

# The First Members of the Church

## Acts 2

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### INTRODUCTION:

- A. History is fascinated with firsts.
1. First people
  2. First people to discover America
  3. First President of the United States
  4. First automobile
  5. First flight
  6. First color television
  7. First person to climb Mt. Everest
  8. First man on the moon
- B. May 28, 30 A.D. was indeed one of the greatest days in the history of the world. Over 4,000 years in the making. We read about it in Acts 2
1. It was the Day of Pentecost. A Day of Pentecost had been observed annually for approximately 1,477 years, but none had been as special as this one.
  2. **This one was the birthday of the Lord’s Church.**
- C. That day was the culmination of events prepared for over 4,000 years.
1. It had been in the mind of God before the foundation of the world was laid. Ephesians 3:10-11
  2. God had promised it.
  3. The Old Testament prophets had foretold it.
  4. John the Baptist had preached that it was at hand.
  5. Jesus preached that it was at hand and promised to build it.
  6. The apostles had been trained to proclaim it.
  7. It had been about 52 days since Jesus had been crucified and 49 days since He had been resurrected.
  8. Only ten days before on Thursday, May 18, Jesus:
    - a. Had given the great commission. Matthew 28:19-20
    - b. Had ascended back into Heaven. Acts 1:9-11
    - c. The world would never be the same again.
- D. According to the divinely inspired Word of God in **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, the very purpose of the Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection was for the redemption of mankind. “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

- E. Just ten days before the church was established in Jerusalem, Jesus taught two great truths to His then eleven apostles.
1. God had given Him all power in Heaven and earth. **Matthew 28:19** – And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
  2. He was utilizing that power to tell His followers what to do henceforth. **Matthew 28:19-20** - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.
  3. The bible clearly shows that Christ requires all accountable people to:
    - a. Believe the gospel . . . . . The Good News
    - b. Repent of sins
    - c. Be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- F. But first, the eleven were to return from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem and tarry there until they be endued with power from on high . . . That is, until the Holy Spirit came upon them.
1. That power was the Holy Spirit.
  2. Promised in John 16:3-15 and arrived in Acts 21-4
- G. From Acts 2 these truths are revealed:
1. The 11 apostles did “tarry” in Jerusalem as Christ had charged them in Luke 24:49. They did in Acts 1:13
  2. It was not time for the Word of the Lord to go forth from Jerusalem just as Jesus had foretold in **Luke 24:47-49** – And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.  
48 And you are witnesses of these things.  
49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."
- H. The stage was set for establishing the Lord’s church.
1. Jews from all nations were gathered in the city of Jerusalem for the observance of Pentecost. **Acts 2:5** - And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.
  2. According to **Acts 2:6** - And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.
  3. This was indeed a great audience, and in the providence of God, a wonderful opportunity for beginning to spread the gospel to all the nations.
- I. The Day of Pentecost in 30 A.D. was a GREAT day of many firsts!

## THE FIRST MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH BECAME SUCH IN ACTS 2 . . . IT WAS GREAT!

### A. A Great DAY - Day of Pentecost

1. Seven Saturdays plus one day according to Leviticus 23:15-16
2. The day God chose for the beginning of the church.
3. The day prepared for since early Old Testament days.

### B. A Great CITY – Jerusalem

1. Isaiah & Micah had foretold it.
2. They foretold that Jerusalem would be the city wherein God would do great things.

### C. A Great POWER - The Holy Spirit

1. Jesus had promised it.
2. And, Jesus sent it.

### D. A great SPEAKER - The apostle Peter

1. In Matthew 16:18-19 – Jesus had promised to give Peter the keys to the kingdom.
2. Keys open doors so that entrance can be gained.
3. Peter opened the doors to the kingdom.
  - a. For the Jews in Acts 2 . . . . . Jerusalem.
  - b. For the Gentiles in Acts 10 . . . . . Caesarea

### E. A Great AUDIENCE - 15 nations named

1. Parthians
2. Medes
3. Elamites
4. Dwellers in Mesopotamia
5. Dwellers in Judea
6. Dwellers in Cappadocia
7. Dwellers in Pontus
8. Dwellers in Asia
9. Dwellers in Phrygia
10. Dwellers in Pamphylia
11. Dwellers in Egypt
12. Dwellers in Lybia about Cyrene
13. Strangers of Rome
14. Cretes
15. Arabians

- F. A Great MESSAGE - The gospel was preached. These truths were preached:
1. That the prophecy of Joel was being fulfilled that day. Acts 2:16-21
  2. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God (perhaps inferring that He was not approved of the audience) was evidenced by the miracles and signs he performed. Acts 2:22
  3. You have taken and crucified Him. Acts 2:23
  4. God raised Him up to be alive again. Acts 2:31
  5. Christ now sits on throne. Acts 2:30
  6. God has now made Jesus both Lord and Christ. Acts 2:36
- G. A Great QUESTION - Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Acts 2:37
1. They were not already saved when they asked this question.
  2. They had come to the realization that:
    - a. Peter was right and they were wrong.
    - b. Christ had been right and they had been wrong.
    - c. God was on the side of Christ.
    - d. They were guilty of crucifying the very Son of God.
    - e. They were, in fact, guilty of murdering God’s Son.
- H. A Great ANSWER - Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38
1. Isn’t this what Jesus was talking about in Luke 24:47? “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
  2. A closer look at Peter’s answer.
    - a. Since they were not yet saved when they asked what they had do, Peter was **NOT** telling them what to do because of remission of sins already received, but rather he was telling them **HOW** to obtain the remission of sins they were still in.
    - b. Why is it important to stress the significance of the phrase, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins?”
      1. Some denominationalists render Peter’s statement to mean to be baptized because you have already received the remission of sins.
      2. It does not read “unto the remission of sins,” but rather, “for the remission of sins. There is a difference . . . . . There is a big difference . . . . . There is an eternal difference.
  3. Please note carefully the order facts as they are presented.
    - a. The gospel was preached to those gathered there.

- b. Romans 1:16 tells us that the gospel is “the power of God to salvation.”
- c. They were commanded to “Know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” **Acts 2:36**
- d. They came to believe this as shown by the question, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” **Acts 2:37**
- e. Peter commanded them to “repent.” Jesus said in **Luke 13:3** – “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.
- f. Peter further commanded them to be “baptized.”
  - 1. Since they were wanting to know WHAT to do to be saved, “repent and be baptized” in order to be forgiven of their sins.
  - 2. Had the sermon ended at that point, which it didn’t, they people would have known that they would need to “repent and “be baptized” in order to be saved.
  - 3. They would have known that they were to both repent and be baptized in order to be forgiven of their sins.
  - 4. “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”
    - a. In the order given, one’s repentance precedes (comes before) one’s baptism.
    - b. Baptism is by the authority of Christ.
    - c. Baptism has a purpose . . . it is for the forgiveness of sins.
    - d. Baptism is a burial in water. “Baptizo” – immersion.
    - e. Please observe further:
      - 1. “Repent AND be baptized” are both connected by the coordinate conjunction “AND.”
      - 2. This makes both repentance and baptism necessary for the remission of sins.
      - 3. The conjunction ties the two together like the coupling of two boxcars so that when the first car moves forward , the other one moves in the same direction with it.
      - 4. The word AND is a coupling word . . . A copulative conjunction.
      - 5. Peter used it here to tie “repent and be baptized” together and to make both to look forward to remission of sins to be received upon these conditions being met.
  - 5. **Matthew 26:28** – “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
    - a. Goodspeed’s translation of **Acts 2:38** – “You must repent and everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to have your sins forgiven; then you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.”
    - b. I have never seen a translation that renders it “because of the remission” of sins.

- c. The Thayer Greek-Lexicon renders it: “To obtain the forgiveness of sin.
  - d. This is the way to:
    - 1. This is the way to be saved by grace through faith.
    - 2. This is the way to trust in Christ for salvation.
    - 3. This is the way to be saved by the blood of Christ.
- I. **A Great RESPONSE** - “About 3,000 souls were added to them.”
- 1. **Acts 2:41** – “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.
  - 2. **Verse 42** tells us what they did after their obedience; “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
  - 3. Acts 2:41 & 42 tell us about their response to the Lord . . . But what about the Lord’s response to them? **Acts 2:47** - “. . . And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”
- J. **A Great BEGINNING** - The Lord’s Church, for which He died, was now established.
- 1. The church began that Satan could not prevent.
  - 2. The church began that Satan could not destroy.
  - 3. The church began that will never be destroyed.
  - 4. The church began that will be delivered up to the Father in Heaven.
  - 5. The church that God’s earthly family is a member of.

## CONCLUSION:

- A. The first members of the church . . .
- 1. Were such because they obeyed God’s message preached by Peter
  - 2. Were such because they obeyed the gospel by being baptized in order to have their sins forgiven.
  - 3. Were such because, upon their obedience, Christ added them to His church.
  - 4. They were . . . And are . . . Our brethren . . . And we are Theirs’!
- B. Many reasons contribute to Making Acts 2 an important chapter in the Bible.
- 1. The fact that it is the Bible at all makes it important.
  - 2. The fact that so many thousands of years of preparation and prophecy are fulfilled in that one chapter makes it exceedingly great.
  - 3. The fact that the great commission went into effect in Acts 2 makes the chapter one of the most important ever written.
  - 4. The fact that the true benefits of the shed blood of Christ, forgiveness . . . remission of sins, went into effect that day lends great weight to Acts 2.

5. The fact that this chapter records the birthday of the church provides people with the knowledge to differentiate between the Lord’s church and those established by men (denominations).
  6. Acts 2 is an important Bible chapter in that it not only tells us how to be saved, it shows in the example of about 3,000 people.
  7. This chapter tells us what the Lord does with the saved . . . He adds them to His church.
- B. Miss Acts 2 and you could miss Heaven.
- C. What a real joy and honor it is to stand in this century alongside these great Christians of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- D. The people we have read about in Acts 2 responded out of a great need they had . . . The need to be forgiven for their sins. They responded to what they heard from God’s Word . . . And so can we. Is that not our need today?
1. We have the same **NEED** – To be forgiven of our sins.
  2. God offers the same **TERMS** – “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Acts 2:38
  3. We can receive the same **RESULTS** – Forgiven by Christ and added by Him to His church.
- E. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**