

Session 10 The Believing Jerusalem Assembly

Acts: The Book That Explains Everything

Session 10 | Acts 2:40-47

Be Rescued

Receive the Word

Continue Steadfastly

Share as Needed

The Lord Added

Before You Read

Big idea: Israelites who receive Peter's word separate from the Messiah-rejecting generation, are baptized and added to the believing company, and continue together under the doctrine and authority of the Twelve.

How to use this guide: Read Acts 2:40-47 as one unit. Watch how Peter's appeal in verse 40 produces the believing company whose life Luke describes in verses 41-47.

Five movements to keep watching

- **Be rescued** - Peter urges his hearers to separate from the crooked generation that rejected Christ.
- **Receive the word** - The responsive hearers accept Peter's message and are baptized.

- **Continue steadfastly** - The new company remains devoted to apostolic doctrine, fellowship, meals, and prayers.
- **Share as needed** - Their kingdom expectation takes material form in voluntary generosity.
- **The Lord added** - The Lord continues enlarging the Jerusalem assembly.

A simple right-division reminder: This company remains in Jerusalem, under the Twelve, attending the temple, practicing signs and shared possessions, and living within Israel's prophetic expectation. The word "**church**" in verse 47 means an assembly; the surrounding features identify which assembly Luke is describing.

Acts 2:40

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

What does the passage say?

- Peter's recorded sermon is a faithful summary, not every word he spoke.
- He solemnly testifies and urgently exhorts his hearers.
- He calls them to be rescued from the generation that rejected Messiah.

Words to notice

- **Many other words** - Luke does not claim to reproduce the entire address.
- **Testify and exhort** - Peter both bears witness to the truth and appeals for a response.
- **Save yourselves** - This does not mean that they become their own saviors. The underlying command is passive: "**be saved**" or "let yourselves be rescued." They must

accept God's offered escape.

- **Untoward generation** - "**Untoward**" means crooked, perverse, or turned from the proper course. Peter is describing the Israelite generation that rejected Christ.

Cross-references worth marking

- Deuteronomy 32:5 - Moses describes Israel as a perverse and crooked generation.
- Psalm 78:8 - Israel is warned not to be like a stubborn and rebellious generation.
- Matthew 23:36 - Jesus warns that judgment will come upon "**this generation.**"
- Philippians 2:15 - Paul later uses the same word "**crooked**" in a different setting.

Do not miss

- Human responsibility does not mean self-redemption. They must receive the rescue God provides.
- Peter is not merely telling people to escape bad society in general; his appeal concerns separation from the generation responsible for rejecting Messiah.

Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

What does the passage say?

- Only the responsive portion of the multitude gladly receives Peter's word.
- They obey his command to be baptized.
- About three thousand people are added to the existing company that day.

Words to notice

- **Gladly received** - They welcome Peter's message with assent rather than merely hearing it.
- **Were baptized** - Their reception of the word leads to the public response commanded in verse 38.
- **Were added** - They join the believing company already

gathered around the apostles.

- **Souls** - Here this means people, not disembodied spirits.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 1:15 - The earlier Jerusalem company numbered about 120.
- Exodus 32:28 - About three thousand fell after the golden calf; the numerical contrast with Acts 2 is striking, though Luke does not explicitly call it a type.
- Acts 4:4 - The number later grows to about five thousand men.
- Acts 2:47 - The Lord is identified as the One adding to the assembly.

Do not miss

- Not everyone in the audience receives the word. Luke distinguishes the responsive remnant.
- **"Gladly"** is included in the Textus Receptus and KJV but omitted by most modern critical-text translations.

Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

What does the passage say?

- The new believers persist in four things: doctrine, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayers.
- Their teaching comes from the apostles appointed by Christ.
- Their shared belief produces a shared life.

Words to notice

- **Continued stedfastly** - They remain devoted rather than participating occasionally.
- **The apostles' doctrine** - This is the teaching of the Twelve in the Jerusalem and kingdom setting. It does not mean that Paul's later revelation was already known.
- **Fellowship** - This means participation in something shared, not merely friendliness.

- **Breaking of bread** - The phrase can describe shared meals and does not by itself require a formal sacramental meaning.

- **Prayers** - The plural may include recognized Jewish hours of prayer as well as the prayers of the company.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 1:14 - The earlier company also continues in prayer.
- Acts 3:1 - Peter and John go to the temple at the hour of prayer.
- Acts 4:32-35 - Their fellowship includes common witness and material provision.
- Acts 20:7 - Breaking bread later appears in another gathered meeting; context must guide its meaning.

Do not miss

- Doctrine stands first. This is a taught and ordered assembly, not merely an emotional response to signs.
- Do not turn the verse into a timeless four-step formula while ignoring which apostles, city, and program are in view.

Acts 2:43

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

What does the passage say?

- Awe spreads as God works publicly among them.
- Many extraordinary works take place.
- Luke specifically attributes the wonders and signs to the apostles.

Words to notice

- **Fear** - This is solemn awareness and awe produced by visible divine activity.
- **Wonders** - The works astonish those who see them.
- **Signs** - The same works point beyond themselves to God's message and authorization.
- **By the apostles** - Luke distinguishes the thousands who

believe from the apostles through whom the signs are performed.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 2:22 - Jesus was approved by miracles, wonders, and signs.
- Acts 4:33 and 5:12 - Exceptional power and signs remain associated with the apostles.
- Hebrews 2:3-4 - Signs and wonders confirm the message delivered by those who heard the Lord.
- 2 Corinthians 12:12 - Paul refers to "**the signs of an apostle.**"

Do not miss

- Apostolic signs authenticate God's messengers; they are not religious entertainment.
- The verse does not promise that every believer or every later congregation will perform apostolic signs.

Acts 2:44

And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

What does the passage say?

- The arrangement belongs to the believing Jerusalem company.
- The believers gather around a shared life and purpose.
- Their possessions are made available to meet needs within the company.

Words to notice

- **All that believed** - Luke identifies who participates in the arrangement.
- **Together** - Their unity is visible in teaching, prayer, meals, worship, and provision.

- **Common** - What each possesses becomes available for shared use when needs arise.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 4:32-35 - A fuller description of their shared possessions and distribution.
- Acts 5:4 - Property remains under the owner's authority before it is sold, showing that the sharing is voluntary.
- Luke 12:32-34 - Jesus connects the promised kingdom with selling possessions and treasure in heaven.

Do not miss

- This is genuine material fellowship, not merely a warm feeling of community.
- It is not state-enforced communism. Luke describes voluntary sharing within the believing remnant.

Acts 2:45

And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

What does the passage say?

- Believers sell land and other belongings as needs arise.
- They distribute the proceeds within the believing company.
- Actual need determines the distribution.

Words to notice

- **Possessions and goods** - The wording includes landed property and other belongings.
- **Parted** - In older English this means divided or distributed.
- **All men** - The immediate context is “**all that believed**” in verse 44, not every inhabitant of Jerusalem.

- **As every man had need** - They do not give everyone an identical amount; they address genuine need.

Cross-references worth marking

- Deuteronomy 15:4-11 - Israel is commanded to give generously to the poor.
- Acts 4:34-37 - Property is sold and proceeds are placed at the apostles' feet.
- Acts 5:4 - The sale and donation are not externally compelled.
- Romans 15:25-27 - Gentile believers later send relief to needy Jerusalem saints.

Do not miss

- The grammar describes an ongoing practice: they were selling and distributing as needs appeared.
- Scripture never rebukes their generosity, but neither does it command this arrangement as the economic order for every later dispensation.

Acts 2:46

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

What does the passage say?

- Their shared life continues every day.
- They remain publicly present in the temple.
- They share meals in homes with joy and sincerity.

Words to notice

- **Daily** - Their life is not organized around only one weekly gathering.
- **With one accord** - They act from a united purpose.
- **In the temple** - These believers remain connected to Israel's sanctuary and institutions.
- **From house to house** - The phrase points to domestic settings or individual homes; it does not necessarily describe door-to-door visitation.

- **Meat** - In older English this means food generally.
- **Singleness of heart** - This describes simplicity, sincerity, and freedom from selfish reserve.

Cross-references worth marking

- Luke 24:52-53 - The disciples return to Jerusalem and continue in the temple praising God.
- Acts 3:1 - Peter and John continue to participate in the temple hour of prayer.
- Acts 5:12, 20-21, 42 - The apostles continue their public temple activity.
- Acts 12:12 - A home serves as a gathering place for prayer.

Do not miss

- Temple and homes are complementary: public identification with Israel's worship and private sharing among believers.
- Their continued temple attendance is an important indication that this assembly remains within Israel's prophetic and institutional setting.

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

What does the passage say?

- The believing company praises God.
- At this stage it enjoys favorable public reception.
- The Lord continues adding people to the Jerusalem assembly.

Words to notice

- **Having favour with all the people** - Luke describes this early stage; opposition will increase later.
- **The Lord added** - Growth ultimately comes from the Lord, while verse 41 also records the hearers receiving the word and being baptized.
- **The church** - The word means an assembly or congregation. Its dispensational identity must come from the context, not from the English word alone.
- **Such as should be saved** - This is an inherited older-English construction. “Should” does not mean “ought

to.” Compare, “Whom should I meet but John!” Jude 18 similarly says “**there should be mockers**,” meaning that mockers would appear. The Greek more directly means “**those being saved**.”

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 5:13-14 - Public esteem and believers being added appear together again.
- Acts 7:38 - Israel in the wilderness can be called a “**church**,” showing that the word itself means an assembly.
- Acts 11:26 - The assembly at Antioch is also called a church; context identifies each assembly.
- Jude 18 - “**There should be mockers**” illustrates the older use of “**should**.”

Do not miss

- Do not read “**should**” as moral obligation or as a predetermined group expected to be saved later.
- Do not conclude that the body of Christ began here merely because the KJV says “**church**.” This assembly is identified by the Twelve, Jerusalem, the temple, apostolic signs, and Israel’s prophetic expectation.

Text And Translation Helps

- **Save yourselves** in verse 40 expresses the hearers’ responsibility to accept God’s rescue; the Greek command is passive, “**be saved**.”
- **Gladly** in verse 41 is present in the Textus Receptus and KJV but absent from most modern critical-text translations.
- **Parted** in verse 45 means distributed, and **meat** in verse 46 means food.
- **Such as should be saved** in verse 47 does not mean “those who ought to be saved.” The Greek describes “**those being saved**.”
- The Textus Receptus explicitly reads “**to the church**” in verse 47. Most critical texts omit those words and connect “**together**” with the following sentence.

Common Ideas To Test

- “Save yourselves means that people produce their own salvation.”
 - Test it by the passive command and by Peter’s call to accept God’s provided rescue from the condemned generation.
- “Every baptized believer immediately performed wonders and signs.”
 - Test it by verse 43: Luke says the signs were done **by the apostles**.
- “Having all things common proves a compulsory Christian political system.”
 - Test it by Acts 5:4: ownership and the decision to sell remained voluntary.
- “Temple attendance was merely incidental.”
 - Test it by Luke 24:53 and Acts 3:1; 5:12, 20-21, 42. The temple remains central to this Jerusalem company.
- “The word church automatically means the body of Christ.”
 - Test it by Acts 7:38 and by the distinctive features Luke records in Acts 2:42-47.

Session Summary

- Peter urges his hearers to be rescued from the generation that rejected Messiah.
- Those who gladly receive his word are baptized and added to the believing company.
- They remain devoted to the doctrine of the Twelve, fellowship, shared meals, and prayers.
- Apostolic signs produce public fear and authenticate the apostles.
- Their kingdom expectation and fellowship produce voluntary, need-based sharing.
- They continue daily in the temple and in homes.
- The Lord keeps adding those being saved to the Jerusalem assembly.

For Long-Term Study

Mark these themes as Acts unfolds

- The growing separation between Israel's believing remnant and the rejecting generation.
- The continuing authority and signs of the Twelve.
- The believers' continuing relationship with Jerusalem and the temple.
- The later needs of the Jerusalem saints and Gentile assistance sent through Paul's ministry.
- The different assemblies called "**church**" and the need to identify each from its context.

Questions to keep asking

1. From what does Peter tell his hearers to be rescued?
2. Who performs the wonders and signs in verse 43?
3. What evidence shows that the sharing of possessions is voluntary and need-based?
4. Why is the company's continued use of the temple important?
5. What does "**such as should be saved**" mean in older English and in the Greek?
6. Which features identify the "**church**" of verse 47?

One sentence to remember

Those who receive Peter's word join a steadfast, generous, temple-centered Jerusalem assembly under the Twelve, and the Lord continues adding to their number.