

**The Book of Acts
Week 3**

Study Guide and Discussion Questions

The Lord's First Witness

Read Acts 2:22-37

Here we find the very first evangelistic message preached after Jesus ascends. What can we gain (just as we are also called to be witnesses to our world) Peter's example?

Peter – through the Holy Spirit –

1. Introduces the topic of Jesus
2. Reminds them of his ministry,
3. Speaks of his divine nature,
4. Declares Jesus as the Messiah
5. And is ready with a call to action.

1. Verses 22-23 Peter addresses the “men of Israel.” Do you remember what Jesus told them about whom to preach to first? Where were the followers to take the message?

2. In verse 22, Peter declares that Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God. How do we know this?

3. We will read more of this later in Acts. The Lord often uses the demonstration of the Spirit through signs, wonders and miracles to accompany the Gospel message. What if there are signs and wonders and miracles and no Gospel preaching? Can we trust that this is also from one approved of God? Let's look at Revelation 13:13-14. Who else will do great signs and wonders and miracles?

4. What is distinguishes Jesus as “one approved by God”?

5. How do we know if a person performing signs, wonders and miracles is “approved of God”?

6. Verse 23, Peter declares that Jesus was taken and crucified by “wicked hands” with the foreknowledge of God. In this one sentence Peter affirms that the crucifixion was God’s design, not men’s. While wicked hands carried out the assignment, make no mistake this was pre-ordained. How do we know this? Think back to other scripture verses. Any come to mind? Let’s list a few:

7. Verses 24-36 Peter reminds his listeners of the words of David. Something the Jews of his days would have been familiar with. He does this with the assistance of the Holy Spirit who, faithful to the words Jesus spoke, is able to bring all things to remembrance for those of use who step out to preach the good news. This reference to scripture helps Peter set up the fact that Jesus is indeed risen from the dead – as David said he would.

When we address unbelievers with the things of God it is important to think about their frame of reference. Peter used the words of David. What might we use?

8. Verse 36. Peter sums it all up here. Jesus is both Lord and Christ. The word Christ is a Greek translation of the Hebrew messiah, meaning “the anointed one.” The Jews

would have known precisely what this meant. They crucified their long awaited Messiah. At this point the crowd could have turned on Peter – remember they just crucified Jesus. But they did not. What do they do instead?

9. Remember the Holy Spirit was to bring conviction too. And here we see the first time that happens. The men are convicted of their sins – not condemned. What is the difference?

Conviction is:

Condemnation is:

10. At the realization of their sin, the men of Israel ask: What must we do? And Peter is ready with the answer.

When the Holy Spirit uses you to bring the light of the Gospel into someone's life, and that person conscience is pricked and they see the need for Jesus to save them, what will you tell them when they ask: What must I do?

1. Recognize who Jesus is – the son of the Most High God, the messiah.
2. Recognize what Jesus has done for them – that he died on the cross to take away sins. Rose up again to reconcile an unholy population to a holy God.
3. Repent of their sins – which is refusing to do it God's way. All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God. Repent means to turn away from. So it is more than sorrow, it is changing the behavior. This was and is often accompanied by water baptism as an outward demonstration of a new life in Christ.
4. Ask Jesus to forgive them of their sins.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill them so they can have the power to overcome the ways of the evil one and be his witnesses in the world. This is the baptism of fire that John the Baptist spoke of: Matthew 3:11

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. . .”