

# The Context Bible

## Life Group Lesson 19

May 5-11, 2014

John 20:30-21:19; Acts 1:1-2:41

### Introduction to the Context Bible

Have you ever wished the Bible was easier to read through like an ordinary book – cover to cover? Because the Bible is a collection of 66 books, it makes reading like an ordinary book quite difficult. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that the later writers of the New Testament, were often quoting or referencing passages in the Old Testament. In fact, much of the New Testament makes better sense only if one also considers the Old Testament passages that place the text into its scriptural context.

You are reading a running commentary to The Context Bible. This arrangement of Scripture seeks to overcome some of these difficulties. Using a core reading of John’s gospel, the book of Acts, and the Revelation of John, the Context Bible arranges all the rest of Scripture into a contextual framework that supports the core reading. It is broken out into daily readings so that this program allows one to read the entire Bible in a year, but in a contextual format.

Here is the running commentary for week nineteen, along with the readings for week twenty appended. Join in. It’s never too late to read the Bible in context!

### Week Nineteen Readings

<p><b>5/5 Jesus - Miracle Worker Jn 20:30-20:31</b></p> <p>Matt 9:1-9:8 Matt 9:18-9:26 Num 15:37-15:41 Lev 15 Matt 9:27-9:34 Ex 22:18 Matt 12:22-12:45 2 Chron 8-9 Matt 15:21-15:39 Matt 16:5-16:12 Matt 17:14-17:21 Mrk 9:14-9:29 Matt 17:24-17:27 Matt 20:29-20:34</p>	<p><b>5/6 Jesus - Miracle Worker (Cont'd) Jn 20:30-20:31</b></p> <p>Mrk 1:21-1:45 Lev 14:1-14:32 Mrk 2:1-2:12 Isa 43 Luk 5:17-5:26 Luk 17:11-17:19</p>	<p><b>5/7 Jesus - Miracle Worker (Cont'd) Jn 20:30-20:31</b></p> <p>Mrk 5 Mrk 3:20-3:30 Mrk 7:24-7:37 Mrk 8:1-8:26 Mrk 10:46-10:52 Luk 8:22-8:56 Luk 14:1-14:6 Luk 18:35-18:43</p> <p><b>5/8 Peter Reinstated Jn 21:1-21:19</b></p> <p>Pslm 130 Pslm 131 Pslm 13 Pslm 85</p>	<p><b>Conclusion Jn 21:20-21:25</b></p> <p><b>5/9 The Promise of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' Ascension Acts 1:1-11</b></p> <p>Pslm 132 Isa 19</p> <p><b>Matthias Replaces Judas Acts 1:12-1:26</b></p> <p>Mrk 14:1-14:11 Ezek 8 Mrk 14:12-14:72 Prov 18:18</p>	<p><b>5/10 The Holy Spirit Comes Acts 2:1-2:13</b></p> <p>Luk 18:31-18:34 Lev 23:15-23:22</p> <p><b>Peter's Sermon at Pentecost Acts 2:14-2:41</b></p> <p>Joel 2:12-2:32 Mrk 12:35-12:37 1 Chron 11-12, 17 Zech 1:1-1:6</p> <p><b>5/11 Off</b></p>
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## JESUS – MIRACLE WORKER (John 20:30-20:31)

John wrote of seven miracles of Jesus, mirroring the seven days of creation. After recording those miracles, John added that Jesus did many more, but his seven were chosen for the specific purpose of confirming belief in Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah (“Christ”), and that by believing, have life in his name. For the context to this passage, we have miracles of Jesus from the other gospels, along with several Old Testament readings called into the context of those miracles.

**READING PURPOSE:** The goal for these reading days is to see Jesus as the miracle worker. These readings should impress the reader with the unique authority of Jesus, compared to all others. This was a struggle for those present for the miracles. Beyond that, these miracles also demonstrate Jesus’ motivations for the deeds. Sometimes the deeds arise from a demonstration of authority over disease as well as unseen powers. Other times the motivation is simply Jesus’ love and pity on those hurting and underprivileged. Jesus reaches out to Jews and Gentiles with his serving power, demonstrating a wide love and compassion for all. The reader’s focus should also note the reactions of the people involved. As noted, some were impressed with Jesus and saw divinity. Others came up with some most illogical reasons why Jesus was anything but divine. Some had gratitude for healings, others took the healings and offered not even a “thank you.”

Matthew 9:1-9:8; 9:18-9:26; Numbers 15:37-15:41; and Leviticus 15

In Matthew 9:1-9:8, Jesus heals a paralytic proclaiming his sins forgiven. This jolts some who are enthralled by a supernatural healing, but the similar supernatural ability to forgive sins is seen as offensive.

In Matthew 9:18-9:26, Jesus is sought after to raise a ruler’s daughter from the dead. On the way, a woman who has had a hemorrhaging problem twelve years touched the fringe of Jesus’ garment. The garment fringe was a clothing requirement set forth in Numbers 15:37-15:41. These tassels were to serve as reminders to follow God’s laws rather than one’s personal heart or eyes (i.e., wishes or desires). The touch of the woman was an unclean touch. A woman with a discharge of blood was considered unclean for a period of time set out in Leviticus 15, especially verses 25 and following. Jesus turned and declared her healed, but not by some “magic” touch. It was her faith that made her well. From there, Jesus went on and raised the ruler’s daughter from the dead.

There is an ironic touch here. Jesus was not made unclean by touching the bleeding woman, which would ordinarily be the case. Instead, the cleanness of Jesus was contagious and the touch healed the bleeding woman and made her clean!

#### Matthew 9:27-9:34 and Exodus 22:18

In Matthew 9:27-9:31, Matthew wrote up the healing of two blind men who first cried out for mercy as Jesus walked by. They then followed Jesus as he entered a house. Jesus quizzed them on their faith, and then gave them their vision. This was not for show, nor was it for broadcasting. It was an act of compassion from the savior to the two blind men. Jesus urged them not to tell of it, although they could not contain themselves.

In Matthew 9:32-9:34, Jesus healed a man who was mute. The man's inability to speak was brought on by a demon Jesus cast out. The crowds were delighted and stunned, but a group of Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by associating with the prince of demons. This was no idle charge. It amounted to an accusation of sorcery by Jesus, something meriting the death penalty as noted in Exodus 22:18.

#### Matthew 12:22-12:45 and 2 Chronicles 8-9

People were at a loss to explain the supernatural miracles of Jesus. There were really limited choices. Either the miracles were not real, and were illusions, or the miracles were truly supernatural. In that event, Jesus was either acting by the power of God or the power of Satan. Nobody could challenge the reality of the miracles. Jesus was doing things that just can't happen by the laws of physics and medicine. The masses tended to think Jesus might have been the Messiah. Groups of Pharisees often argued instead that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of the prince of demons, here termed "Beelzebul."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus pointed out the obvious, that no one, even a demon, wins by destroying his or her own works. For Jesus to master the demons, Jesus needed something stronger than the demons. Jesus then added the caution against blaspheming the Holy Spirit. If Jesus was acting by the Holy Spirit (which he was), then the people needed to listen to the Spirit, not reject him. Life was not just a cavalier life where you went about your day with no real concerns for the bigger picture. People would be known by the way they acted (the fruit they bore), and there would be a time of judgment.

Even the Ninevites repented upon Jonah's preaching, and someone greater than Jonah was there in Jesus. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days and night. Jesus would

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<sup>1</sup> Beelzebul or Beelzebub was originally a Philistine deity (see 2 Kings 1:2). The name literally means "Lord of the flies." By the New Testament times, it was used as a name for the prince of demons. (This is the basis of William Golding's chosen title for his novel, *Lord of the Flies*.)

be in the ground dead for the same time. Similarly, the people should be thinking about the queen of Sheba who came to visit Solomon. Jesus was greater than Solomon, and the people should be clamoring to hear him.

2 Chronicles 8 and 9 contain the story of the queen of Sheba. In chapter 8, we read of Solomon's amazing accomplishments, building the temple, the palace, and important cities. In chapter 9, the queen of Sheba makes the long trek to Jerusalem to test Solomon with "hard questions." She brought a large group of people as well as many royal gifts. Solomon was able to discuss everything so well that the queen was breathless. She worshipped YHWH as God and gave him praise for so giftng Solomon. At the end of the passage, Solomon dies, just as every other person in history. Yet unlike Solomon, Jesus did not stay in the grave. Rather the third day, he rose again. Someone greater than Solomon was indeed with the people in Jesus!

The Matthew reading ends with Jesus stressing the importance of not simply cleaning out evil from one's life, but replacing it with good. Otherwise, the evil will return, growing even stronger.

Matthew 15:21-15:39; 16:5-16:12; 17:14-17:21 and Mark 9:14-9:29

In Matthew 15:21-15:39, we read of Jesus healing the daughter of a Canaanite woman (a non-Jew). The story is touching. The disciples tried to send the woman away. Jesus even pointed out that he was sent to the Jews. But the woman was desperate. She persisted so long that Jesus healed her daughter, commenting on the beauty of her faith. Matthew added that Jesus healed many more than he could record.

In Matthew 16:5-16:12, Matthew told of the failure of the Pharisees to respect and appreciate Jesus' miracles, equating it to leaven that spreads in bread. The disciples at first did not understand what Jesus meant, but as Jesus continued to explain, they figured out Jesus was talking of the teaching of the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Matthew 17:14-17:21 has the story of Jesus healing an epileptic boy with a demon. This was a situation in which the disciples had tried to invoke God's healing, but they were unsuccessful. Jesus pointed out the disciples' lack of faith in what they were about. Mark told the story with greater detail, and thinking of Mark as Peter's gospel, that extra narrative takes on extra import. Peter may well have been a major part of this failed healing attempt by the apostles.

Matthew 17:24-17:27 and 20:29-20:34

These final two miracles we draw from Matthew are found in 17:24-17:27 where Peter pays his taxes from a tax coin found in the mouth of a fish and 20:29-20:34 Where Jesus heals two blind men out of pity.

### Mark 1:21-1:45 and Leviticus 14:1-14:32

Mark's gospel early on begins recounting the miracles of Jesus. In Mark 1:21-1:28 we read of Jesus healing a man with an unclean spirit. The spirit certainly knew who Jesus was, to the amazement of all watchers. In verses 29-45 Mark adds Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law of her fever as well as many others. The chapter closes with Jesus healing a leper instructing the leper to go show himself to the priest.

Leviticus 14 has the instructions for how a healed leper was to present himself to the priest. Leprosy in the Bible was not simply the leprosy we know today by that medical diagnosis. Leprosy was the term for a number of skin diseases.<sup>2</sup>

### Mark 2:1-2:12; 5:17-5:26 and Isaiah 43

In this passage of Mark and Luke, Jesus was preaching in a house so crowded, that a group of friends carrying a paralytic had to lower him through the roof to get before Jesus. Jesus proclaimed the man's sins forgiven (this miracle was in the prior days reading as recounted by Matthew), to the chagrin and offense of some scribes present. Jesus addressed the unspoken accusations of blasphemy from those scribes announcing it just as simple to say "your sins are forgiven" as to say, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." Jesus' point was that his authority was not simply over physical disease, but over the true cause of all fruits from the fall – sin.

The Isaiah 43 chapter spoke into Israel with the voice of YHWH as Israel's only Savior. God promised not only to save the people from the scattered lands, but he promised to heal them. The chapter has powerful phrases of God as:

- the "Holy One of Israel" (Is. 43:3 and 14);
- the one who "created for my glory" (Is. 43:7);
- "your Redeemer" (Is. 43:14);
- "the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King" (Is. 43:14);
- "the LORD, who makes a way in the sea" (Is. 43:16);
- one who is "doing a new thing" that people will note readily perceive (Is. 43:19);

and most importantly, the one who

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<sup>2</sup> "λεπρός," Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature (U. of Chi. 1979), 2d Ed.

- “blots out your transgressions for my own sake” and “will not remember your sins” (IS. 43:25).

This is the authority Jesus claimed. It is the authority Jesus had!

Luke 17:11-17:19

In this passage, Jesus heals ten lepers. Of the ten, only one expressed thanks to Jesus, praising God – and this one was one of the hated “Samaritans”!

Mark 5; 3:20-3:30; 7:24-7:37; 8:1-8:26; 10:46-10:52

In this stretch of Mark we read of the miracles that Peter routinely inserted into his gospel preaching.<sup>3</sup>

Mark 5:1-5:20 relates the story of Jesus casting the demons out of the “man of the tombs.” This was a man that was so disturbed he could not live around others, could not be held by chains, and was constantly self-mutilating. Jesus healed the man, casting the demons into pigs that rushed over a cliff and drowned in the sea. The townsfolk came out and saw the insane man in his right mind, sitting peacefully with Jesus. The people’s reaction was also one of fear, yet instead of that fear driving them to Jesus, it had the opposite effect. The people begged Jesus to leave them! Regardless of his abilities to heal, to teach, to forgive, these people will go down in history as ones who asked Jesus to leave them! They were too afraid to have him around!

After Jesus left the region of the man of the tombs, he was approached by a ruler of the synagogue named Jairus. Jairus had a daughter who was sick to the point of death. He

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<sup>3</sup> We remind the reader that this is based on the early church’s near unanimous statements of Mark having recorded Peter’s gospel. The fuss of the early church was over whether Mark wrote it with Peter’s permission, acquiescence, at Peter’s request, or even after Peter’s death. Papias (c.60-130) wrote,

Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatever he remembered. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.14-17).

Clement of Alexandria (c.150-215) also confirmed Mark as recording Peter’s proclaimed gospel message, but not at Peter’s request, just with Peter’s awareness:

The Gospel according to Mark had this occasion. As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. When Peter learned of this, he neither directly forbade nor encouraged it. (*Ibid.* 6.14.5-7).

Irenaeus wrote that Mark recorded Peter’s gospel after the death of Peter, while Origen (c.185-c.254) thought that Peter had instructed Mark to write the gospel. (*Ibid.* 5.8; 6.25).

asked Jesus to come and heal her, and Jesus agreed. On the way, Jesus stopped to converse with a woman who had a bleeding disorder healed simply by touching Jesus' clothes. Putting on hold his mission to heal the daughter of Jairus, Jesus calls this woman his own daughter and declared,

Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease (Mrk 5:34).

During this delay, word came to Jairus that his daughter had died. He was told to trouble Jesus no more. Jesus overheard this news and told Jairus,

Do not fear, only believe.

This was the choice Jesus saw: Jairus could react in fear, thinking nothing could be done and letting Jesus go away (a la man of the tombs) or Jairus could trust Jesus and wait for his actions. Jairus chose faith, and it was shortly after that that Jesus raised his daughter from the dead.

Mark 3:20-3:30 relates impressions and reactions of different people to the miracles of Jesus. Jesus' family heard and thought Jesus was out of his mind. (It is appropriate to note that *after the* resurrection of Jesus, his family all became believers and his brothers martyrs for their faith.) Certain prominent scribes were ascribing Jesus' miracles to a demonic activity.

Mark 7:24-7:37 has Jesus healing the daughter of a foreign woman from Syria/Phoenicia. This is followed by Jesus healing a man who was both deaf and hindered in speech. Jesus healed the man, restoring his hearing and allowing him to speak "plainly." At this the people "were astonished beyond measure," noting Jesus did "all things well."

Mark 8:1-8:26 recounts multiple miracles. Jesus feeds four thousand with seven loaves, and in stark contrast to the miracle, Mark noted that Pharisees *then* came to Jesus demanding a sign! It wasn't enough that Jesus fed five thousand with five loaves and four thousand with seven. For this reason, Jesus pointed out to his disciples the distrust of the Pharisees was like leaven that on its own seems to penetrate all around it. The final miracle in this section has Jesus healing a blind man. The miracle is interesting because the man is not fully healed by Jesus' first touch. Jesus touches the man a second time before the healing is complete. Many people read different interpretations into these events, some even building bold theologies onto it. We note it simply as Mark presents it. There are times where our shortcomings and problems will need repeated contact with Jesus for healing. I suspect most people have need for a few hundred touches on some particular problem areas. The story teaches that Jesus will stick around until the job is done. Paul said it this way,

And I am sure of this, that he who began his good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6).

Mark 10:46-10:52 is a great account of Jesus healing a blind man who wouldn't let anything get between him and Jesus. The man, Bartimaeus, was begging on the side of the road when he heard Jesus was coming by. He shouted out for Jesus' mercy, to the chagrin of those around him. People were telling him to shut up, but he cried out even more. He knew his one chance at healing was there and he wanted it desperately. Mark tells the story and adds the emphatic pause: "Jesus stopped." Of course what followed was the miraculous touch of the healing compassionate Messiah. Jesus, the one who stops for the man everyone wanted to shut up.

Luke 8:22-8:56; 14:1-14:6; 18:35-18:43

The miracle section concludes with these passages from Luke. In Luke 8:22-8:56 we read of Jesus calming a storm, to the amazement of those with him, followed by the healing of the Gerasenes' demoniac and Jairus' daughter. Luke contrasts Jesus having the healed Gerasene going to "declare how much God has done for you" while Jairus and his wife were told to "tell no one what happened." Jesus healed to bring God glory, but he was not a show-and-tell Jesus.

May 8

#### PETER REINSTATED (John 21:1-21:19)

Peter had sinned. Not some personal private sin, but a public one that struck directly against the love and faith he had for Jesus. His sin caused great personal bitterness and tears. Peter was devastated, and really had no clue he would ever get a chance to make things right. Once Jesus was resurrected, Peter realized that the sin was not "over." Peter would again be in the presence of Jesus and Peter's denial must have seemed like an elephant in the room. How could Jesus ever feel the same about Peter after what Peter had done?

Of course we read the story knowing the end. We know of Jesus as the divine and forgiving Son of God, and so are not so easily placing ourselves in Peter's sandals! Yet if we do, we are touched by the story John gives at the end of his gospel. Jesus did not leave Peter wondering if things would ever be right again. Jesus came to Peter one-on-one and cleared the air. Jesus did it with love and compassion, charging Peter with purpose in love.

This is how John chose to close his gospel – a reminder of man's unfaithfulness and the compassion of our forgiving Jesus. This story itself is a synopsis of the entire gospel told in real time and illustrated in real life.

**READING PURPOSE:** The context readings are from the Psalms. They are psalms that would have brought a measure of relief to Peter and are given to provide that



measure of relief to any readers who are burdened by their sins and disappointments to the loving God. They are written to offer the assurance of God's ready forgiveness and desire to bring healing not simply to bodies, but to hearts.

### Psalm 130

I hope Peter was praying this psalm during the days between his denial of Jesus and his restoration. This Psalm cries out that if God remembers sin, we are all in trouble. The hope for us all is that God comes to redeem his people from all their iniquities, and for that his people wait in hope and confidence.

### Psalm 131

This is another psalm that would have meant a lot to Peter if he spent time with it during that critical period of depression. The psalmist reflects on his humble state, quietly hoping in the lord as a child who rests its mother.

### Psalm 13

This psalm spends an extra measure of time on the seeming delay in God salving the broken life and heart. This is not because God is anything less than faithful. It is a recognition that God has his purposes and timing, and our goal is to wait. Jesus upon his resurrection did not go to Peter first to clear the air and set Peter's heart right. He did it in God's timing, not Peter's!

### Psalm 85

This psalm is for repeat offenders! The psalmist knows that God had already forgiven his people when they were sinning again and again calling forth his judgment. The psalmist contemplated how long the judgment would last, seeking God's steadfast love and continual redemption. The psalmist knew the loving and saving God would again restore his people in love and righteousness.

## THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 1:1-1:11)

May 9

Luke recorded that over forty days the resurrected Jesus appeared and spoke to his apostles about the kingdom of God. Before Jesus' ascension, he instructed his apostles to await the coming Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. The apostles asked Jesus if he was about to restore the kingdom *to* Israel, and Jesus responded that the kingdom was going to reach beyond Israel, it was going to the ends of the earth.

**READING PURPOSE:** Two selections of Old Testament prophetic promise are set out in context for this section to underscore God's detailed promises that do not fail, even as generations come and go and centuries pass. God's plans are never thwarted.

## Psalm 132

Jerusalem was where the apostles were instructed to wait. Jerusalem was God's chosen city for blessing with abundance (Pslm 132:13, 17, 18). The presence of God was coming to Jerusalem in a special way that would clothe the chosen with salvation bringing shouts of joy (Pslm 132:9, 16). The Psalm is written with an eye toward God's promise of blessing through the seed of David in a way that would have an eternal dimension (Pslm 132:11, 12).

## Isaiah 19

Isaiah 19 is an oracle concerning Egypt, written at a time when Egypt and Judah were under immediate threat of world superpower Assyria. Isaiah explained that Egypt's wisdom and might would not save it, but a day was coming when little Judah would be the source of awe and fear for Egypt and Assyria alike.

The Lord would be sending forth a savior and defender from Judah bringing a common worship of the Lord from Egypt (south) and Assyria (north). Israel will be the source of blessing for the whole earth.

Some interpreters place this promise as coming to fruition in a millennial kingdom at the end of the age.<sup>4</sup> Most readily note it was not fulfilled at any time in Old Testament history.<sup>5</sup> Historically, however, the prophetic word was readily fulfilled during the early centuries of the church. Beginning with Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought forth the kingdom in the church. From there, the kingdom spread as foretold by Jesus from Jerusalem to the end of the earth. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt worshipped God through Jesus just as readily as Jerusalem and parts north (Antioch, Damascus, etc.). This prophetic word was not empty. The faith spread forth from Jerusalem to circle the world today.

## MATTHIAS REPLACES JUDAS (Acts 1:12-1:26)

Judas was gone. After his tragic betrayal of Jesus, wracked by guilt, Judas fell to his death in a field bought with his 30 pieces of silver. Peter took the initiative in seeing that a twelfth apostle was chosen from among those who had been with Jesus since his ministry began, also personally witnessing the resurrection. Matthias was chosen.

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<sup>4</sup> Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Accordance electronic ed. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), n.p.

<sup>5</sup> Watts, John, *Isaiah 1-33* (Word 1985) at 315.

The contextual readings build off of the betrayal story as told by Mark, writer of Peter's gospel. We also add a proverb that may have served as the apostles' inspiration for casting lots to determine whom they would designate as the replacement for Judas.

**READING PURPOSE:** These readings remind us of how atrociously evil was the betrayal of Jesus. Yet, it is not something that anyone should relegate to only Judas. A betrayal of God and Jesus is something that is not far from even the best of us. It is cleanly seen in the light of day, but in times of darkness, becomes something all can and have done to varying degrees.

### Mark 14:1-14:72 and Ezekiel 8

Peter's gospel tells the story of Judas's betrayal starting with the account of a woman anointing Jesus with an expensive perfume. We know from John that Judas challenged the events, asking why the perfume wasn't sold and given to the poor. John added that his was because Judas was skimming from the moneybag, not because of a genuine caring about the poor (Jn 12:1-12:8). But as Mark reported the story, as Peter told the story, it was not simply Judas who was indignant. It was a number of the disciples both indignant and scolding the woman (Mrk 14:4-14:5). Judas was the one for whom this event seemed to throw a switch. Judas decided to betray Jesus to the authorities.

The text never indicates that Judas knew with certainty that the betrayal was one to death, though he surely knew that the authorities had wanted to end Jesus' activities and curtail his following. The betrayal by Judas was followed by an arrest, the subsequent abuse and pseudo-trial before the council and Peter's denial.

These actions in Jerusalem readily recall the prophetic warnings of Ezekiel 8. Ezekiel was captured in a vision that transported him from his Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem where he saw abomination after abomination being committed in the house of the Lord. Ezekiel was appalled. He was then told that even "greater abominations than these" were forthcoming (Ezek 8:15). These abominations were not simply foreigners abusing the temple. Abominations would issue forth from the house of Judah, from the Jews (Ezek 8:17).

May 10

### THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES (Acts 2:1-2:13) and PETER'S SERMON AT PENTECOST (Acts 2:14-2:41)

As Jesus promised the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. Over the coming chapters of Acts, it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit came and did the very things Jesus had promised as recorded by John in John 14-16.

**READING PURPOSE:** The contextual passages underscore the unique portion of history in which we live post-Pentecost. Prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit selectively

indwelt a few for specific purposes. It is after Pentecost where the Holy Spirit set up residence and began to indwell *all believers*.

#### Luke 18:31-34

Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit would come and in a fresh way, indwell the apostles (Jn 14:15-14:17). In the day when that occurred, Jesus said the apostles would finally understand that Jesus was in the Father, that the apostles were in Jesus, and that Jesus was in the apostles (Jn 14:20). The Holy Spirit would also remind the apostles of what things had happened (Jn 14:26). The Holy Spirit would come with conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:7-16:8), bearing witness to Jesus in conjunction with the apostles (Jn 15:26-15:27). The apostles did not understand what Jesus was saying yet, nor would they *until* the Holy Spirit came (Jn 14:5; 14:8-14:10; 14:22; 16:25-16:33).

We read in Luke 18:31-18:34 that even as Jesus had foretold his death repeatedly to his disciples, they really had no clue what he meant. “They did not grasp what was said” (Luke 18:31-18:34).

#### Leviticus 23:15-23:22

Things changed on Pentecost. Also called the Feast of Weeks, we read of this festival in Leviticus 23:15-23:22. This festival goes by several names biblically. It is called the “Feast of Weeks” because it is computed as seven weeks from a certain prior Sabbath. The Israelites added a day for the day a sheaf was “waved” to the 49 days that constituted the seven weeks, thus making the festival one that was measured out 50 days from the waving of the barley sheaf during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. From this came the Greek name for the festival, “Pentecost.” The Greek word for “fiftieth” is *pentekoste* (πεντηκοστή). Because it celebrated the barley harvest, it was also called the Feast of Harvest.

While the other two major feasts in the Old Testament were specifically identified with a historical event in Israel’s history, that is not done with Pentecost (although Jews in the day of Jesus and since have celebrated it as the day Moses received the Law on Sinai). The association for the church became something altogether different. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, and the harvest of souls began.

#### Joel 2:12-2:32

The events of Pentecost require a close reading. Too many times, we simply think that the Holy Spirit descended and the apostles began speaking in tongues that left many thinking the apostles were drunk. That is not the fair reading. It is not that the apostles spoke in tongues that made people think they were drunk. The tongues were the various languages that the listeners had. It would not seem someone is drunk because he was speaking in Greek, Latin, Aramaic, or Egyptian. What made the crowd say, “They are

filled with new wine” was *what* the apostles said! The apostles were filled with the Spirit and were proclaiming Jesus, the resurrected Lord! The idea of seeing a dead man, eating with him, testifying to watching him ascend into the heavens, and understanding him to be the Messiah made people think the apostles were drunk!

Peter explained they were not drunk. They were living in the last days. These were the days prophesied by Joel when God poured out his Spirit not selectively, but upon all who called upon his name. Old men, young men, sons and daughters were all blessed by the Spirit and ready to proclaim the words of the Lord. More signs and wonders were coming and salvation was at hand for all who called on the name of the Lord! Luke then recounted Peter’s sermon, noting 3,000 came to faith that day.

#### Mark 12:35-12:37 and 1 Chronicles 11-12, 17

One illustrative part of Peter’s sermon is his use of Psalm 110 where David wrote prophetically about the Lord (YHWH) saying to David’s Lord (Jesus), “Sit at my right hand...” This quotation is a classic illustration of the Holy Spirit bringing to Peter’s memory events and teachings of Jesus, finally making them make sense to Peter. Jesus had used this very passage of himself as recorded in Mark 12:35-12:37.

David may have been Israel’s second king, but he was first in the national consciousness. David had taken Jerusalem by force, something unthinkable at the time (1 Chron 11). The Old Testament stories of David recount his mighty men and their valiant achievements, yet they also include stories of David’s overarching concern for God and humble recognition of his own shortcomings (1 Chron 12, 17).

God had promised David one of his heirs would be a son to God who would hold God’s house and kingdom into eternity (1 Chron 17:13-17:14). Peter was proclaiming this heir – Jesus.

#### Zechariah 1:1-1:6

Long after the monarchy had ended for Israel and Judah, Zechariah prophesied. His call was for the people to repent and turn to the Lord again. At the start of his prophecy, Zechariah reminded the people that their fathers had died, the prophets had died, everyone had died. The people would not live forever, and they were urged to repent while they had time. Peter is able to contrast this with his cry for repentance. The prophets may have all died, but Jesus’ death was not the end of him. It was a moment that changed history. Three days later, Jesus was resurrected, appearing to countless people.

Peter called out for the people to repent and they did. As Jesus has foretold, the Holy Spirit brought a conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment. 3,000 were added to the church that day.

## QUESTIONS FOR WEEK 19

1. If God works through circumstances and the laws of physics, does that make his actions on our behalf any less of a “miracle”?
2. How do we react to the works of God in our lives? Do we write them off as simply “life”? Do they stir up gratitude and appreciation?
3. The old song says, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.” What is the significance of Jesus’ kingdom in your life and what would you give to gain it? What do you think you need to give to gain it?
4. Considering the sin in your life, have you reached a point of reconciliation with Jesus? A true time of confession and repentance?
5. Are you able to point to the work of the Holy Spirit in your own life? In what ways?

### *Week Twenty Readings*

<p><b>5/12 Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost</b> <b>Acts 2:14-2:41 (Cont’d)</b></p> <p>Pslm 90 Isa 40:1-40:15 Ezek 18</p> <p><b>The Fellowship of Believers</b> <b>Acts 2:42-2:47</b> Luk 22:24-22:30</p> <p><b>Healing a Lame Beggar</b> <b>Acts 3:1-3:10</b> Matt 26:17-26:35 Prov 22:1</p> <p><b>5/13 Peter in Solomon’s Portico</b> <b>Acts 3:11-3:26</b></p> <p>Mrk 9:30-9:50 Zech 13 2 Chron 17-20</p>	<p><b>5/14 Peter and John Before the council</b> <b>Acts 4:1-4:22</b></p> <p><b>Believer’s Prayer for Boldness</b> <b>Acts 4:23-4:31</b></p> <p>Luk 12:22-12:561</p> <p><b>Holding all things in Common</b> <b>Acts 4:32-4:37</b></p> <p>Pslm 133 Prov 11:28-11:31 Phil 4:2-4:3 Prov 15:1; 15:4 Prov 17:1 Prov 18:19</p> <p><b>Ananias and Sapphira</b> <b>Acts 5:1-5:11</b></p> <p>Zech 5 Pslm 101 Prov 11:1; 11:3; 11:5-11:6; 11:18 12:5; 12:17; 12:19; 12:21-12:22 Prov 14:5; 14:12; 14:25</p>	<p><b>Ananias and Sapphira (Cont’)</b> <b>Acts 5:1-5:11</b></p> <p>Prov 15:8; 15:9 Prov 29:1 Prov 16:13 Prov 19:5; 19:9 Prov 20:10 Prov 21:3; 21:6; 21:23 Prov 26:24-226:8 Pslm 15</p> <p><b>5/15 Many Signs and Wonders</b> <b>Acts 5:12-5:16</b></p> <p><b>Apostles Arrested and Freed</b> <b>Acts 5:17-5:42</b></p> <p><b>Seven Chosen to Serve</b> <b>Acts 6:1-6:7</b></p> <p><b>Stephen is Seized</b> <b>Acts 6:8-6:15</b></p> <p>Luk 22:31-22:38 Luk 22:47-22:62 Prov 19:28</p>	<p><b>Stephen’s Speech</b> <b>Acts 7:1-7:8</b></p> <p>Gen 12:4-16:16 Num 33-34 Prov 26:24-26:28 Pslm 15</p> <p><b>5/16 Stephen’s Speech</b> <b>Acts 7:1-7:8</b></p> <p>Gen 26 Gen 34-36</p> <p><b>5/17 Stephen’s Speech</b> <b>Acts 7:1-7:8</b></p> <p>Gen 37-40 Prov 7:4-7:27</p> <p><b>5/18 Off</b></p>
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