



BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Easter 2 (A)

April 12, 2026

RCL: Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Opening Prayer |

God of Life and the source of all creation, from the words of faithful women, we live in the grace of your resurrection. Help us to walk in the steps of their faithfulness and love to you, and in your time carry out your plan for salvation to restore all things to your glory. We pray these things in the precious name of your son, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Context |

The Acts of the Apostles falls under the genre of ancient historiography and is attributed by scholars to Luke. Luke uses history and historical markers quite intentionally in service of his goal to prove the truth of the gospel. By grounding his narrative with historical markers—such as dating events to specific periods and referencing other historical events, such as the reigns of kings—Luke’s writing attempts to “provide an orderly account of a single connected stream of events.” While our Bible divides his gospel from the Acts of the Apostles, Luke composes one single narrative that chronicles Jesus’s life, then “tracks the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.” Scholars consider the Acts of the Apostles to be a historical monograph since it deals with a limited time period and narrates this period in the vein of—and using the same historiographical tools of—other contemporary historical works.

Toward Act’s work of capturing the unfolding of history, roughly thirty percent of the book takes the form of recorded speeches. The speech in Acts 2 is one of the book’s central evangelistic sermons, one by Peter which speaks to the birth of the church through the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and celebrates God’s fulfillment of prophecy. By documenting Peter’s evangelical sermon, along with other historical events, Luke aims to legitimize the Christian movement, especially its inclusion of the Gentiles as an integral part of God’s plan of salvation. Throughout his writing, Luke uses prophetic fulfillment and testimony to the Spirit’s guidance as means of authorizing the steps taken by the early church. Through these methods in his writing, he counters any doubt that Christianity may be a movement of “novel superstition.” Instead, he presents it as one rooted in great and respectable antiquity. Quoting Peter, Luke makes clear that these truths are conveyed on the basis of direct eyewitnesses to these events, increasing the historical validity of his monograph.

Theological Reflection |

In the incarnation, God becomes human; with the resurrection of Jesus, humanity is perfected beyond the reach of sin and death. When Peter and the other apostles speak out as eyewitnesses about their own direct encounters with the risen Christ, they offering the irrefutable foundation of the Christian faith. We come to know that the resurrection—which is not just a resuscitation from death, like that of Lazarus, who will die again—initiates us into a new covenant of reconciliation.

The particularity of the incarnation—that God became human in the flesh as a Palestinian Jew—is also present at resurrection. Resurrection, like incarnation, is relational. In today’s text, Peter proclaims the good news that Jesus has been raised by God, and “that all of us are witnesses.” Peter’s “witness” is a continuous witnessing of the life, death, and the resurrection of Jesus. To be an eyewitness to these events is not just to offer an observation report. Peter’s witness is deeply formed by relationship with the Jesus who is fully human and fully divine.

Witness does not end with Jesus’s death, nor does it begin with the moment of resurrection. Rather, Peter’s witness is a continuous one, spanning both realities. His continuity of witnessing to both the pre-Easter Jesus and the post-Easter Jesus crystallizes the developing Christological understanding of the developing Church. Who is this man now? Who is this God now? We call him Jesus Christ: Jesus, the Galilean who was a teacher, performer of miracles, and nomadic preacher, now becomes “the Christ” in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, following the resurrection. In this transition from Jesus to Christ, the church affirms the fulfillment of God’s promises in and through the incarnation. Christ, therefore, is the name of promises fulfilled, as he is the medium through which the promise of the new age are realized.

While Peter offers an encounter-based witness to Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection, the author Luke also offers a narrative witness embedded in the Jewish prophecies of old, showing how this turn in the story of salvation provides continuity with antiquity. The events of the resurrection are not divorced from the witnesses’ Jewish ancestry and their collective history. Rather, it fulfills them, and Luke’s use of scriptural citations highlights this. At the same time, this new experience of God—revealed in and through history—is so compelling that it begins to break open the tribal borders of the Jewish faith and race, to invite in the whole world. The incarnation and resurrection invite all of humanity into a reconciled relationship with the divine. The resurrection becomes a highway through which all have access to God’s loving-kindness, not only a few. Peter’s evangelical tone in his sermon, captured by Luke’s broader imagination, underlines the plan of God’s salvation for all, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Reflection Questions |

- When, where, and how have you encountered the risen Christ?
- Who has witnessed to you? How has hearing the promises of God from others shaped your faith?
- Put yourself in Peter’s shoes: what do you think it was like for him to preach this sermon, given his history with Jesus? What emotions can you hear in his words?

Faith in Practice |

In the season of Easter, we celebrate encounters with the risen Jesus and trace the explosive growth of the church following the incredible good news of his resurrection. How do you witness to this life-changing truth in your own experience? Be on the lookout for resurrection this week: in your heart and in our world. When you spot it, share it. Be a witness to the transformative truth that resurrection is real.

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