

Acts Chapter 2

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In any Bible study, do not just believe Armin Wolff or whoever, but be like the Bereans in Acts 17 -- read the scriptures carefully, pray for the Holy Spirit to open your understanding of God's word and come to your conclusion on this or any subject. Points raised as questions will hopefully create an incentive for you for further study on your own.

The Acts of the Apostles is mainly the acts of two of them, the first 12 chapters feature Peter and the rest tell us of the doings of the apostle Paul.

• *Written by Luke to Theophilus*

It was written by the physician Luke who also wrote The Gospel of Luke, to what may have been a Roman official named Theophilus. Some scholars believe that the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts are legal background documents which Theophilus was the use on behalf of Paul in his defense before Caesar. The name Theophilus means lover of God. The Romans, in both books are portrayed as the good guys. Centurions are given as examples of good persons in a very positive light.

• *The Feast of Pentecost*

Acts 2:1 (NIV) When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Pentecost is One of the seven Feasts of Moses as he was instructed by God to write in the law.

• *One of the seven feasts ordained by God for Israel*

Three occur in the first month of the ecclesiastical year: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and First-fruits; three occur in the seventh month: Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, Feast of Tabernacles; leaving one which happened between, actually 50 days after First-fruits: Feast of Weeks also called Feast of Pentecost. Pentecost means "Fifty."; seven sevens plus one. Each feast had several purposes besides its ceremonial role. Each of the feasts had a historical commemorative effect and also a prophetic role.

• *The Feast of First fruits*

The feast of first fruits is to occur on the day after the Sabbath after the feast of Passover. This is not

linked to a day of the week because Passover is the 14th day of Nisan and that could be any day of the week. After Passover there is a Sabbath, the day after that Sabbath is the Feast of First-fruits. Therefore this occurs Sunday.

Leviticus 23:9-14 (NIV) The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb a year old without defect together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil--an offering made to the LORD by fire, a pleasing aroma--and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine you must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. □

• *Prophetic role of First-fruits*

The Feast of First-fruits was prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus was resurrected on the morning when they were celebrating the First-fruits in the Temple. The first three feasts in the first month speak of Jesus Christ's first coming. The three feasts in the seventh month relate to Jesus' second coming.

• *The feast of Pentecost is in between*

In between there is the Feast of Pentecost. Every able-bodied Jewish male was required to be in Jerusalem to celebrate these three festival seasons, if it were at all possible. Thus, in this chapter, because it was the Feast of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with people there to celebrate the Feast.

• **Pentecost is measured from the Resurrection of Jesus**

Note that Pentecost is 50 days after the day after the Sabbath following Passover. That puts it at 50 days after the Resurrection! Pentecost is measured from and relates to, not the Lord's death, but His Resurrection.

*Leviticus 23:15-21 (NIV) "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD from wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, **baked with yeast**, as a wave offering of first-fruits to the LORD. Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings--an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the first-fruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. □*

• **Pentecost includes leaven**

At Pentecost, a new meat offering is to be offered, and note verse 17, with **leavened** bread! All the other feasts and offerings are required to deal with **unleavened** bread. In Exodus and Leviticus, leaven is not to be in the house during these feasts, except Pentecost. The idea of leaven is always used negatively. Levitically, leaven is symbolic of sin because it corrupts by puffing up. What is the source of all sin? Pride. God hates pride since it was through pride that Lucifer fell. The Apostle Paul gives us a New Testament example of the negative symbolism of leaven.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NIV) Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ,

our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

• **The Church includes Gentiles**

In the prophetic picture of Pentecost, thus the Church, we have leaven as an image or symbol. Unfortunately, the Church is not perfect, and leaven is an appropriate type. Jesus, writing to seven churches as given to us in the Book of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 clearly shows room for improvement for most of the churches.

• **The Conception of the Church**

It is often taught Pentecost is the birthday of the church. This is not the day that the church was *born*, but the day on which the church was *conceived* by the Holy Spirit. The church has been growing for almost 2000 years and will be born into the kingdom of God on the day the rapture happens.

• **The first four feasts fulfilled**

Jesus is the Passover is the first fruits of them that slept and He began the Church on the very day they were celebrating this Feast!

• **A mighty wind**

Acts 2:2-4 (NIV) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

This wind was not a gentle breeze, but a loud boisterous storm that could be heard all over a Jerusalem. We are not told what the other weather effects accompanied this storm, such as dark clouds, but there must've been a manifestation that caused the crowd to assemble within earshot of the place where the 120 followers of Jesus were assembled.

• **Wind symbolic of the Holy Spirit**

Jesus himself makes the connection between the Holy Spirit and the wind. (Hebrew= *ruach*, Greek= *pneuma*).

John 3:8 (NIV) The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot

tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

• ***A crowd gathers***

Acts 2:5-12 (NIV) Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues. Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Because of the requirements of the law, Jerusalem was crowded with Jews and Gentiles from all over; it says from every nation under heaven, of which only 16 are listed. They came running to the place where the 120 were assembled, drawn there by the noise of the wind and whatever other unusual manifestation accompanied it. By the way, "Asia" – is not what we now consider as the continent, at that time but referred to a specific Roman province.

• ***A puzzled throng***

They could not figure out how a bunch of uneducated Galileans could be praising God each in their own language. Not only was there the supernatural speech, but there must have also been supernatural listening ability by the diverse hearers to be able to pick out a particular language from the chorus of 120 simultaneous speakers. Each member of the crowd heard the praise in his or her own tongue. This is a different thing than the gift of speaking in tongues, which comes up later.

• ***Looking for an explanation***

They were amazed and perplexed by this phenomenon and asked for an explanation. However, some of them scoffed and criticized, a pattern often repeated in other sections of the

Book of Acts. They asked " what does this mean?"

• ***Peter gives his first sermon***

Peter's sermon answers their question of "What does this mean?" This sermon is an intricate masterpiece of organization and is well worth studying carefully. Also in this sermon we can see the infilling of the Holy Spirit of Peter. In the four gospels we see impulsive Peter speaking and acting without thinking, but this sermon is presented elegantly and skillfully. The sermon is not about the Holy Spirit, it is about the Son of God.

Acts 2:14-21 (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. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

• ***Peter stands up***

It was the custom in those days that teachers sat, but heralds stood. For example, Jesus in Nazareth, He sat down to teach. Peter is standing, he is a herald, he is going to proclaim something to the "Men of Judea". Peter is addressing Jews, his whole presentation is aimed in that direction.

• ***Defending the charge of drunkenness***

Peter is attempting to answer their accusation of the men being full of new wine. Note, he doesn't say that they were not drunk, but not drunk "as you suppose." He tells them that it is too early in the morning to get drunk. A different kind of spirit is here. Paul links the idea of being filled

with the Spirit in contrast to being filled with new wine.

Ephesians 5:18 (NIV) Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

• **Peter quotes scripture**

Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32. Peter picks out a passage that deals with the promise of the Holy Spirit. In the Hebrew Bible, this passage is in Chapter 3 (just divided differently), in the Hebrew Bible this passage is a chapter of its own. There is the promise of the Holy Spirit and it is followed by end-time prophecy. Peter quotes from the Septuagint version which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Peter speaks of this event which they just witnessed as being that which was prophesied by Joel. He is not implying that the total prophecy was fulfilled on this day, but that prophecy in Joel included that which they had just seen happen. "In the last days" - the scope of this prophecy is far broader than the experience that they had just witnessed. It has lasted almost 2000 years.

• **Peter blasts Jewish prejudice against gentiles**

This passage destroys every major Hebrew prejudice. If you were Jewish, hearing Peter, you probably would get emotional when you heard Peter talk. Note that this verse says that God will pour out His Spirit on *all* flesh, not just Israel; meaning the Gentiles as well as Israel. Furthermore, the idea of prophesying is no longer limited to the office of the prophet. They were used to having a prophet, a priest. Joel says "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy." It doesn't denote just the Levites, or those ordained in the office of a prophet but includes even servants and handmaidens. To the Jews this must have been very strange. This has not happened yet because Joel here is speaking of very end-time issues. Here in Acts 2, the Day of Pentecost has been announced. How long does this time period last? The Church is the Body of Christ, and it lasts until the Church is gone to be with the Lord.

• **Jesus "of Nazareth"**

Acts 2:22 (NIV) "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs,

which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

The designation "Jesus of Nazareth" is found seven times in the Gospels and here at the new beginning, the new beginning of the church Peter uses it for the 8th time.

Philip first designated

John 1:45 (NIV) Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Demon possessed man

Mark 1:24 (NIV) "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"

Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21:11 (NIV) The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Pilate: affixed to the cross

John 19:19 (NIV) Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Resurrection: angel at tomb

Mark 16:6 (NIV) "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

Two men: Emmaus Road

Luke 24:19 (NIV) "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.

And here at the apostle Peter - the 8th - the new beginning!

• **Jesus' sentence of death was no accident**

Peter makes it clear that this was not a mistake, but that this was in the plan of God, within the boundaries of God's purpose.

Acts 2:23 (NIV) This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

• **Accredited by God**

We often speak of an organization, such as a university or college being accredited or a person being accredited to practice medicine or law. Such accreditation is done by a human organization, but here Peter tells the Jews that this Jesus of Nazareth was accredited by none other than God himself through the miracle is that God did through Jesus.

- **Jews are not to blame**

For years the Church has promoted the heresy that the Jews are to blame for Jesus' death. This way of thinking led to the Holocaust. I hereby tell you: If you want to blame someone for the death of Jesus Christ, blame me, because it was my sins that put Him on the Cross. It was not only I, but everyone of you who has sinned that is to blame.

- **Raised from the dead**

Acts 2:24 (NIV) But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

The finishing touch, or the defining moment of God's accreditation and vindication of Jesus Christ was the fact of the resurrection. Peter tells his listeners that if Jesus had stayed dead, God would be a liar, and since that is impossible, it was equally impossible for Jesus to remain dead.

- **Peter quotes David**

Peter buttresses his arguments for the resurrection of Jesus by quoting psalm 16. He tells his listeners that the Holy one will not see decay, but will have life and joy.

Acts 2:25-28 (NIV) David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence."

- **Jesus, not David**

Peter makes sure again and again that his listeners understand who is that he is talking about, namely Jesus, the Messiah and that is who David was prophesying about. He makes sure that they

understand that this prophecy cannot apply to David because he's dead and buried and any one of them can go and see David's tomb.

Acts 2:29-35 (NIV) "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' "

As he emphasizes the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, I can see in my mind's eye him pointing to those standing with him as he says "and we are all witnesses of this" has a number of them nodded in agreement. What you have seen and heard here today is the fulfillment of the prophecy made by our forefather David. The resurrected Jesus has received the Holy Spirit from the Father and the result of the Spirit's coming is what you have witnessed here today.

- **Now Peter gets personal**

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

He knows that many of those directly involved in the crucifixion of Jesus are there gathered before him. Boldly he tells them, perhaps pointing a finger, that the one they crucified is indeed the Messiah, the one David prophesied about. Pentecost and Peter's sermon are not primarily about the person of the Holy Spirit, although He was given at this time, but as this key verse of the whole chapter states, it is about the person and Lordship of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

- **What do we do now?**

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?"

The inescapable logic of Peter's words empowered by the Holy Spirit caused them to be struck deeply and ask what their response to the truth should be.

- **The answer**

Acts 2:38-40 (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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

Peter tells them what to do and also tells them that if they do, they will also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He also tells them that this gift of salvation is also for those who are yet "afar off" - - that is the gentiles. Even though he uttered these words, he still didn't quite understand the part about the gentiles and the Lord had to drive that part home later on.

- **The harvest**

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

The result of Peter's sermon was a jump from 120 to 3000 church members. Some scholars believe that all this took place in the temple or on the temple grounds because there were facilities for mass baptism.

- **The Lord adds to the church**

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the

Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

What did these early Christians do to make the church grow? Did they have membership drives, raffles and other programs to bring members into the church? I believe the key of what they had to do and what they did is found in verse 42. If we truly do the things that we are told that these early Christians did, then the Lord will surely do his job, a job only He can do, -- that is add steadily to this or any gathering of believers that are obedient to him.