

LESSON TWO

(2:1-36)

In An Apartment of the Temple 2:1-36

2 *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

18 yea, and on my manservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

20 the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day.

21 And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know, 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 But God

raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. 27 For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.'

29 "Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all were witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says,

'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 35 till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.'

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

The News has come! The twelve were commanded to stay in Jerusalem, which they did, and are now prepared to receive the power from on high (Luke 24:49), the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). Luke 24:53 shows the apostles, the "witnesses of these things," in the temple, continually in praise to God.

Without doubt, God chose the time of Pentecost because many Jews would be in Jerusalem and present to hear the Gospel proclamation. Likewise, Jerusalem was chosen as the place of presentation, not only because of the above fact, but also because the facts of the Gospel were known to most (remember that Jesus was crucified at Passover time) and any unfounded claims (such as the resurrection) could easily be checked.

V. 1 - Pentecost - Normally occurred 50 days after Passover. See Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31; Deuteronomy 16:9-12.

they - The nearest grammatical antecedent is "apostles" in 1:26. This does not prove "they" to have been the apostles. The remainder of the chapter treats the apostles, however, and not any others who were with them. The ministry of Jesus to the apostles, the events in chapter one, the subsequent events in Acts which show the unique place the apostles held in the church: all combine to argue for the apostles and against any others. Those who hold that the "120" are the group which received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 do so without any basis in fact, rather upon poor exegesis and wishful thinking. Such a position makes it possible for everyone to be "baptized" in the Holy Spirit as the apostles were, a strictly non-scriptural point of view.

V. 2 - **sound** - The Greek word means noise, or echo. "Sound" is a good word. The idea to be conveyed is this: the sound heard is not simply a wind, but like a rushing mighty wind, as of a tornado. The significance for the apostles may have been varied, depending upon their state of mind.

The promise of Jesus of a mighty power to come upon the apostles was described by the term "Holy Spirit". We do not, as a rule, connect the Holy Spirit with wind, or wind with God. However, for the men sitting in the house, the situation was different. The Greek term (if they spoke it); the Aramaic term (which probably they spoke); the Hebrew term (the language in which most of their Bible was), all had the varied meanings of wind, breath, etc.; then spirit, mind, attitude/disposition, and God. The O.T. used the Hebrew term in all these ways. Here are some examples: as wind, Genesis 8:1, "and God made a wind blow"; as breath, Job 27:3, "as long as my breath is in me"; as one's disposition/attitude ("spirit"), Numbers 5:14, "and if the spirit of jealousy"; as that part of man from God which returns to God at separation of spirit and body, Isaiah 57:16 "from me (God) proceeds the spirit, and I have made the breath of life"; (Note the idea in Eccles. 3:21; 8:8; James 2:26) and of God, Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4, "the spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (It is thus often a phrase which equals God, as in Psalms 33:6; Isaiah 30:33). These ideas could be multiplied but this will suffice to help us see that the sound like that of a rushing mighty wind would have created in the minds of the "twelve" the concept of God in their presence, a God of power, might, ability.

house - Can refer to the temple, as in 7:47.

V. 3 - **tongues** - Symbolized like a flame of fire (though not actually fire).

Both the wind and the fire were O.T. symbols of God, as in II Sam. 5:24; I Kings 19:11,12; Psalms 104:3; Ezekiel 37:9; Exodus 3:2; Deuteronomy 5:4; Hebrews 12:29. Recall John 1:32, when the Spirit descended as a dove upon Jesus, "abiding upon him." The Spirit of God lives in Christians, II Cor. 1:22. Hence, the Spirit may take different forms in relationship to man.

As we consider the Holy Spirit coming upon these men, it will be instructive to compare Luke's Gospel with Luke's history. Consider Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25; 3:22; 4:1; etc. Then Acts ch. 2, 7:55; 8:17, 29; 10:19; etc. Luke shows the coming of the Spirit in both sound and sight to direct the lives of these twelve men, upon whose shoulders the proclamation of an everlasting Gospel rested.

It has been pointed out that though this day of Pentecost seems of great importance, it is not found to be so in early church writings (including the N.T.); the day of Christ's resurrection is the day of prominence.

V. 4 - **tongues** - Identified as a language, spoken and understood. Note the expressions which show the identification of tongue with language in verses 6, 8, 11. I Cor. 14:21 makes a positive equation of "tongue" with language. There is nothing in the

N.T. to cause any other interpretation than this: tongue = language. Those who make “tongue” equal to something else, do it in opposition to the evident usage, and not because of any usage.

V. 5 - Luke identified various groups (v. 9-11) who were hearing and seeing the heavenly event, as the apostles spoke “the mighty works of God.” The people were characterized as devout (cf. Luke 2:25), and dwellers in Jerusalem. It may be that they dwelt there permanently, or were temporary dwellers from Passover to Pentecost. The point is made that all were Jews, in sympathy if not by birth.

One can think of the tower of Babel where God brought confusion by mixing languages. Now He unites through the same medium. It is important to note that no Scripture can be cited that shows such a gift was used to “evangelize” or used other than in a meeting of brethren.

V. 6 - **they were bewildered** - Though all “dwelt” in Jerusalem (and perhaps all understood a common language like Aramaic) various language groups were represented among them. The sound drew them together, but the bewilderment came when the realization came that all were hearing in their own particular language despite the fact that the twelve apostles (the ones who were speaking) were Galileans (and not, therefore, capable of speaking so many different languages). As a matter of interest, notice how widely Jews were dispersed in the world. Peter’s epistles were addressed to the “dispersed,” I Peter 1:1ff.

V. 11 - **our own tongues** - The usage of the Greek term is the same in verse 4.

mighty works - We are not told what these things were, so it is useless to speculate.

V. 12 - **all were amazed** - The exact results intended by the “wind” and languages. The signs were not the message, but to get attention for the message. The phenomena were, however, a partial fulfillment of God’s prophetic statements through his prophet Joel, as Peter will say. God had been preparing for this event since before the foundation of the world. It is now the fullness of time and the mystery, long hidden, is to be revealed, a mystery that concerned Jesus and the unique role he filled in man’s history, being the actual basis for man’s redemption, and forming the foundation of the church (the kingdom of God, which also was/is Christ’s body), within hours of being a historical reality.

V. 13 - **new wine** - The Greek word means a wine that is sweet. Since the time was spring, no “new” grape juice had been made from “sweet” grapes and preserved by one of several methods. If the skeptics’ remarks are taken at face value, “new wine” could produce inebriation.

mocking - Some were predisposed to explain the phenomena in terms contrary to the truth. Such had always been so, and would continue to be. Consider the parable of

Jesus in Luke 8, the comment and quote of an O.T. text from Isaiah in Matthew 13:14-15; and Paul's use of a like text from Habakkuk 1:5 in Acts 13:41; and use of the Isaiah text in Acts 28:26-28. (The basic Greek term was used in ch. 17:32 to describe what some did when Paul preached about the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead.) They jeered at the signs and perhaps also those who were minded to accept said signs as from God. Peter had a ready response to the amazement of some, the skepticism of others.

V. 14 - **Peter** - He will now begin a sermon, not only intended to allay the charge of some (v. 13) but to show that the Jews should have been prepared for what had happened to Jesus, and what was now beginning to happen in the "church age."

The first major task of the apostles was to show the Jews the cross as it related to God's plan for the Messiah. Their problem was manifold, but basically involved seeing Jesus as both God and man, and both a Messiah and a suffering servant.

the eleven - As with another term, "the twelve," those who accompanied Jesus were meant, and excludes the "120" as remarked above.

men of Judea - He addressed the crowd, though we know not if all understood, or if some did, because we know not if the crowd could all understand a common language, or if only some did (hence the need to have other languages spoken by the apostles). As obvious, but not able to be settled, we don't know if, in addition to the miracle of sound, sight, speech, there was also a miracle of hearing.

V. 15 - **These are not drunk** - Whether or not the scoffers really meant what they said is anybody's guess. They may have suggested it to avoid praise (cf. v.11) or because they did not understand the phenomenon, or because they understood, but did not wish to believe, etc. As Peter stated, drunkenness was unlikely, and offered a more reasonable interpretation of the manifestation.

V. 16 - **this is what** - Peter asserts that God had planned just such an event to usher in a new era, the last days, in which the pouring out of the Spirit would be one event. Turn it around, and Peter said: what was spoken by the prophet Joel is fulfilled in what you are hearing, seeing, etc. Peter said, in effect, that everything he quoted from Joel was then being fulfilled. Many try to take the prophecy apart, and asserts each piece must be more or less literally fulfilled. Peter seems to assert the opposite. The gist of Joel was the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. The subsequent events were results of this cause. It is then unnecessary to look for or expect any fulfillment of Joel beyond the apostles.

As a general conclusion in consideration of N.T. quotes from O.T. texts, one should not assert what the N.T. does not assert. Contrariwise, if the N.T. asserts a fulfillment, then the safest and best course is to accept it. As illustrations, see Matthew 1:23; 2:15, 17; 4:15-16; Acts 13:33-41; 15:15-17; etc. Peter certainly interprets Joel by that which he said, and the interpretation was inspired. That is hard to argue with.

V. 17 - **pour out my spirit** - As with 2:38, the question is: was the Spirit Himself given (poured out) or gifts from the Spirit? The O.T. Hebrew text says “poured out” but that doesn’t settle the matter. It seems from various texts that either position could be true insofar as the apostles were concerned. Certainly if the person of the Holy Spirit is meant, it can only be in a manner of speaking, as best we know, since we can’t conceive of one distinct person being in twelve different bodies at the same time. However, since God is not limited as we are, such is quite possible. See John 14:23; Rom. 5:5; Eph. 1:13; I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 1:21,22; I Thess. 4:8. The end result was what was important, and we can see that for ourselves.

V. 20 - **day of the Lord** - Normally used in the N.T. epistles to mean the Second Coming, as in I Cor. 1:8; II Cor. 1:14, Phil. 1:10; I Thess. 5:2; II Thess. 2:8; I Tim. 6:14. Of course, there may have been more than one “day of the Lord,” with one yet to come when the epistles were written. It may also be true that Joel’s expression included all the time in the “last days,” so that his prophecy included the Second Coming. Again, as remarked about, the gist of Joel’s prophecy was what was occurring that day to the twelve.

V. 21 - **whoever calls** - Paul has the same statement in Romans 10:13. It apparently means that any person, regardless of who it is, may receive salvation if said person turns to the Lord for salvation. Of course, this idea of universal salvation was foreign to Jewish concepts, in the main, and definitely not understood by Peter, the speaker, the other apostles, or those listening. The whole Acts account gives various struggles of the early Christians to overcome their provincial thinking, and see the truth of the statement in Romans 3, that God is “the God of the Gentiles also.”

name of the Lord - This expression equals the person of the Lord. Many times “name” means the person, as in Acts 3:16; etc. We might notice that this is one of several times when the texts referring to God in the Old Testament are applied to Jesus in the N.T. Consider Isaiah 45:23 and Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11; Psalms 34:8 and I Peter 2:3; Isaiah 8:13 and I Peter 3:15.

V. 22 - **Jesus of Nazareth** - This phrase identifies who is the subject of Peter’s remarks. Many were called “Jesus.” We need to remember that the real issue is this: do you and I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God? Peter affirmed this proposition in Matthew 16:16, as did the other apostles.

Peter proclaimed that the events were part of God’s plan; the above fact (including explicit details about Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection) that was prophesied by Joel to happen in the “last days” - all was taking place just as God had intended.

mighty works, wonders and signs - Three aspects of any miracle, viewed from what it took to do it (mighty work), the response it caused in the viewer (wonder), and that it (sign) pointed to something beyond itself.

you yourselves know - The Gospels are replete with miracles no one could deny. The case is much like that in Acts 4:16. Many of those in the audience had knowledge of Jesus' works, or were themselves among the blessed. It was as Nicodemus said in John 3, "We know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, except God be with him."

V. 23 - **this Jesus...delivered up** - Further evidence that God had planned to redeem man, and counted the cost to do so. Consider what light this sheds on the "scandal of the cross": it was God's plan! For God, the events of the cross were the means of the reconciliation of the world. It was only to the minds of men out of tune with God that the cross was a scandal.

lawless men - Probably the Romans, but could well mean men with no restraints, such as the Jewish leaders or Pilate; whose only restraint was what worked for them personally. Jesus' death was not a matter of helplessness: God foreknew it; but men were still guilty of it, because they, with power of personal judgment willed it to be so. The crowds shouted to Pilate, "Crucify him (Jesus)." They accepted blame for his blood, Matthew 27:25.

V. 24 - **God raised him up** - Note how clear and bold Peter is, within a city where the facts he preached could be easily checked. Only an abundance of evidence could have changed the apostles into such forthright witnesses. Consider also how much Peter's ideas about Jesus' death and resurrection had changed since he first heard about it.

pangs of death - Probably best understood as referring to that which held Jesus (i.e., death), which is likened to the trap or snare that held whatever it caught. In Jesus' case, God planned that death would not triumph over Him who is Life. As Peter said, "It was not possible" for death to hold Jesus. Obviously the resurrection provided the best perspective from which to view the crucifixion, then or now.

V. 25 - This is one of the interesting usages of prophecy Peter makes, through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The text (from Psalms 16), as Peter explained in verses 29-31, could not refer to David, and to no one else but the Messiah. In it, the Messiah had expressed the confidence that a resurrection (in his case) would occur, since he, being raised, would enjoy the presence of God after the resurrection from the state of the dead.

In this connection, consider how often Jesus spoke of his resurrection. The epistles show what the resurrection means to us as they elaborate upon the meaning and application of Jesus' death in our behalf.

V. 27 - **Hades (Hebrew "sheol")** - The term really describes, not so much the actual grave, or the decay of the flesh, but rather the dead in total, all those who have died, regardless of their actual state. The meaning, then, is that the one David is quoting expected to be restored to life again, not remain among the dead. Of course, the apostles were witnesses of this fact, additionally substantiated by Peter's argument in verses 29-

31, that David could not have been speaking of himself, the facts being contrary to it. The Psalmist was then shown to have been speaking of the Messiah who was to come, and now identified to be Jesus. For us as Christians, knowing that Jesus existed before the time of the Psalmist (since Jesus is eternal in nature), we can understand that Jesus through the Psalmist foretold his own death, resurrection, etc.

The Greek word for Hades occurs ten times in the N.T: Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14 and our text. It is equal to the O.T. "Sheol". The Greek word for hell occurs in the following places: Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6. It is important to note that we should not read hell in our text, since that gives a misunderstanding of the actual events. Jesus did not go to hell as we think of it, but rather to Hades which is simply the place of the dead, inclusive of all the dead.

corruption - To be understood in parallel with Hades, and meant the state/place of the dead, rather than referring to the physical body, per se.

V. 28 - **thy presence** - The Greek says "with your face" meaning God's actual presence. The Greek term "face" often meant the person or the person's presence.

V. 29 - David's tomb was within the city walls, as seems evident from Nehemiah 3:16. Solomon was apparently also buried there. (The "tombs of the kings" now extant are apparently not the ones Peter had in mind, since they date only from the Roman period.) This the Jews listening all knew. Hence, the Psalm could only refer to the Messiah, who was being preached to them as Jesus of Nazareth.

V. 30 - **God had sworn** - The text Peter has in mind is II Sam. 7:12-16; and Psalms 132:11-12. Note Luke's record of Gabriel's remarks to Mary, Luke 1:32-33. Since the Messiah's resurrection was a matter of prophecy, thus truth, the Jews could not argue the point. All Peter needed to do was show that Jesus was the subject of that prophecy.

V. 32 - **we are witnesses** - The proof positive of the resurrection of Jesus was in the twelve apostles who were eyewitnesses of the matter.

V. 33 - **Being exalted** - The promise to David had been fulfilled at last, since Jesus was the fulfillment. The greatest era in the Jews' history, known as the "last days," had come. Paul remarked as much in I Cor. 10:11. The thing that was different, however, was that Jesus was exalted in heaven at God's right hand, while the Jewish people, as a nation, had supposed that the Messiah would sit upon a throne in the (earthly) city of Jerusalem, and establish an earthly kingdom. Of course, they were sadly and badly mistaken. The kingdom to be brought into existence by the Messiah was to be spiritual in nature, not material, and its king was to reign from heaven not upon earth. This point about "Jerusalem" was enlarged and clarified by Paul in Galatians 4:21-31. The kingdom of which the Messiah was to be king was/is the Church, the body of Christ. In this way, Jesus sat upon the throne of his father David, ruling over a kingdom that, by

its very nature, could have and would have no end (since the kingdom was not material in nature, but spiritual. Material things, all of them, have an end, I John 2:15-17).

the promise (of the Father) - See Luke 24:49. It is noteworthy that God is said to do this in Joel, and Acts 2:17; while here Jesus is said to “pour out” the Holy Spirit, or at least gifts of the Holy Spirit, accounting for what they saw and heard. Hence, Jesus and God are said to have done the same things; another item which shows Jesus’ deity.

V. 34 - David did not ascend - Peter again appeals to Scripture to establish his case, using the same Scripture Jesus had used earlier to show the misunderstanding of the Jews (see Matt. 22:41-45). It was Jesus who ascended into the heavens to begin to reign, not David. We do not think that Peter affirmed anything about what David did at death, but rather stated what happened to Jesus as the subject of prophecy.

V. 36 - Let...Israel know - By virtue of the prophecies, the testimonies and the empirical evidence, the fact was clear: Jesus of Nazareth was Lord and Messiah, the person the Jews had crucified. (Note John 17:5, 24-26; I Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:20-23; etc.). Observe also how David’s “Lord” and Peter’s “Lord” are declared to be one and the same, and that “Lord” and “Messiah” were equated, all in reference to Jesus.

Now, as we begin study of 2:38, we must recognize the following: The basics are to be considered in this text, and 2:42. It must be recognized that good and honest men have labored long over this whole section and yet have differed over what is therein said. It will not do, therefore, to argue that the Bible “says” it (whatever), and suppose that statement will end the discussion. The question to be resolved is: what does the Bible “say,” here or elsewhere? May we then approach the text within that sphere of thought, and do our best to understand exactly what God did say to us. It may further be added that even if we, or anyone else, is able to discern the exact import of these verses, that gives no reason for pride, nor does it mean that practice will be equal to understanding. God may well save because of faith and despite some/much misunderstanding (with the resultant disobedience or lack of obedience). Stated differently, grace may be greatened to some/many as God so desires. Be that as it may, no one is hereby relieved from knowing and doing as well as possible. Neither are we privileged to offer salvation other than as God directed.

QUESTIONS

17. Did God plan for the Pentecost event to happen?
18. How many of the Jews were to be in Jerusalem for this feast? (See Ex. 23:14-17; Lev. 23:15-21; Deut. 16:9-12).
19. With whom did Peter stand up? To whom did the crowd address their questions?
20. How many things did God plan or perform in regard to Jesus, according to Peter’s sermon?

21. What was the point about David's tomb?

22. Peter said the Jews had done what to Jesus?

ABA REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 2

1. Pentecost occurred how many days after the Passover?
2. How many people are referred to by the "they" in Acts 2:1?
3. Wind and fire are Old Testament symbols of what Being?
4. To give an explanation of what had happened, Peter stood up with whom (Acts 2:14)?
5. The "day of the Lord", as normally used in the New Testament, refers to what event?
6. Explain why "tongues" in Acts 2:4 should be understood to be spoken and understood languages.

7. List each country, region, people group mentioned in 2:9-11.

8. Complete the following statement: "Luke shows the coming of the Spirit in both _____ and _____ to direct the lives of these twelve men, upon whose shoulders the _____ of an _____ rested."

9. Which Apostle preached the sermon recorded in Acts 2?

10. Which Old Testament prophet predicted that "God would pour out my spirit upon all flesh"?

11. What does the term “day of the Lord” (as normally used in the New Testament epistles) refer to?
12. What happens to whoever “calls on the name of the Lord”?
13. Complete the following statement: “Three aspects of any miracle, viewed from what it took to do it (_____), the response it caused in the viewer (_____), and that it (_____) pointed to something beyond itself.”
14. What does the term “Hades” (Hebrew “sheol”) really describe?
15. Does Acts 2:27 teach that Jesus went into hell? What does this verse really teach/indicate?