

ACTS 2:14-41

[INTRODUCTION]¹

- Edward Lorenz was a physicist at MIT in the 1960s. He was working on one of the very first computers, to see if it could be used to model the weather. His hope was that if you could input enough data, the machine could then predict what the weather would do next. That was the beginning of modern forecasting.
- One afternoon, Lorenz was rerunning some of his calculations. The first time, he had entered the number 0.506127. The second time, he rounded it to 0.506. A difference of one part in a thousand. He assumed it wouldn't matter. But when the machine printed out the second forecast, he could hardly believe his eyes. The two patterns had started off the same but then diverged wildly. The tiny change led to a totally different result.
- Later Lorenz said it was like a butterfly flapping its wings in Beijing had set off a hurricane in New York. Hence the name of his discovery, the butterfly effect. Small beginnings, massive consequences.
- In our passage today, a small gathering of 120 believers explodes into a movement of over 3,000 in a single day. This movement would then multiply farther, until, in a very real sense, it would lead to our presence here today.
- What happened? What was the butterfly in this instance? A sermon. Hard to believe, isn't it? Well, it's true. Peter stood up and spoke—about the last days, the last king, and the last chance—and that small sermon had massive consequences.

[Transition]:

- Let's follow his outline—see if this small sermon might have an effect on us today.
- The first thing Peter talks about is...

1. THE LAST DAYS (VV14-21)

[State]

- He starts by **addressing the crowd** directly: **Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.**
 - Do you remember the context?
 - The HS has just descended on the disciples enabling them to speak languages they had never learned.
 - The crowds hear the gospel declared in their own tongue.
 - Some were amazed and perplexed.
 - But others mocked and said the disciples were drunk.

- That same day, Peter stands up and declares:
 - Listen up! I have something important to say!
 - Don't write this off as drunkenness—it's only 9 a.m.!
 - If it was 9 p.m. you might have a point.
 - But we didn't have mimosas for breakfast!
- Instead, Peter says, the Bible makes sense of these miraculous events: **V16: This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel...**
 - The miracle you've witnessed isn't the result of drunkenness or chaos.
 - Instead, it's **part of God's plan**.
- **V17: In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...**
 - God promised this would happen, and now it's happening before your eyes.
 - His Spirit—his presence, power, and purpose—has come down:
 - Not just on the religious elite—the priests, sages, and holy men.
 - But on all who belong to him—sons and daughters, young and old, servants and rulers alike!
- Why has this happened? Peter explains in **VV19-20**:
 - So that in these **last days** before Jesus comes back...
 - Remember the angels said Jesus would come back in the same way the disciples saw him leave (1:11)?
 - He will return, history as we know it will end.
 - Peter calls it **the day of the Lord**, the **great and magnificent day**.
 - And pictures it dramatically as that day when the **sun shall be turned to darkness** and **the moon to blood**.
 - Between now and then, God's spirit is poured out so that all God's people can be witnesses for Christ:
 - Declaring the mighty works of God to a world in desperate need.
 - And **V21: everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**.
- **Here's the bottom line:** The Spirit's arrival is the signal: the final chapter of God's plan has begun.

[Illustrate]:

- As we learned in our study of Revelation:
 - The **last days** shouldn't make us think of zombies, nuclear war, a meteor destroying the earth, or the rise of AI.
 - That's Hollywood, not the Bible!
- In the Bible:
 - The last days are the time between the first and second comings of Christ.
 - In other words, they're now.
 - We're in the final act...
 - We're reading the seventh Harry Potter; we're watching the last Avengers movie; to quote Dr. Strange: "We're in the endgame now."
- As Peter taught the crowd: Life might feel chaotic, but it's all part of God's plan.

[Apply]: Why does all this matter?

- Bc the same is true for us—your story is part of his story: When things seem uncertain or chaotic in your life...
 - You're waiting on biopsy results.
 - You're not sure if your relationship will make it.
 - You're awake at 3 a.m. wondering if your teenager will come home.
 - You're scanning the job listings—desperate for a change.
 - You don't know what your future holds.
 - You read about wars abroad and violence at home.
- In those moments—in every moment:
 - You are not the victim of chance or fate, of cosmic chaos or drunkenness.
 - You are part of God's plan.
 - God is in charge of human history.
 - And God is in charge of your life.
 - At the office, in the classroom, on the sidelines of another soccer game...
 - Our lives are not drifting, they are moving:
 - Toward that time when Christ will return.
 - And every tear will be wiped, every wrong made right, and everything on earth will be as it is in heaven.
- Do you need that reminder today?
 - Your life is in God's hands.
 - Keep going—in the end, we'll rejoice in his plan.

[Transition]: How can we be sure? Bc after the **last days**, Peter tells us about...

2. THE LAST KING (VV22-36)²

[State/Illustrate]

- Peter's main point in this section is **simple**: the last king has been enthroned.
 - He sums it up in **V36: Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.**
- But the way he makes this point is **nuanced**.
 - To help us follow the ebb and flow of his reasoning, Rico Tice, a British preacher, has us imagine this scene.
 - You're on vacation in London. You duck into a grocery store to grab some lunch and suddenly spot someone who looks exactly like the King. You can't believe your luck. You reach for your autograph book—then you notice—he's chewing gum, wearing shorts, and standing at the cigarette counter in a Madonna T-shirt. Suddenly you think: *It looks like him, but it can't be—not here, not like that.*
- That's how the crowds felt about Jesus.

- At first, **they thought he was the king.**
 - **V22:** Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.
 - He did things only God could do. Palm Sunday sealed it—cloaks on the road, shouts of *Hosanna!* The autograph books were out.
- But then—**the unthinkable.**
 - He was arrested, humiliated, crucified. Strung up on a cross.
 - That doesn't happen to the king—this can't be him!
- Except Peter says: it was all **part of God's plan.**
 - **V23:** This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
 - Yes, they were guilty of putting Christ to death—but behind it all, God was at work.
 - Jesus had to die.
 - He did so for us.
- But even then, **God wasn't finished...**
 - **V24:** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.
 - The point of **VV25–32** is that all other kings had died and stayed dead.
 - Even David—his tomb is with us to this day!
 - But Jesus is different—his tomb is empty.
 - The resurrection was always part of the plan.
 - And because he rose again, Jesus is now enthroned as king.
 - **V33:** Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God...
- Back to the grocery store. You walk away confused—he looked like the king, but he couldn't be the king. But later that day, you join the crowd outside Buckingham Palace. And there, standing on the balcony, waving to thousands—it's him. Still chewing gum, still in shorts and a Madonna T-shirt. But now there's no doubt. It's the King. Only the King could be there, doing that.
- Peter's saying: the king might not look like you expected, but have no doubt:
 - He is alive, risen, and enthroned in heaven.
 - Only the King can be there, doing that.

[Apply]

- Every generation has its kings and rulers:
 - The Caesars of Rome.
 - The monarchs of Europe.
 - The politicians, presidents, and power-brokers of today.
- They rise, and they fall—their kingdoms never last—but Jesus is different.
 - He was crucified—but death could not hold him.
 - He was raised—and is now enthroned in heaven.
- And one day everyone will see it:

- **V35:** The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”
- The day is coming when all powers and all peoples will bow before him.
 - **Php 2:9-11:** God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - Buddhists and Muslims, atheists and agnostics, our friends and neighbors, you and me—one day all will bow before the ultimate, final, last King.

[Transition]: We are in the **last days**, under the rule of the **last king**. Which means, Peter says, we all have one **last chance**...

3. THE LAST CHANCE (VV37-41)

[State]

- When the crowd hear this message, their response is immediate.
 - **V37:** when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”
 - Jesus is the king? And we crucified him? What should we do?
- Peter’s answer is clear and direct.
 - It’s not try harder. Do better. Get your act together. Improve.
 - Instead, it’s good news:
 - **V38:** 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.
 - Turn to Jesus and commit your life to him!
 - Repent: Confess your sin and turn to God.
 - Be baptized: Make it known that you are following Christ.
 - And you will receive:
 - Forgiveness full and free...
 - And the HS—the presence of God—will be with you this day.
- **V39** tells us that the invitation is personal and expansive:
 - **Personal:** For the promise is for you...
 - **And expansive:** and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.
 - It’s for you. And it’s for everyone. We can all be Xns today.
- **VV40-41** tell us that many responded:
 - They didn’t delay. They didn’t overthink it—they took their last chance.
 - And **about three thousand souls** were added to the church.

[Illustrate]

- You ever missed a flight?
- I remember running through Seoul airport.
 - Our connecting flight had been delayed, and now it looked like we'd miss our flight home.
 - The attendants were calling names: "Last call. James Forsyth. Last call."
- I didn't delay. I didn't overthink it. I ran. Bc I wanted to make it home.

[Apply]

- **[Personal]:** More than anything, I want you make it home.
 - Maybe you grew up here but have never stepped over that line to Christ.
 - Maybe you're back in church after wandering for a long time.
 - Maybe this is your very first Sunday.
 - It doesn't matter—today you have a chance...
 - Don't delay. Don't overthink it. Come to Christ.
 - He'll forgive your sins and give you his Spirit—hope for today, and eternal life to come.
- **[Expansive]:** If you've already done that—celebrate:
 - We are in the **last days**—God is in control of our lives.
 - We follow the **last king**—who loves, forgives, and fills us with life.
 - And we can share the good news with others—that they still have a **chance**.

[THE CLOSE]

- This passage gives us the opportunity to have a butterfly effect of our own—a small act with massive consequences.
- Someone in your life needs you to tell them about Jesus.
 - Not to try harder. Do better. Get their act together. Improve.
 - But the good news.
- Who was your butterfly? Who lead you to Christ?
 - Parent? Pastor? Friend?
 - It took a village of butterflies to get me over the line.
- This week: Be the butterfly.
 - To your spouse or kids; your colleague or friend.
 - Maybe God will use you individually or maybe you'll be part of the village he uses over time.
 - But tell them—that they might make it home.

RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles*.
- Ray Cortese, *The Mission: Clarified, Mobilized, Empowered*.
- Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption*.
- Alan Thompson, *Acts: A Commentary*.

Endnotes

¹ I owe this introduction to Rico Tice, *Facing Internationals*, accessed [here](#) 9/25/25.

² I owe this progression of this point and the illustration to Rico Tice.