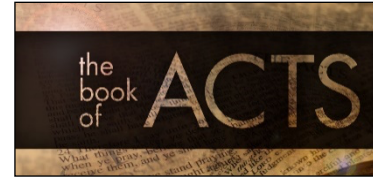


# ACTS – Fall 2025 D-Groups

*For Wednesday, September 10*

**Acts 2:1-41**



## The Big Picture - ACTS as a Whole

I have sitting on my shelf a book called *Randleman Rendleman Rintelman Reunion 1981* (sounds exciting, I know), that traces my family history back to 1754 in our ancestors move from Germany to America. I enjoy looking at it every now and then and being reminded of my backstory, where my family came from. In many ways, this is also what the book of Acts is. I love the imagery of viewing the book of Acts as our *backstory*. This is true of Scripture as a whole, of course, but I feel it at a deeper level as we see the church *begin*. As we read of their ups and downs, the trials they faced, their perseverance in those trials, their dependance on the Holy Spirit, and more, we are encouraged and we can find hope in our own circumstances. These stories are important, vital even, because they are a part of *our* story. You and I have placed our faith and trust in Jesus and joined the global church *because of* what happened in these chapters. Lives were changed and evangelism continued and eventually we benefited. This is the legacy that we carry. This is our *family history*.

In chapter one, we encountered the promise of the coming Holy Spirit which would happen *not many days from now* (1:5). We saw Jesus ascend and the disciples begin to wait for the fulfilment of that promise. As chapter two opens, we see the disciples *waiting*. Luke opened with people waiting on the coming Messiah. In Acts, for the promised Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost was 50 days after Passover, Jesus appeared after his resurrection for 40 days, so the disciples have been waiting for the Spirit for 10 days. *Waiting* is a key theme in the unfolding story of God. Things don't always happen on our timeline, but we are called to *be ready* when they do. We still wait, today, for the return of Jesus. We still wait for people we know and love to respond to the gift of salvation. We have to learn how to *wait* well, preparing ourselves, being ready.

But it is important to remember, also, what the disciples were waiting for: the promised Holy Spirit. We can trace from the beginning of Scripture how closely God wants to be present with His people. In the garden in Genesis, he *walked* with them. As the Hebrew nation grew and wandered, He remained with them with the placement of the Tabernacle containing His presence in the middle of their camp. In John 1 we read that Jesus came and *tabernacled* with us, and now in Acts 2, we see the Spirit descend to actually dwell *within* us. There are some amazing things in this chapter, the rushing wind, the tongues of fire, the multiple languages being spoken, but don't get lost in all that. *They* aren't the point: The *Holy Spirit* is. Luke's agenda is not to promote the miracle of tongues, but to promote the new age of the Holy Spirit which will launch His people into a global mission.

***An additional resource:*** while we won't follow the exact same flow, there is a RightNow Media resource called "**Acts: Lessons from Our Backstory**" that might be valuable to you throughout this semester. This content is from Jim Dalrymple at Ozark Christian College. Let the office know if you need access to RNM.

## The Close-Up for September 10 - Acts 2:1-41

*Please make sure you read the passage, perhaps even 2-3 times using different versions. We want to provide supplemental material, but what matters most is actually interacting with God's word.*

**As you read, continue using the chart on page 3 as a place to take notes on some key themes as they appear.**

**Some notes on the overall flow of chapter 2:**

**This chapter begins to fulfill the promise of verse 1:8...**the disciples were told that they would receive power and be His witnesses, beginning in Jerusalem, when the Holy Spirit came to them. Immediately after, Peter stands up (along with the other 11) and preaches the first gospel sermon. It's significant that this man, Peter, who had denied Jesus three times, stood up with courage and preached this sermon. Even after denying

Jesus, he was used to convict people of their sin and to repent and turn to Jesus. The restoration and forgiveness of Jesus is perfect and whole.

**A note on tongues...**It's easy to get distracted with the show of this event. The rushing wind, the fire, the speaking in tongues. And these *are* amazing, but *they* aren't the point. Luke is driving home the missionary foundation of the church. With the power of the Holy Spirit, it's time to be about preaching and teaching the gospel. Events like this happen 3 times in Acts to validate a new group of people (here the disciples are proved to be God-ordained witnesses. In Acts 10, Cornelius Gentile conversion shows the inclusion of gentiles to the family. In Acts 19, Christian baptism was proved to supersede John the Baptist's immersion). Tongues in these passages are *human languages*. People gathered from all over, speaking many different languages, all heard the gospel in *their own tongue*. This was a kind of undoing of the tower of babel. There, in Genesis 11, we were separated, but here in Acts 2, we are being brought back together. The point is that the Spirit empowers us to complete the mission to carry the gospel in Jerusalem and then to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

**People responded to the message...**Peter didn't shy away from preaching a message that convicted people of their sin and their role in the crucifixion of Jesus. They were cut to the heart and ready to respond *because* of that conviction. We have to know what it is we are saved *from* to really know and appreciate what we are saved *to*. Peter gave them this response: *repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit*. Peter is not adding to the gospel a "work" in baptism. Our sins are forgiven because of what Jesus *did*. Not because of what we *do*. Nonetheless, the text *does* connect repentance and baptism to our forgiveness. These are a part of our faith response to His work. Repentance is a change of allegiance, a turning around and walking back *to* God. It's being broken by our sin and making a change. Through baptism we put on Christ (Gal. 3:27), imitate his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12), make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). Baptism is also connected to salvation in Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:21. Peter calls for two actions and two promised effects: Respond with faith by repenting and being baptized and receive forgiveness and the gift of the promise Spirit. Part of the gospel we preach must include the opportunity to respond in this way.

**Some additional questions to reflect on leading-up to next week's D-Group:**

- *In John 16:7, Jesus said: "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you..."*. Do you believe Jesus when he says this? Why or why not?
- How does the Holy Spirit empower you to communicate the gospel to all people?
- How are you still calling people to remember their backstory so they are convicted to, as Peter says in Acts 2, "Repent and save themselves from this crooked generation"?
- What does Jesus emphasize about Jesus in his sermon?
- Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life or community today?
- How can the church reflect the Spirit's unifying work across languages, cultures, or backgrounds?
- What does Peter's boldness teach us about sharing our faith, especially after past failures?
- What does repentance look like in daily life, beyond a one-time response?

**A Challenge for this Week (we'll identify a few to choose from along the way):** *Who do you need to share the gospel with? Trust the Spirit to empower you and find a way to start that conversation.*

**Key Themes (we're tracing these through Acts, reflecting on how they appear in each section along the way - not an exhaustive list):**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>How it Appears in This Section + Reflections</b>
<b>Jesus' Role at the Center of the Church/the Story</b>	
<b>The Holy Spirit's Role (His Power, Guidance, etc.)</b>	
<b>The Good News (what the Church bore "witness" to) of Jesus' death/resurrection</b>	
<b>The Church's External Mission in the World</b>	
<b>Conversions - People Coming to Faith/Salvation</b>	
<b>Kingdom Expansion across Various Boundaries (e.g. geographical, racial, etc.)</b>	
<b>Courage/Boldness from Jesus' People</b>	
<b>The Church's Internal Community Life Together</b>	
<b>God's Word, Prayer and Other Such "Practices"</b>	
<b>Antagonism from Outsiders (Persecution/Opposition)</b>	

*These all won't necessarily appear in each and every section of Acts, but they are themes that appear regularly in the story.*