

- A Study in Acts -

**Chapter Two – Coming of Power and the First Gospel Sermon**

**ACTS 2:40-42:**

In our last lesson, we looked at the fulfillment of the commission of Jesus to His chosen Apostles for the very first time. The Gospel of Jesus Christ as King was preached for the very first time (2:22-36); as it was commissioned to be preached to everyone (Mark 16:15). At the beset of the convicted audience, the rest of the commissioned instructions were given (2:37-39). This set the precedence for the preaching of the Gospel and the obedience instructed alongside it, from this point forward.

God's plan of salvation has been shared with these Jews on this Day of Pentecost; however, it is not complete until they fulfill their part!

**Text #1:**

**Acts 2:40-41** “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”<sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”

**Testified and Exhorted:** There is a universal message being shared here that we must take notice of. It is one thing to be convicted in understanding; it is a completely different thing to act upon those convictions. Peter is not going to rest his case in hope (“with many other words”); instead, he is going to give further factual information (“testified”), and he is going to charge them to do their duty (“exhorted”).

**Be Saved:** God has done His part in the provision for the redemption of man; here, Peter shares that man must do his part. This is the ultimate understanding of [**personal responsibility**]. In addition, it is also Peter's intent to show that the provision of God is one that translates (changes) the one who chooses to be saved by it, out of a crooked or perverse generation (where these crooked or perverse remain by choice, as the Gospel was to be preached to all). Even after one chooses to be saved from the perverse environment around them, it would be instructed by the Apostles of Christ that they continue to “lay hold” of or continue to “work out” their own “salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

**Hebrews 4:1** “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.”

**2 Peter 1:8-10** “For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble”

**Gladly Received:** The ones that received the words of the Apostles were baptized. Neither can we receive the word today without being baptized. About three thousand souls had their sins washed away that day in baptism; therefore, they saved themselves through the provision of God (the only method that could be chosen for this result), as commanded by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. They are added to the Apostles (the ones who are speaking to them) and will now constitute the “**Called Out**” (the church – **2:47**), to be called out of darkness and service to Satan, to knowing the light and service to God (**Acts 26:18**).

**Text #2:**

**Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”**

**Continued Steadfastly:** These who have laid hold of their salvation, did not forsake their newfound way of life; but continued in the Apostles teaching (doctrine), and commanded acts of worship. In addition, this is the first day of the week! It will also set an additional precedence for when these acts of worship should be observed. When this is combined with: **Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-22; 16:1-4; Hebrews 10:24-25** – we learn that not only was this the day that these early Christians gave themselves to worship (in every aspect), but also did not forsake at the cost of detriment to their service.

**Apostle’s Doctrine:** The Apostles were commanded to teach, then baptize, and then teach all things that Jesus had commanded to be taught to disciples (**Matthew 28:18-20**). This would once again make it the individual disciple’s responsibility to learn. The teaching of the Apostles would not be a doctrine born in their own minds but would literally be the mind of Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (**John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16**).

**Fellowship:** Everything mentioned in this verse is categorically acts of worship. They are distinguished together from other things the disciples will do, post their conversion to the Gospel. The importance of “**Fellowship**” is to discern that all worship is to be done collectively. This is what gives us joint participation towards a common goal.

**Breaking of Bread:** This was a universal term that is descriptive of an entire meal; however, in the context of this verse it is associated with acts of worship. In addition to the association with acts of worship, the words “**ate**” (**2:46**), or “**eaten**” (**20:11**), [**are missing**]! These are words that come from variations of the Greek ‘*Geuo*’, which describes the tasting of perceiving flavor of, or to partake to enjoy. All describing the satisfaction of the flesh. In this absence, we know that it is referring to a spiritual meal, one where the discernment thereof was for a purpose completely different than the satisfaction of the flesh. It is referring to the Lord’s Supper. This was spoken of prophetically by the Lord to His Apostles – **Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-23**. It would be enforced in the kingdom through the doctrine of the Apostles (**Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**). This would be a memorial that would be observed every time the disciples of Christ would come together (**Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, 26; 16:2**), in other words, every first day of the week!

**Prayers:** One of the greatest blessings enjoyed by disciples of Christ in this life is the privilege of **PRAYER**, by which we can approach God. Through prayer, the disciple can find [**FORGIVENESS**] for sins **Acts 8:22-24; 1 John 1:9**. Through prayer, the disciple can find [**PEACE**] to replace anxiety – **Philippians 4:6-7**. Through prayer, the disciple can receive [**STRENGTH**] from God through His Spirit– **Ephesians 3:14-16**. It must be offered “**IN THE NAME OF JESUS**”.

**Ephesians 5:20** “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

This means much more than simply adding a little phrase “**in Jesus' name**” at the end of our prayers! It carries the same importance of authority as baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (**vs. 38**). A singular source of authority appointed by God (**Matthew 28:18**), by which all things are [**offered to God acceptably**]. This is the purpose of Jesus Christ as our only High Priest, so that everything offered to God, by us, can be acceptable – **John 14:6, 13; Hebrews 7:24-25**.

Once again, the importance of obedience to the commands of repentance and baptism become so very evident. Baptism into Christ (**Galatians 3:26-27**) provides for the obedient all these blessings. Note the words of the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Ephesus, noting their condition prior to obeying the Gospel:

**Ephesians 2:12** “that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

This alienation from God, prior to obedience to the Gospel’s call, also alienates one from being recognized as His (**2 Timothy 2:19**) and heard by God. After baptism and “**in**” Christ, note the change of language:

**Ephesians 2:13** “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

**Next: “The Lord Added to the Church Those Being Saved!”**