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## **Acts chapter 2**

**14** Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

**36** Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.'

**37** When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'

**38** Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.'

**40** With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' **41** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:14, NIV: Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

## What does Acts 2:14 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]

Depending on what version is used, and how one counts, the Bible contains somewhere around thirty-five instances of the phrase "Peter said" or "Peter answered"—most of those in the Gospels. Some of his statements were requests for clarification (Matthew 15:15; Luke 12:41). Some were because he was so overwhelmed he didn't know what to do (Matthew 17:4). Some were rash vows he couldn't keep (John 13:37). Other words were inspired (John 6:68). Once he receives the Holy Spirit, Peter's natural tendency to speak up is transformed, and he becomes a powerful witness for Jesus.

In the book of Acts, Peter gives five speeches of varying lengths. Three are evangelistic (Acts 2:14–41; 3:12–26; 10:34–43) and two are explanatory (Acts 4:8–12; 11:4–17). He gave many more over the course of his life, but these are representative enough to show a common thread. All of Peter's speeches start with what is going on in that moment and explain it in the context of Jesus is the Savior. In Acts 3, he addresses a crowd that is amazed when he heals a lame man (Acts 3:1–10), saying the power by which the man is healed is given by Jesus, whom they crucified. In Acts 10, he defends his presence in the house of Cornelius, a Gentile centurion who wanted to know how he could be saved.

Here, Peter will explain why it is all these Jews can understand the disciples' speech in their own language. It is the fulfillment of a prophecy by the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16–21).

The wording Peter uses is somewhat poetic. Luke explains that Peter "lifted his voice" and "addressed them," which both mean the same thing, but the repeat adds a bit of a lilt to the phrasing. Similarly, Peter's use of the phrases "Men of Judea" and "all who dwell in Jerusalem" and then "let this be known to you" and "give ear to my words" follow the Hebrew poetic form of synthetic parallelism which is so common in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. That Peter is speaking in such a lyrical way is probably one of the reasons the high priests are amazed at the "uneducated, common" fishermen from Galilee (Acts 4:13).

Acts 2:36, NIV: Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.'

## What does Acts 2:36 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]

Peter finishes the first sermon of the church age by presenting three incredible truths: Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah sent by God to save the Jews; the Jews killed Him; God raised Him from the dead, giving the Jews hope for their own resurrection. As Jesus promised, the apostles and other Jesus-followers will spread variations of this message "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Peter's message is directed to the Jews in Jerusalem, but Jesus has already said the message is for everyone on earth (John 10:16). Because, the truth is, Jesus came to save all of us; we all, with our sin, killed Him; and God raised Him from the dead to give us all hope.

The truths in Peter's message in Acts 2:14–36 carried his audience through an extraordinary range of ideas. The crowd gathered in the first place because the Holy Spirit came on 120 Jesus-followers who started speaking different languages and dialects (Acts 2:4–13) as Joel prophesied (Acts 2:17–18). Joel also wrote that those who do not pay attention to these signs will be counted as God's enemy and treated as such (Acts 2:19–20). But there is yet time to turn to Him (Acts 2:21).

Then Peter shows his audience how this relates to Jesus. Peter's Jewish audience, either directly or through proxy by being of the Jewish nation, took a Man who was also marked by God's miracles and crucified Him (Acts 2:22–23). But God not only raised Him from the dead, His resurrection brings hope for theirs, as well (Acts 2:24–35).

After such a speech of signs, condemnation, and hope, it's no wonder Peter's audience responds, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Fortunately, when Jesus called His followers to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8), the message they were given was never just to convict others of sin; it was always to lead to repentance, as Peter tells them, "for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

### Context Summary

Acts 2:37–41 shows the first mass influx of people into the church. Men in Jerusalem for Pentecost from across the Roman Empire and beyond are startled to find 120 Galileans speaking their native languages (Acts 2:1–13). Peter uses

passages from Joel and Psalms to support his points on several ideas: that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Jews had Him killed, God raised Him from the dead, and His resurrection provides hope of forgiveness for His followers (Acts 2:14–36). The crowd is stunned and reacts in the only logical way possible, asking, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter explains their need for salvation, and thousands respond.

Acts 2:37, NIV: When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'

### **What does Acts 2:37 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

A large group of people who are in Jerusalem for Pentecost have just heard Peter give the first Christian sermon. These are particularly God-fearing Jews and proselytes (Acts 2:5, 11) who have been presented with historical and theological proofs that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah. Peter's last point, still ringing in the air, is that the Jews killed their own Savior.

"Cut," or "pierced" in other translations, is from the Greek root word *katanusso* and means to receive a sharp pain in concert with great sorrow. That they were "cut to the heart" means they understand that they crucified David's heir, the Messiah. Their horror delves past their surface emotions and thoughts and deep into their being.

Undoubtedly, not every person in Peter's audience was in Jerusalem when Jesus was killed. Even fewer, if any, were in the crowd that called to crucify Him (Mark 15:12–14). But God's primary relationship with the nation of Israel has always been communal. *Salvation* has always been an individual issue based on faith (Hebrews 11:1–2). But the Old Testament is filled with stories of how God blessed or punished Israel as a group for the obedience or disobedience of the nation as a whole. Even Daniel, an extremely godly man, repented for the sins of his people as if he had committed them himself (Daniel 9:1–19).

Their question is the most important we can ask when faced with our own rebellion against God. It is by the grace of Jesus and the work of His death and resurrection that we can be assured there is an answer. "Repent..." Peter says,

"for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). That is the answer for us, as well.

Acts 2:38, NIV: Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### **What does Acts 2:38 mean? [[↑](#) See verse text [↑](#)]**

It's likely that many in Peter's audience know of John the Baptist and even heard him preach. Those who accepted his words would have repented from their sins and been baptized to show that they affirm his message. And they would know that he did not claim to have any significance in and of himself, but that he was proclaiming that the Messiah was coming. In addition, John prophesied the Holy Spirit would come with fire, as He did just that morning (Acts 2:1–4), and the Messiah would give the Holy Spirit to His followers and destroy those who rejected Him (Matthew 3:1–12).

So, Peter's words are familiar to any Jew who spends time in Jerusalem. The call to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit is the same as that given by John, but the addition of Jesus' name is new. It marks the fulfillment of John's prophecy (Luke 3:16).

It seems that anywhere baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, confusion follows. It must be clear that baptism is no more required for becoming saved than putting on a jersey is required to officially join a sports team. We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9), just as a professional football player is made a teammate by signing a contract. Baptism, like the uniform, is an outward, public sign, not a requirement in and of itself.

"Repent" is from the Greek root word *metanoeo*. It means to completely change one's paradigm, to admit error and accept the truth. In Christianity, it means to accept the viewpoint of God about the world, Jesus, and oneself, and act accordingly. "Forgiveness" is from the Greek root word *aphesis*. It is a pardon, granted by the victim of a crime or offense, whereby the victim agrees to relinquish his or her right to recompense from the perpetrator. In this case, God forgives our crimes against Him and places the burden on Jesus.

So it is that Peter calls the Jews to admit they are wrong, accept God's correct view of things, and trust that Jesus has paid for their sins. The crowd responds, and "there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Acts 2:39, NIV: The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.'

### **What does Acts 2:39 mean? [[↑](#) [See verse text](#) [↑](#)]**

Peter has just called a crowd of Jews to repent and be baptized. Some of them must have recognized the words of John the Baptist who had his ministry on the Jordan River just east of Jerusalem three years prior. If so, they may remember John's harsh words to the Pharisees and Sadducees who believed they were saved by virtue of being descendants of Abraham. John told them don't rely on pedigree. "God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 3:9–10).

Peter knows the apostles are to be Jesus' witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), but he doesn't yet know that this is more than a geographic description. His audience is of devout Jews and proselytes (Acts 2:5, 11), all dedicated to Judaism. It won't be for a while that the apostles recognize that when Jesus said He had "other sheep that are not of this fold" (John 10:16) He meant the wretched Samaritans (Acts 8:14–17) and the blasphemous Gentiles (Acts 10:44–48), as the Jews would have seen them.

Jesus' offer of salvation was always meant to be offered to the Jews first, but, equally, it was always meant to be offered to the Gentiles as well (Romans 1:16).

Acts 2:40, NIV: With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.'

## What does Acts 2:40 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]

Earlier this very morning, the church was born as the Holy Spirit came to indwell 120 of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem, giving them the ability to speak in foreign languages and dialects (Acts 2:1–4). A large crowd of faithful Jews and proselytes from as far away as Rome, Libya, and Mesopotamia hear the Jesus-followers and are astonished (Acts 2:5–13). Peter explains that Jesus of Nazareth, who the Jewish nation condemned and executed, is the Messiah sent by God. Even more, He was resurrected by God and offers forgiveness and life to those who believe in Him (Acts 2:14–38).

Now, one of the basic tenets of the church is being established: that the church is a place where those more knowledgeable about Jesus teach those who are younger in the faith. As a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, as He empowers Peter's words, three thousand members of the crowd will call on Jesus' name and be saved (Acts 2:41). Many will stay in Jerusalem and create a new community dedicated to "the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

"Bore witness" is from the Greek root word *diamartyromai* and means "to attest to and confirm a message." "Exhort" is from the Greek root word *parakaleō*, and means "to encourage someone to take action." This is closely related to the word *Paraklētos*, used by Jesus when referring to the Holy Spirit as a "helper" (John 14:16). The message of Jesus requires a response, and the response cannot come without the message (Romans 10:14).

Jesus had also declared that the generation is crooked (Matthew 17:17). The scribes make great shows to gain respect but turn around and act cruelly to the vulnerable (Mark 12:38–40). The people kill the prophets that would lead them into God's presence (Matthew 23:37). And all of Matthew 23 is a list of sins the Pharisees and scribes commit against God. Most of all, the Jewish leaders don't believe Jesus is the Son of God come to save them. But Jesus offers people an escape. No one is condemned to follow their culture or leaders in rejecting Jesus. Everyone is invited to repent of their sins and turn to God. It is why Jesus sent His disciples (Acts 1:8), and why all His followers are included in the Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Acts 2:41, NIV: Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

### **What does Acts 2:41 mean? [[↑](#) [See verse text](#) [↑](#)]**

In the course of a couple of hours, the infant church of Jerusalem has grown from 120 (Acts 1:15) to three thousand. Jesus promised His followers they would receive the Holy Spirit and be His witnesses, starting in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Long before, Jesus had told His disciples that the world was hungry for Him, if only there were people willing to teach (Matthew 9:37–38). He also told them they would do greater works than He—not in power but in scope (John 14:12). This is not the last great influx of believers. After this event, God will add "to their number day by day those who [are] being saved" (Acts 2:47). When Peter and John heal a beggar, five thousand men, besides women, will have come to follow Jesus (Acts 4:4). Eventually, even many of the priests will believe (Acts 6:7).

This verse brings up the question of when a new believer should be baptized. In the New Testament church, people are baptized immediately upon accepting Christ as their savior, in one special instance even before receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9–17). How much do new converts need to understand? While many of the Jews and people who lived around Judea know about Jesus and how He fulfilled Judaism, the Philippian jailer and his family don't, and Paul and Silas see to their baptism right away (Acts 16:30–33).

The early believers are baptized right upon their conversion, and then trained in the doctrines of the faith. Over the course of history, as more false teaching assaults the church, training has been shifted to before baptism. This is intended so people understand their faith before publicly committing to it. Once someone claims to be saved and has demonstrated they understand what salvation is and the purpose of baptism, there's no theological reason to wait. Baptism is not required for salvation. It should be performed as soon after conversion as reasonable. Bear in mind that a core group of 120 believers baptized three thousand converts. Neither the baptism nor the training needs to be a complex production.

## Psalm chapter 116

### New International Version

**1** I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.  
**2** Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. **3** The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow.  
**4** Then I called on the name of the LORD: 'LORD, save me!' **5** The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.  
**6** The LORD protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me.  
**7** Return to your rest, my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. **8** For you, LORD, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling,  
**9** that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. **10** I trusted in the LORD when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted';  
**11** in my alarm I said, 'Everyone is a liar.'  
**12** What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me? **13** I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.  
**14** I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. **15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants.  
**16** Truly I am your servant, LORD; I serve you just as my mother did; you have freed me from my chains. **17** I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. **18** I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,  
**19** in the courts of the house of the LORD-- in your midst, Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

### 1 Peter chapter 1

**17** Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. **18** For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. **20** He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. **21** Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

**22** Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. **23** For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

**24** For, 'All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

**25** but the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word that was preached to you.

### Context Summary

1 Peter 1:13–25 describes how Christians—those God has caused to be born again—should live now. We must mentally engage in setting all of our hope in God's future grace for us. We must choose to act as those who are God's own people, rejecting the evil desires that drove our actions before we knew better. Our choices matter. Our God placed a high value on our lives, paying for them with the blood of Christ. Since God has made us able, we must now strive to earnestly give love to each other.

1 Peter 1:17, NIV: Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

### What does 1 Peter 1:17 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]

Verse 17 combines quite a few varied ideas. First, Peter reminds us that this relationship we have with God—by His grace and through our faith in Christ—is a relationship between a child and a Father. It's a relationship of open communication. He has called us (1 Peter 1:15), and we call on Him.

This is a Father who has proven His love for us (Romans 5:8) and right now actively shields us and the inheritance He has promised us in heaven (1 Peter 1:6). He is a good Father. We are saved; we are secure. But this is not a Father who smiles and nods approvingly at every choice we make. He judges our conduct impartially and individually. In other words, He judges our actions with absolute fairness and with complete understanding of each of us specifically.

This has to be carefully understood. This is not a judgment about whether or not God will allow us into heaven, or punish us in His wrath. Already in this letter, Peter has been clear that decision is made and done. Our Father has given His believing children credit for Jesus' perfectly righteous life and has allowed His Son's death to pay the price for our sins.

But our Father *does* judge. He judges our works. He pays attention to whether our actions are those of "holy people" set apart for His purposes (1 Peter 1:15) or whether our choices continue to be driven by the "evil desires" we had when we lived in ignorance (1 Peter 1:14; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15). Knowing this should change the way we live. We should stop trying to convince ourselves and the world around us that we belong here. We should stop trying to fit in. We should embrace our status as foreigners, strangers, and people in exile. We should live like the Father we wait to be united with.

And, yes, we should live with some amount of healthy fear. Not a terror of God's wrath or eternal punishment, that's clear. Instead, this is a fear of loving parental discipline (Hebrews 12:4–11) and a solemn awareness that the God of the universe watches and expects to see us make choices that bring Him glory.

1 Peter 1:18, NIV: For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,

### **What does 1 Peter 1:18 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

In verse 17, Peter has revealed that our loving Father God judges the actions of His saved children. This is not to decide our eternal fate, but to weigh whether our choices are those of a holy, set-apart people. Peter writes that we should live out our lives on earth as foreigners and with "fear," meaning "reverence."

Why fear? In part, the idea is that we should carry solemn awareness of the great worth God has placed on our lives. We should appreciate the great expectation He has to make use of us, as His children, for His plans and for His glory (Philippians 2:12–13). That awareness should motivate us to be cautious about making worthless choices.

Peter demonstrates the value God has placed on us by showing the price He paid for us. He didn't pay mere cash: "silver or gold." He didn't pay temporary currency for an eternal transaction. Verse 19 will reveal that He paid for us with the blood of His own Son, a currency of limitless value. We cannot overestimate our worth in our Father's eyes.

And what did He redeem us from? Worthlessness. He didn't just save us from hell; he bought us out of the futility of human existence that we had inherited from our ancestors. He bought us out of an empty, meaningless waste of time—all that the world can truly offer us. Peter's point in all of this may be that our choices now, after that transaction, truly matter. As people of great value to God—holy people—we should be terrified that we will squander our days continuing to invest ourselves in worthless things.

1 Peter 1:19, NIV: but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

### **What does 1 Peter 1:19 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Verse 19 continues the thought begun in verse 18. Peter is showing the great value Christians, God's children, carry in the eyes of our Father. It can be measured by the price He was willing to pay. He made a great sacrifice in order to possess us, to call us His own people. Peter has already shown that God didn't pay for us in mere human currency like silver or gold. Our worth to Him can't be weighed in pounds or dollars. Instead, in verse 19, Peter writes that we were redeemed with something that will still hold value long after this world's economies are forgotten.

Our Father purchased us with the blood of Christ. The value God placed on our lives was equal to that of the very life of His "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Peter describes Christ as a lamb free from blemish or defect. His Jewish readers, especially those who grew up participating in the sacrificial system, would have immediately understood the reference. In fact, some may have carried a memory of watching as a perfect, beautiful year-old lamb was killed, understanding that its blood was being spilled to cover their sin for a time.

As the sinless, perfectly righteous Son of God, the life of Jesus—His blood—was of such great value that He became the final offering required under that Old Covenant system. No more animal sacrifices are needed to temporarily cover human sin (Hebrews 9–10). Instead, the Father paid the ultimate price to redeem us, giving limitless value to lives that would otherwise have been futile and empty.

1 Peter 1:20, NIV: He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

### **What does 1 Peter 1:20 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross wasn't improvised. God didn't make it up in response to the unfolding events of history. Peter writes that Christ was known before the world was founded. As God, Jesus existed in eternity past as the one whose blood would cover the sins of all who receive salvation. Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, and return to the Father were always God's plan to save us. Always. Jesus was always the answer to the questions asked by the prophets and the angels investigating what the Holy Spirit's Old Testament prophecies were pointing to (1 Peter 1:10–12).

Finally, in Peter's lifetime and those of his readers—the beginning of what Peter calls the "last times"—God revealed the mystery. He showed Himself and His plan to the world by coming to earth as a baby, a man, God in flesh, the final sacrifice for sin. Why? For our sake. God's great gift of mercy, and the timing of that gift in human history, demonstrates God's great love for us (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

1 Peter 1:21, NIV: Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

**What does 1 Peter 1:21 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Continuing his thought from verse 20, that Jesus had been revealed as God's Son and the sacrifice for sin for our sake, Peter writes that it is through Christ that we have become believers in God. Peter heard Jesus say the same Himself in John 14:6–7: Nobody comes to the Father except through the Son. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Many may say they believe in God, but only through trusting in Christ do we truly put our faith in the Father.

God's plan didn't stop with the sacrifice of His only birth Son as the payment for sin. Peter says that God also raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory. Describing that glory given to Jesus by the Father, Paul wrote that God "...highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

So our faith and hope are in God. In the same way that God had a plan for Christ's life and death and resurrection and glory, He has a plan for our life, death, resurrection, and glory. We trust the God who did all of that in and through Christ and know He will do the same in and through us. Our hope is in exactly the right place.

1 Peter 1:22, NIV: Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

**What does 1 Peter 1:22 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

In his letter, Peter has described what our lives were like before we trusted in Christ for our salvation by God's grace. We lived in ignorance, driven along our empty, futile way by our selfish passions or evil desires. We served ourselves, to our own destruction, and could do nothing else. All of that changed when God saved us. He declared our lives worthy of the blood of His Son. He rescued us from emptiness and set us apart for one thing: His purposes. Then, Peter wrote, God commanded us to "be holy," to stop living for self and to be fully available to Him.

Now Peter writes that our obedience to the truth has a purifying effect on our souls. It's not that we make ourselves clean from sin by our obedience. God has declared us clean from sin through the blood of Jesus, His death in our place. Rather, it's that when we obey, we are not sinning! We are living the pure, holy lives God intends for His people. When we obey Him, we stop being double-minded, torn between our selfishness and fulfilling His will for us. Setting our desires aside allows us to give ourselves over fully to loving each other—without being half-hearted or false.

So, Peter says, we should go for it with everything we've got. We should abandon our own "evil desires" and work hard at loving each other, instead. The word translated as "earnestly" or "deeply" in this verse—*ektenōs* in Greek—means "at full stretch" or "in an all-out manner, with an intense strain." Just as an athletics coach might tell a player to "leave it all on the field," Peter tells us to completely exhaust all of our resources in a single-hearted effort to give love to each other.

1 Peter 1:23, NIV: For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

### **What does 1 Peter 1:23 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

In the previous verse, Peter charged his readers to love each other deeply or earnestly from pure hearts. He connects that command to the reminder that, as Christians, we have been born again. It's an odd thought, when first read. When Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3 that nobody can see God's kingdom unless they are born again, Nicodemus recognized the figure of speech. He saw that this was biologically impossible. Jesus made it clear that He was referring to a spiritual birth.

Being born physically does not make us alive spiritually. In fact, Paul wrote that we all start out spiritually dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1). God is the one who makes us alive when we come to Him through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:5–9). Peter wrote at the beginning of this chapter that God had caused his believing readers to be born again. So, as Christians who have been born again, we now have the ability to love each other with spiritually alive hearts. We can do this with all our might and complete sincerity.

This spiritual birth leads to a life that will never end. Physical birth results from a seed that dies eventually. But the new birth springs from an undying seed, through God's undying word. What is this "word of God"? In verse 25, Peter will tell us it is the good news that has been preached to us. We sometimes call it the gospel. It is the message from God that He will forgive our sins and make us spiritually alive forever in Christ.

1 Peter 1:24, NIV: For, 'All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

### **What does 1 Peter 1:24 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

This verse must be taken together with verse 25. Peter quotes from Isaiah 40:6–8 to back up his statement in verse 23 that we are born again through the undying Word of God. Human life, though intense and beautiful in many ways, comes and goes in a season. Even the most productive, most privileged, most adventurous of mortal lives begin to fade just as they get underway.

This is understood and grieved by people of every culture, every generation and every belief system. Human life is achingly temporary. Peter writes this letter, in part, to remind His readers that God has provided (by grace and through faith in Christ) a true home and a secure future on the other side of this temporary life. In Him, we have hope of a future without end.

However, the specific point he is making here is about the word of the Lord, and it concludes in verse 25.

1 Peter 1:25, NIV: but the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word that was preached to you.

### **What does 1 Peter 1:25 mean? [[↑ See verse text ↑](#)]**

Verse 25 completes Peter's quote from Isaiah 40:6–8. Isaiah's poem describes a glorious field of flowering grass that quickly withers and dries up. It's a picture of

human existence, intense but all too brief. But that's not the end of the poem. By contrast, the Word of the Lord remains forever. While we may come and go on this side of eternity, one generation after another, God's truth remains the same throughout all of time. It never changes.

Peter has made the case in this first part of his letter that the word of the Lord has now been revealed to his readers, and therefore to us as well. Specifically, it is the good news—also called "the gospel"—that was preached to us, which we believed, which made it possible for us to be born again.

Because the word of the Lord remains forever, human beings can, also. We can live forever through believing the word and placing our faith in Christ.

## **Luke chapter 24**

**13** Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; **16** but they were kept from recognizing him.

**17** He asked them, 'What are you discussing together as you walk along?' They stood still, their faces downcast. **18** One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?'

**19** 'What things?' he asked. 'About Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **20** The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **21** but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. **22** In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24** Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.' **25** He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

**28** As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. **29** But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.

**30** When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. **31** Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. **32** They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'

**33** They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together **34** and saying, 'It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' **35** Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.