

Peter at Pentecost Acts 1–2

Memory Verse: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*
Acts 1:8 (ESV)

Background Helps:

We leave the four Gospels behind and their record of Peter, the disciple of Jesus. For the next four weeks we will study the book of Acts, giving our attention to Peter’s activity as an apostle (a missionary) of Jesus.

Notice in Acts 2 that Peter is the instrument God uses to open the door of salvation first to the Jews. Perhaps this is one fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19.

Lesson Helps:

Possible aim: My students will learn about the remarkable change in Peter’s life after Pentecost, so that they will allow the Holy Spirit to transform their own lives.

Observe Peter’s role in Acts 1:15-26 and 2:14-41. Compare the Peter you see in these passages with the Peter we saw in the Gospels. (Discuss this comparison with your class.) Peter continues to be the leader of the Twelve, but notice his boldness, his understanding of spiritual things (especially the Scriptures), and his effectiveness in ministry. What accounts for these dramatic changes?

Several factors can be cited to account for Peter’s transformation: the resurrection of Christ (including a personal appearance to Peter), Peter’s public restoration (John 21), the ascension of Christ and promise of his return (Acts 1:9-11), and prayer (Acts 1:14). But the most important factor (and the one emphasized in the book of Acts) is the filling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4, 17-18). Study with your class the effects of the Holy Spirit’s filling in Peter’s life and ministry.

Application: What changes does the Lord need to make in your life? (For example, challenge your class members to become bolder in their witness for Christ, by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Use the memory verse, Acts 1:8.) How can we, like Peter, be filled with the Holy Spirit? (See John 7:37-39. Come to Jesus and drink. In other words, simply trust Christ to fill you!)

Home Assignment:

-  Read Acts 3–5.
-  Memorize Acts 4:12.