptized. “The gift of the Holy Spirit” is connected to Baptism in the name of Jesus as the means of forgiveness, a promise that is to all people, children as well as adults, “all who are far off” (v 39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:38 *Repent and be baptized.* Repentance was important in the message of the forerunner, John the Baptist (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3), in the preaching of Jesus (Mk 1:15; Lk 13:3) and in the directions Jesus left just before his ascension (Lk 24:47). So also baptism was important to John the Baptizer (Mk 1:4), in the instructions of Jesus (Mt 28:18–19) and in the preaching recorded in Acts—where it was associated with belief (8:12; 18:8), acceptance of the word (v. 41) and repentance (here). (CSB)

Recognize your desperate state, confess your sins, and be washed by God. (TLSB)

Means more than regret. They already regretted their past rejection of Christ and their part in his crucifixion. Repent means to turn from your sinful unbelief to faith in Jesus, from your self-righteousness to trust in his redeeming work. (PBC)

This is pure Gospel, not a legal requirement. There were no conditions. The Holy Spirit is a person, and where He is, He is fully. Christ promised that he would baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). That promise was not something beyond the joining of a man of Christ but the very joining! To be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be baptized with water is to be clothed with Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

in the name of Jesus Christ. Not a contradiction to the fuller formula given in Mt 28:19. In Acts the abbreviated form emphasizes the distinctive quality of this baptism, for Jesus is now included in a way that he was not in John’s baptism (19:4–5). (CSB)

Distinguishes the Baptism mandated by Christ from that of John the Baptist and other Jewish groups. This does not rule out use of the full trinitarian wording in Baptism (Mt 28:19). (TLSB)

for the forgiveness of your sins. † Baptism effects forgiveness. The Greek preposition indicates purpose—for the forgiveness of sins. The Holy Spirit works through baptism, a means of grace, which produces faith in the believer, who receives forgiveness as a gift. Baptism (by God’s word connected with the water), forgiveness and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated in this sacrament. (CSB)

Chief blessing of Baptism, especially helpful emphasis in view of v 37. (TLSB)

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is received through Baptism. (TLSB)

Notice that “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is imparted with baptism. It is not something that comes separately or later. Notice that children are included in the promise. They also need the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They also, therefore, are to be baptized. (PBC)

2:39 *the promise* - This is a rich grace word as contrasted with any indication of merit. The Spirit was expected as promise (1:4) and now given as promise (2:33). In each of the Spirit Baptism passages in Acts, the word promise or gift is used. Baptism in the Spirit is never an achievement or challenge or opportunity of some special class of believers. It is God’s promise, God’s gift,

with no age restrictions (“for you and your children”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

God is gracious to all people regardless of age or race. “Children are to be baptized... Being offered to God through Baptism, they are received into God’s grace” (AC IX2). “God’s approval of the Baptism of little children is shown by this: He gives the Holy Spirit to those baptized... For if this Baptism would be empty, the Holy Spirit would be given to no one. No one would be saved. And finally, there would be no Church” (Ap IX 53). (TLSB)

2:40 *save yourselves* - This better translated “Be saved” (passive). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Or, “be saved.” (TLSB)

sōthēte is an aorist passive plural imperative and so should be translated “Be saved!” not “Save yourselves!” as the ESV has it. It is crucial to see that salvation is proclaimed by Peter as a gift of God passively received by guilty sinners, not an active achievement of righteous human beings. Small details of translation can have big effects on our proclamation! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

crooked generation – This does not refer simply to the people of that time. Nor is it limited to the Jewish people. It refers to all unbelieving people of every age. (PBC)

“Corrupt” is from the Greek for crooked (see our word “scoliosis”). The opposite of that is straight (our prefix “ortho”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

2:41 *who received his word* – Peter’s message was God’s effective word. Peter planted the seed and God made it grow. (PBC)

Not all believed. (TLSB)

were added. The number of believers. (CSB)

What an advantage (John 16:7-11)! Three thousand were added in a single day! The Holy Spirit was at work in the sermon giving the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit was at work with the water giving Jesus and His gift of the forgiveness of sins. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

three thousand souls. Describes the stunning growth of the Church. Cf 1:15. Luke places special emphasis on the growth and spread of the Church (2:47; 4:4; 5:14, 16; 6:7). (TLSB)

2:14–41 Peter shows from the Scriptures that Jesus is Israel’s Lord as well as Savior of the nations. Rejoice that God pours out His Spirit in Baptism and multiplies His blessings to us in daily repentance and forgiveness. He makes a new Israel, a new house of David—the Church! • Lord, grant that I may confess and proclaim You with confidence, as Peter did. Amen. (TLSB)

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all

things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

2:42 The particular events of the Day of Pentecost now give way to summary statements of the church's life. Some statements are descriptive and changing: "enjoying the favor of all the people" (v. 47). This verse, however, is prescriptive and unchanging. It is central to the life of the church: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer" (literally, the prayers). In other words, it wasn't optional for the believers to be devoted to the apostles' teaching. This is how the Holy Spirit brought Christ to them. Nor was it optional that their fellowship show equal devotion to the breaking of bread (Luke's term for the Lord's Supper). This is how the Holy Spirit brought Christ to them. Right from the beginning the prayers that flowed from and framed these gifts of the risen Christ (the liturgy) were equally centered on Word and Sacrament. Right from the beginning we see that sermon and Sacrament are not liturgy-dividing competitors, but rather life-giving complements. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

devoted – The KJV has "continued steadfastly" which is really close to the original. The Greek from the lexicon has the following phrases: to persist in adherence to a thing; to be intently engaged in; attend constantly. Devoted – Volume 3 page 618 of Kittel has: To occupy oneself diligently with something; pay persistent attention to; to hold fast to something. Our English dictionary has: fixed or unchanging; firmly loyal or constant; unswerving; fixed in one place. – Philips has "continued steadfastly learning..." This is a characteristic of a disciple. In Greek "disciple" means to be trained, disciplined and instructed. In Matthew 28:20 where it says "teaching them to obey everything..." the word "obey" means to "have a living reception in the heart, as assimilated by means of faith, one that will henceforth control and mold the entire character and life and goes on throughout life. (CSB)

With rapt attention. (TLSB)

ēsan de proskarterountes. Every word in this verse matters, for here is laid down by the evangelist the life of the Church at worship. This periphrastic imperfect suggests that their devoting themselves, their persevering as a community, was habitual and persistent, defining their life as the Church. By repeating *proskarterountes* four verses later (v 46), we are encouraged to see that the persistent worship in the temple and breaking bread in the homes would have included the apostles' teaching, fellowship in the breaking of the bread, and the prayers. This word occurs frequently in Acts (1:14; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

apostles' teaching. Included all that Jesus himself taught (Mt 28:20), especially the gospel, which was centered in his death, burial and resurrection (see vv. 23–24; 3:15; 4:10; 1Co 15:1–4). It was a unique teaching in that it came from God and was clothed with the authority conferred on the apostles (2Co 13:10; 1Th 4:2). Today it is available in the books of the NT. (CSB)

Summary of the apostles' faith and proclamation. (TLSB)

tēi didachēi tōn apostolōn. Within this verse, the apostles demonstrate that straightaway after Peter's Pentecost sermon, they continue the prophetic pattern as outlined in Luke's prophetic

Christology—a first phase of teaching and miracles and a second phase of rejection for preaching that Christ is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. The teaching of the apostles will have followed Jesus’ hermeneutic of seeing the entire Old Testament as referring to his death and resurrection, not simply discrete verses here and there. This teaching would have been centered in the kerygma of a crucified and risen Savior, now present bodily in the preaching of forgiveness in his name (cf. Lk 24:44–47). This would form the center of the first structure of the Divine Service, the liturgy of the Word, as Jesus handed down in the Emmaus story (24:35, the teaching on the way). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

To avoid misunderstanding what factually was happening, we need to remember that these new disciples were all Jews who were fully conversant with the Scriptures. Peter’s easy use of words from David and Joel in his Pentecost sermon bears this out. The one thing Peter’s hearers needed was the conviction that Jesus was the Christ. This the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts and minds on Pentecost. Unlike unbelievers who have no knowledge of God and His Word, these new converts were fully prepared for baptism and membership. The teaching referred to here is the teaching we do in Bible class and through the Sunday sermon. (LL)

the fellowship. The corporate fellowship of believers in worship. (CSB)

Greek *koinonia*, “sharing,” “participation in a common thing.” Christian fellowship has both a heavenly and an earthly dimension (1 Cor. 1:9; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16; 2 Cor. 8:4; 13:14; Eph. 3:6; Phm 3:10; Phm 6). (TLSB)

kai tēi koinōniai. Although the evangelist would not have known that this is the first occurrence in the New Testament of the word *hē koinōnia*, the canonical order takes us through four Gospels before coming upon this critical word for the life of the Church. It stands in an exegetical relationship with the following phrase, *tēi klasei tou artou*, so that we might translate it “in the fellowship, that is, in the breaking of the bread.” Note that a simple *kai* separates the apostles’ teaching and fellowship in the breaking of bread and the prayers, but that no *kai* appears between fellowship and the breaking of the bread. Fellowship is eucharistic fellowship, and that includes the common sharing of property, or what we sometimes call *diakonia*. Fellowship in the breaking of the bread frees us to share bread and wine as the means for Christ to come to us in body and blood, as well as our very possessions for the common good, for those who are in need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

breaking of bread. Although this phrase is used of an ordinary meal in v. 46 (see Lk 24:30, 35), the Lord’s Supper seems to be indicated here. (CSB)

Could include the Holy Supper. “Although we do not object if some interpret these passage as referring to the Sacrament, it does not make sense that one part of the Sacrament was given. According to the ordinary usage of language, naming one part also means the other” (Ap. XXII 7). (TLSB)

tēi klasei tou artou. This is the language used by Luke to describe the Lord’s Supper, first used by him in the Emmaus meal in the concluding and programmatic verse in which he laid down the structures of the liturgy. In Lk 24:35, “the things in the way [Word] and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread [Lord’s Supper]” (author’s translation). It is the oldest expression for the Lord’s Supper, used by Luke in Acts (2:46; 20:7, 11). The breaking of the bread signified the whole meal, and if it were a festive meal like Emmaus, where reclining took

place, such a meal would always include wine. Wherever “the breaking of the bread” is used, it refers to the full eucharistic meal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

prayer. Acts emphasizes the importance of prayer in the Christian life—private as well as public (1:14; 3:1; 6:4; 10:4, 31; 12:5; 16:13, 16). (CSB)

The Jews had liturgical-style prayers they memorized and recited, a practice continued in the Christian Church, as the use of the Lord’s Prayer shows. (TLSB)

kai tais proseuchais. No one can be sure exactly what these prayers might have included. These are “petitionary” prayers, like the Lord’s Prayer, and perhaps Luke is suggesting that this is already a part of the liturgical life of the Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:43-45 The Holy Spirit did not mandate communism - prohibition of private property and the requirement to amass community property. He did lead the early church in sharing the use and benefit of their goods in harmony with Jesus’ teaching about possessions (Luke 12:33; 18:22; Acts 4:32). Their fellowship, partaking in Word and Sacrament as the center of life (v. 42), was not without effect in their sharing the things of this life. The context of the Feast of Pentecost indicates that many of those sharing in the common use of things had come from distant homes and were temporary residents of Jerusalem. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

2:43 *every soul* – Including those who were not yet believers, could see that God was at work through these men. (PBC)

awe - Literally, “fear.” (TLSB)

phobos, polla te terata kai sēmeia dia tōn apostolōn. Here the miracles that are part of the prophet Christology are described by the evangelist as taking place through the apostles, who follow their Lord in this way. Miracles testify to the presence of Christ, the Creator, in his creation bringing in the new creation. Christ is now present “miraculously” in two ways: through the miracles of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as well as through the “wonders and signs” of the apostles. Such thaumaturgic acts accompany the beginning of every new mission start in Acts, as this one at Pentecost that begins the mission to the Jews (cf. Acts 8: Samaria; Acts 10–12: Gentiles). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

“The fear of the Lord” is a key concept throughout the OT. Unfortunately, the Hebrew noun *yir’ah* that is translated “fear” (or the verb “to fear” does not communicate itself through any single word in English translation. What does “the fear of the Lord” really mean? (TLSB)

1 John 4:16-19, “¹⁶And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁷In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us.”

For us, the word fear often has a negative connotation, namely, to be afraid of something or someone. The Hebrew term can mean that. For example, when Jacob prepared to meet his brother, Esau, he feared. (Gen. 32:11). (TLSB)

Proverbs points out that true wisdom begins with such fear. The opening verses sum up the entire Book: (TLSB)

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)

This fear is closely related to trust because we can truly respect and reverence God only when we believe that He is truly everything that His Word, the Bible, says He is. Understanding “fear of the Lord” as trust helps us understand other enigmatic passages such as Psalm 130:4. (TLSB)

“But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.”

The idea of fearing God occurs repeatedly throughout the Book of Proverbs: 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 16, 26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21; 28:14; 31:30. (TLSB)

wonders and signs – “Through” would be a better translation than by here. It was not their power but His which filled everyone with awe. These works were signs that the apostles’ teaching was from God. (PBC)

It wasn’t so much the “may wonders and miraculous signs” done by the apostles as it was this very visible witness made by these first converts that made such a profound impression on the rest of the city’s residents. (LL)

At this time, more miracles are happening through the apostles than Luke has space to record (cf. John 21:25). (TLSB)

2:44 *all who believed were together*. The unity of the early church. (CSB)

hoi pisteuontes. This clearly refers to Christians. And in this context, these are Jews who now believe in Jesus, which is why there is no reason for them to be catechized and why the Church grew in such large numbers during these early days. They had been catechized through the Old Testament, and the only missing piece was that Jesus was the Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

all things in common. See 4:34–35. This was a voluntary sharing to provide for those who did not have enough for the essentials of living (see good and bad examples of sharing, 4:36–5:9). (CSB)

Note of Acts 4:32 says: “Preview and foretaste of the restoration of Paradise-like conditions in heaven. God gives us property and resources for our neighbor’s benefit. The early Christians fully shared with one another, but not in the same way as the failed communist experiments of the twentieth century. Here there is no compulsion or involvement of the State—only believers are affected, and only goods are shared, not their production.” (TLSB)

epi to auto kai eixon capanta koina. The coming of the Spirit of Jesus at Pentecost, the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship in the breaking of the bread, the prayers—all these things set the community free to share what they had with one another. *Leitourgia* gives way to *diakonia*. They are now one in Christ, and those who share this oneness share all things in common. This is also

part of the friendship ethic of the Hellenistic world. The Gospel gave them freedom to do this. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:45 *selling* - *kai ta ktēmata kai tas huparxeis epipraskon*. The imperfect verb *epipraskon*, translated “were selling,” denotes both the inception of the sharing of possessions as well as its ongoing character. This now is becoming the custom of the Church. *tas huparxeis* suggests that this comes out of their very being, out of the essence of their life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

distributing the proceeds to all as any had need – In so large a congregation, and given the speed with which everything happened, it would only be natural that there would be those who found themselves without shelter and food. As these needs became known in these meetings, no questions were asked, no resolutions were passed, no committees were formed. Love acted. Those members who had material wealth had a new understanding of why they were so blessed, and a beautiful and spontaneous sharing and meeting of needs took place. (LL)

kai diemerizon auta pasin kathoti an tis chreian eichen. Another imperfect verb, *diemerizon*, denoting ongoing, customary, habitual action. The Spirit of Jesus and the eucharistic fellowship opens their eyes to those who have need and the concrete response to those needs. Again, *leitourgia* and *diakonia* taken together comprise the entire Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:46-47 Christian worship in the temple was fleeting. The center of activity in the early church was the house churches, where apostle-led Word and Sacrament ministry fed the faithful with the temple of Jesus’ body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

en agalliasei kai aphelotēti kardias ainountes ton theon. The gladness expressed by the apostles is eschatological, for the eschaton had arrived in Jesus and was being celebrated at their eucharistic feasts by Christ’s bodily presence. Joy is a major theme of Luke’s Gospel, as the parable of the prodigal son indicates. Joy is always the response of the believer to Christ’s saving presence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:46 attending the temple – They did this because it was the house of the Lord and they were the Lord’s people. It was the Father’s house and they were his children. They gathered there daily, perhaps at the hours of prayer. (PBC)

The apostles (even as late as 21:26) exercise the maximum possible participation at the Jerusalem temple, which Jesus called His Father’s house (Lk 2:49; Jn 2:16). (TLSB)

broke bread in their homes. Here the daily life of Christians is described, distinguishing their activity in the temple from that in their homes, where they ate their meals—not the Lord’s Supper—with gladness and generosity. (CSB)

kath’ hēmeran. It appears as if eucharistic table fellowship occurred every day in the early Christian communities. This is one of the reasons for Acts 6 and the institution of the diaconate. Serving tables every day became a burden on the apostles and took time away from their *leitourgia*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

klōntes te kat’ oikon arton, metelambanon trophēs. See note above on the breaking of the bread. By “house to house,” Luke means in the various homes where the Jews lived, similar to the house

worship of Jewish families for the Passover and the Sabbath evening Seder, although the gatherings for these meals would have been bigger than the immediate family and would include others in what would now be “the family of God.” Later eucharistic worship in the house churches of Christians would have been modeled after this post-Pentecost example. The sharing at the table would also have been seen as an extension of *diakonia*, sharing all things in common, as this passage emphasizes. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Covers both the agape meal (cf. Jude 12) and the Lord’s Supper. (TLSB)

glad and generous hearts. The fellowship, oneness and sharing enjoyed in the early church are fruits of the Spirit. Joy is to be the mood of the believer. (CSB)

In our day, too, it ought to be possible for unbelievers to say of us, “Those Christians are helpful neighbors and good citizens.” Our lives cannot make believers of them, but the way we live might at least remove some hindrances to their faith. Our words and actions might convince some that they ought to give the gospel a hearing. (PBC)

“All men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). How naturally, beautifully, and powerfully this evidence of discipleship happened! Not only did they meet regularly for the study of the Word, but they also met together often for practical purposes. And it was here in these meetings that what it means to belong to Christ and live in Him came alive for all to see. (LL)

te proskarterountes homothumadon en tōi hierōi. The same word used in Acts 2:42 for the Church’s devotion to *leitourgia* is used here for their worship in the temple. They would pray in the temple, and Solomon’s Portico became a place for their teaching (Acts 5:12). It should not surprise us that the apostles returned to the temple to praise God. Luke’s Gospel begins in the temple with Zechariah offering up the atonement sacrifices in the Holy Place (1:5–25) and ends with the apostles returning to the temple to praise God (24:53). As Jews who now confess Christ as the Messiah, the temple was the premier place of worship. Only after arrests and persecution for going to the temple do references to the temple cease. However, when Paul returns to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey, James, the bishop of Jerusalem, takes Paul to the temple (Acts 21), indicating that the temple remains a place of worship for Jewish Christians until its destruction in AD 70. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:47 *having favor with all people* - The respect they received from the ordinary folk contrasts with the spitefulness of the rulers (Chapter 4). (TLSB)

pros holon ton laon. This is the first use of *ho laos* in Acts, a technical word in Luke for the people of God who are faithful to the promises of God’s eschatological salvation through a crucified and risen Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

charin. As in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, grace is a space where God is making right what has gone wrong. The space of grace here is the Church’s gathering together around the apostles’ teaching, fellowship in the breaking of bread, and prayers, that is, worship in Word and Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

added to their number – No wonder that new believers were added daily! Life-style evangelism. Acts speak louder than words’ either attracting or repulsing. And when actions

attract, as they plainly did here, questions will be asked. Then, teaching the Word takes place naturally, and the Holy Spirit can and does create faith and growth happens. (LL)

God alone, through grace, builds His Church. (TLSB)

tous sōzomenous. See above in v 44 on *hoi pisteuontes*. The numbers were great because these were all Jews who now confess Jesus as Messiah. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

kath' hēmeran. The increase in the Church was happening every day as the news spread that Jesus was the Messiah, that his bodily presence was in apostolic teaching and fellowship in the breaking of the bread, and that the Church now was one community where everyone shared with those in need. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

2:42–47 The early Christians lived only for their Lord and for the other members of His Body, the Church. How cheap in comparison is our indifference to the Church; how sad are our compromises with the world. Yet the Holy Spirit still dwells and works among us; we still have the apostles' teaching embodied in the NT Scriptures. How blessed are we in such heavenly fellowship! • Lord, open our eyes to Your reality, order our priorities, and let Your light transfigure these latter days. Amen. (TLSB)