

# ***International Bible Lessons Commentary***

## ***Acts 2:21-39***

***International Bible Lessons***  
**Sunday, March 16, 2014**

**L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.**

The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 16, 2014**, is from **Acts 2:21-39**. Please Note: Some churches will only study **Acts 2: 22-36**. This commentary is the second part of a two part Bible Lesson that includes Psalm 104:1-7. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

### ***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

#### **Acts 2:21-39**

**(Acts 2:21)** “Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Immediately after the Holy Spirit, the Power from on High, descended on Jesus’ disciples and filled the entire house, they began speaking in various languages and a large crowd gathered who heard them preach the good news about Jesus in their own language. Hearing the gospel in these circumstances led some to be amazed while others mocked the disciples. In Acts 2:14, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit’s courage and power, began to preach a sermon to explain what had happened on that Day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit enabled him. He began to explain the reason why and how everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved. His sermon continues in the verses below.

**(Acts 2:22)** “You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—

Having come from various parts of the known world to Jerusalem, the Israelites spoke different languages, and on the Day of Pentecost they heard Jesus’ disciples speaking in their native languages. They either also knew Aramaic or Hebrew so they could understand Peter’s explanation and sermon, or the Holy Spirit enabled them to hear Peter’s sermon in their native language. The first miracle was one of many Galileans

speaking in different languages. The second miracle could have been a miracle of one Galilean speaking, but each one hearing his sermon in their different languages. Peter preached that God had endorsed Jesus, who had come from Nazareth (because Jesus may have been a common name). God had also endorsed Jesus' teaching by working miracles through Him. Peter reminded them that they knew of Jesus' power, wonders, and miraculous signs that proved He was the Messiah. They knew of Jesus' words and works because they had either seen Him or they had heard reports about Him from those they knew.

**(Acts 2:23) this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.**

When these Israelites, many of them represented by their religious leaders whose actions they approved, arrested, tried, and crucified Jesus, Jesus did not fight but went willingly because He knew He was following the definite plan of God that He foreknew before He came into the world. Still, the Israelites bore individual responsibility for their actions; they had made the individual choice to kill Jesus by using the Roman (those outside the Law of God) legal system to their advantage to murder Jesus. Peter needed to convince them of their guilt so he could then encourage them to repent of their sins and place their faith in Jesus Christ, who came to save His people from their sins.

**(Acts 2:24) But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.**

In spite of their having Jesus crucified, God worked another miracle through Him when He raised Him from the dead. Death has power, but it has no power over God. Jesus submitted to death on the cross to free believers from the fear of death and grant them eternal life. Death could not hold Jesus Christ in its grip, and it cannot hold in its grip those who trust in Him.

**(Acts 2:25) For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;**

At this point in Peter's message, the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to turn to the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, for further evidence regarding Jesus (see Psalms 16:8-11). King David wrote about Jesus before He was born and declared that Jesus was more than a mere man, for David always saw the Lord (Jesus) before him and the Lord (Jesus) gave him the power he needed ("God's power" is sometimes the meaning of "he is at my right hand") so he would not be shaken by his enemies or by the fear of death. Before Jesus was born, King David called Jesus his Lord. Peter also demonstrated the power of Jesus at his right hand when he preached before a large crowd, some of whom were hostile to Jesus and him.

**(Acts 2:26) therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope.**

Because King David had seen Jesus as his Lord, he was glad in his heart to know the Messiah who would come someday in his kingly line. Jesus had been the inspiration of and Jesus had inspired many of David's psalms, which the apostles would later use as evidence regarding the nature and purpose of Jesus the Messiah when He came. David lived by faith in Jesus and with the hope that because of Jesus he would live again after he died. He trusted that he would live again in human flesh. Jesus rose from the dead in a human body, and Jesus will fulfill David's hope (and the hope of all who trust in Him) of living again in the flesh after He comes again.

**(Acts 2:27) For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.**

The Spirit of Jesus inspired David to write that even though he had sinned and deserved to be abandoned in hell that Jesus would not abandon him but forgive him, grant him eternal life, and raise his body from the grave someday. In addition, David foretold that Jesus, the Holy One (who never sinned), would die but His body would not decay in the grave. Though dead and buried, Jesus' body did not in any way decay. He was not embalmed, and the women only brought spices to the tomb on Easter Sunday because they expected to find His body there to anoint. The fact that His body did not decay is an additional miracle and fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy. If authentic, the image of Jesus on the Shroud of Turin can only be explained because no physical decay of His body damaged the imprint of His body made on the cloth when He rose from the dead.

**(Acts 2:28) You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'**

Jesus revealed the ways of life to King David; the ways God expects believers to live. As the Way of Life, Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead and brought gladness to his entire family. Though Lazarus would die again, he would once again find gladness in Jesus' presence in heaven. Because of his faith, Jesus gave eternal life to David. David knew that following his death he would be filled with gladness on the presence of Jesus. Through David's psalm, Jesus wanted to encourage all who trust in Him to expect Him to fill them with gladness in His presence when they die; therefore, the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to share this promise with the Israelites on the Day of Pentecost.

**(Acts 2:29) "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.**

Peter went on to explain that David's hope regarded life after death and the resurrection of the body. Even though David died, was buried, and his tomb was still with them, David's hope was not wrong and David would not be disappointed because David's hope regarded the future that Jesus' resurrection had just assured. David was right to believe and declare that his soul would not be abandoned to Hades even though his body was still in the tomb. Because he believed in Jesus, someday his body would be raised from the dead too.

**(Acts 2:30) Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.**

Some of King David's psalms included prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah; therefore, David was a prophet whose words were inspired by the Holy Spirit when he wrote his psalms. Even though he did not always understand the complete application or full meaning of what he sang or wrote, he knew that God would put one of his descendants on his throne (unlike King Saul, whose descendant was not put on his throne because of King Saul's rebellion against God). King Solomon followed King David on his throne, but God gave some facts to David about the Messiah who would sit on his and Solomon's throne someday. Peter wanted to emphasize that King David believed God and knew that one of His descendants would be the promised Messiah (though he may not have known that the Messiah would be named "Jesus").

**(Acts 2:31) Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.'**

Having quoted some important verses from David's psalms in context, Peter used one of the most important verses to conclude that David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah because David was buried in his tomb and had not been physically raised from the dead yet. Just as David's soul was not abandoned to Hades, so Jesus' soul was not abandoned either. Even though the Israelites and the Romans had Jesus crucified as a criminal, God the Father had not abandoned Jesus in Hades but had also raised Him from the dead in a glorified human body. The Bible was the authoritative Word of God and what Jesus said and did was consistent with and in fulfillment of the Bible (the Old Testament). The Bible served as a testimony about Jesus the Messiah as well as the miracles that God worked through Jesus; therefore, the people had both the Bible and Jesus' miracles as testimonies about His resurrection from the dead.

**(Acts 2:32) This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.**

All of Jesus' disciples who had also received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost were eyewitnesses that Jesus had risen from the dead in fulfillment of David's prophecy that the Messiah would die, His soul would not be abandoned to Hades, and He would rise from the dead in a human body that did not decay. That these formerly fearful disciples could speak so boldly as eyewitnesses was a miracle of astounding proportions.

**(Acts 2:33) 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 both see and hear.**

Furthermore, in fulfillment of the Old Testament, Jesus ascended into heaven where He reigns as Messiah at the right hand of God. Jesus reigns on His throne with the power of Almighty God. In fulfillment of God's promise, Jesus received the Holy Spirit in a way that permitted (and still permits) Him to pour out the Holy Spirit upon His followers. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God the Father and the Son to all those who trust in Jesus

as their Lord and Savior. Therefore, the Israelites staying in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost were eyewitnesses to another miracle — the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Messiah’s followers and the results of the gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives and speaking about Jesus.

**(Acts 2:34) For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand,**

To confirm what he had just said, Peter once again pointed his listeners back to the Scriptures as the ultimate authority for what he preached. God did not want and God does not want the disciples of Jesus to believe based on their experiences alone, for the devil can counterfeit spiritual experiences to mislead people; therefore, the Holy Spirit spoke through Peter and referred the Israelites to their own Scriptures and what David has prophesied. Their most highly honored king, King David, saw into the future and witnessed God the Father say to David’s lord (Jesus), “Sit at my right hand” (Psalms 110:1).

**(Acts 2:35) until I make your enemies your footstool.’”**

As the Book of Revelation by the Apostle John would later reveal, through Jesus the Messiah God will bring all of His enemies to account for their continued rebellion and sin. Though it may seem difficult to us, God the Father will do this as easily as putting your feet upon a footstool to relax and rest. God’s just judgment will come upon Jesus’ enemies in the future, just as God promised through David. God will bring lasting peace to the universe someday, but some will always refuse to receive the peace and salvation of God.

**(Acts 2:36) Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”**

Peter used the Bible (the Israelites “Old Testament”) that the people revered as the Word of God and the words of David, whom the people honored as their greatest king, to help the Israelites understand what they had both seen and heard about the miraculous ministry of Jesus the Messiah. He then concluded his argument by declaring that God (the Father) had made Jesus both Lord and Messiah (even before He was born, because David had seen Him), which was good news. For them, the fact that they had crucified their Lord and Messiah was bad news, and God would hold them responsible for their rebellion against their divine King.

**(Acts 2:37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”**

The Holy Spirit inspired Peter to courageously preach a sermon from the Scriptures and his experiences which was probably beyond his own complete understanding or logical deductions. The Holy Spirit used the truth about God and Jesus to reach the conscience of Peter’s listeners and convict them of a horrible sin: the murder of God’s Messiah. They knew and admitted their guilt before God, Peter, and the other apostles, and they

wanted to know what they could do to escape the judgment and punishment of God that they truly deserved.

**(Acts 2:38) Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

Peter’s sermon had led them to trust (or have faith) that Jesus was the Messiah; therefore, they wanted to know what response they should make. In reply, Peter gave them more good news: they could escape God’s just judgment because of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They needed to repent for having killed Jesus (which included turning from the practice any other sins). Both John the Baptist and Jesus had preached a message of repentance and John and Jesus’ disciples baptized believers. They should be baptized and rise to a new way of life, as one rises from the dead. They should be baptized in the name of their Lord and Messiah, Jesus; truly making Jesus the Messiah their Lord to obey. Then, having been saved by faith in Jesus and having shown their faith through their baptism, they would be cleansed from sin, forgiven for their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit as a free gift from God (not Someone they have earned and deserve because of their faith, repentance, and baptism). Later, they would receive more detailed teaching about these and other truths, for after they believed and were baptized they eagerly listened to the apostles’ teaching (see Acts 2:41-42).

**(Acts 2:39) For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”**

Peter proclaimed that the promise of salvation through Jesus was not just for them that day, but for their children and all who were far away in the homes they had left when they came to Jerusalem. Today, the promise of salvation includes everyone around the world, for people today are far away in time and space. Wherever believers preach or teach the good news of salvation the Lord our God is calling people to Jesus and to saving faith in Him as Lord and Messiah.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

Since this is the second of a two part lesson series, only 3 of the 5 Study Questions will be asked below.

1. Peter said Jesus was “a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs.” Can you give some examples of each of these? Some of his miracles may be an example of all three.
2. What did King David prophecy about death?
3. What types of evidence did Peter give that Jesus was the Messiah and God raised Him from the dead?

**Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.**  
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