

## 4. The Book of Acts 2:1-18

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A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier  
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Tonight we will be entering into Chapter 2—a pivotal chapter that deals with the birth of the Church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

### Acts 2:1 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Pentecost was one of the 3 main Jewish feasts where every adult Jewish male who lived within 20 miles of Jerusalem was required by Jewish law to attend.

What exactly was this feast.

### Leviticus 23:15–17, 20 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. <sup>16</sup> Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the Lord...<sup>20</sup> The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest.

**Pentecost** is called by the Jews to this day "*The Feast of Weeks*."

It's called the Feast of Weeks because God told Israel in Leviticus 23 that they were to count seven weeks from the Feast of Firstfruits, and then on the next day the Feast of Pentecost was to be observed.

Seven weeks are forty-nine days, add another day ("the day after"), and it brings the total to fifty days—which is why it's also called "*Pentecost*" which means "*fiftieth*." Pentecost took place in the late Spring (late May or early June) and marked the "*firstfruits*" of the wheat crop—which is why it's also called "*firstfruits*" in Leviticus 23:17, 20 (not to be confused with the Feast of Firstfruits).

There were, of course, more crops available at this time than at the Feast of Firstfruits in the early Spring—but still not as many as would be coming in the great fall harvest. For this feast the children of Israel were commanded to not just take the first sheaf of the wheat—but now they were to make two loaves of bread with leaven.

They were to then take these two loaves to the Tabernacle, later the Temple, where the priest would wave them before the Lord as an offering. This was the only time that God commanded in any of the feasts which He gave that an offering was to be baked *with* leaven.

- Why would God command Israel to bake leaven inside these two loaves when leaven in the Scriptures is always representative of sin?

Remember that it was on the Feast of Pentecost that the Church was born (Acts 2).

The two loaves speak of Jew and Gentile who would become one in Christ as members of His Body, the Church—

**Ephesians 2:14–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace,

- “OK, but why with leaven?”
- *If leaven is a type of sin—why put leaven inside two loaves of bread that are supposed to symbolize the Church?”*

Because as long as the Church is in the world there will always be sin in the Church. And I’m not talking about the *apostate* church—I’m talking about the true Church, the evangelical, Bible believing Church!

The reason is because as long as the Church is in the world living in these fleshly bodies there will be sin within it.

**1 John 1:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

There is no such thing as a perfect church this side of glory.

Now many people use that as an excuse not to go to church—“*Too many hypocrites.*”

Now, not only was the Church born on Pentecost but something else that was very important happened as well—Jesus rose on the Feast of Firstfruits, He then spent 40 more days with His disciples after His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

Before He ascended to heaven He told them to go to Jerusalem and to wait there until the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon them (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4).

He had promised them at the Last Supper that He was going back to the Father but wasn’t going to leave them alone like orphans, He would send them *another* Helper—the Holy Spirit. And so after Jesus ascended back to His Father—ten days later on the Feast of Pentecost (exactly fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead)—the Holy Spirit was poured out:

**Acts 2:2–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them.

They were probably in the upper room where they ate the Passover with Jesus.

**“...a rushing mighty wind (pneuma)...” verse 2**

This was not the sound of a *gentle* breeze—it was like a *hurricane* blowing through the city because it got the attention of everyone in town. (verse 6) This phenomenon was unique to Pentecost and the birth of the Church—it wasn't repeated again.

**Acts 2:4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

The filling of the Holy Spirit was an experience that was (and is) repeated over and over again—in the Book of Acts up to and including the present day. The idea of being filled with the Holy Spirit is to be “*controlled by*” or “*under the influence of.*”

In Ephesians 5 Paul admonishes us—

**Ephesians 5:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

When someone is drunk, we say that they are “*under the influence.*”

The same is true when someone is filled with the Spirit—only they are not “puppets” they can still do whatever they choose to. This began a new era for believers in Christ—it marked the beginning of a new relationship with the Holy Spirit.

**The Holy Spirit had been *with* them,  
then He came *in* them,  
—and now He has come *upon* them.**

The word tongues (“*other tongues*”) in the Greek is *glossa*, and it means an “*unknown language*”—that is unknown to the person who is speaking in tongues. They began to speak in languages that they had never learned and did not understand—and the only explanation was that it was a supernatural ability given to them by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues is a gift that is mentioned repeatedly in the New Testament—here is the first instance it is demonstrated.

Paul devotes almost a full chapter in 1 Corinthians 14 to the subject of speaking in tongues.

**“...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (ability, prompted).” (verse 4)**

The Spirit never takes control and forces a person to speak in tongues.

**1 Corinthians 14:27–28 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. <sup>28</sup> But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

The Spirit gave them the *ability* but didn't take control over them. He prompted them to open their mouths and make the sounds while the Spirit formed the words and sentences that was the language.

It's kind of like when Jesus told the lame man in John 5 to rise, take up his bed and walk. As the man made the effort to obey, God gave him the *ability* to do the impossible and get up and walk.

The gift of tongues is for the purpose of **prayer** (“*when I don’t know what to pray*”—Comment) and **praise** to bypass my intellect and praise and worship directly from my heart to God:

**1 Corinthians 14:13–16 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. <sup>14</sup> For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. <sup>16</sup> Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?

Sometimes people who want to criticize tongues as not being around today will say something like—“*If tongues are real and the Holy Spirit will speak through people in languages they’ve never learned—then why do missionaries have to spend years learning languages before going out on to the mission field? Why not just let the Holy Spirit speak through them in tongues?*”

Because that’s not what the gift of tongues is for.

God never uses tongues to communicate to His people—He uses the gift of prophecy for that.

**1 Corinthians 14:2–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. <sup>3</sup> But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

While the *wind* and the *fire* are never again seen in the NT with regard to a person being filled with the Holy Spirit—speaking in tongues is seen repeatedly.

- In 1 Corinthians 14:18, Paul wrote, “*I speak in tongues more than you all.*”
- In Acts 10, when Peter was in the house of Cornelius preaching the Word, he didn’t even finish his message before the Holy Spirit came upon the believers and they started speaking in tongues (Acts 10:44).
- In Acts 19, Paul led the Ephesians into the knowledge of Jesus Christ, laid hands on them for the power of the Spirit, and they spoke in tongues (Acts 19:1–6).

One pastor offers a caveat—

“Praying in the Spirit is an invaluable weapon in the spiritual arsenal God has given us. However, I’ll tell you the truth: Almost everyone I’ve ever talked with has discovered that when they began to pray in the Spirit with words they had never learned and sounds, they had never uttered, they were immediately challenged by Satan’s voice in their ears, saying, “*That’s bogus. That’s gibberish. That’s dumb.*” But this should not be surprising, for in every area of spiritual life, God declares, Satan denies, and we decide.”

The Bible tells us that when people speak in tongues—it is not always in a *known* language, or even an *earthly* language!

In 1 Corinthians 13:1, Paul says that tongues can be “*the tongues of men and of angels.*”

1 Corinthians Chapter 12 and 14, Paul deals specifically with the subject of speaking in tongues, and he states this clearly that when people praise and worship the Lord in tongues—it might be an earthly language (still spoken or extinct) or even the language of the angels.

Pastor Jon Courson—

*“I’ll never forget a meeting I attended at the Lake Arrowhead Hilton in California where about one hundred believers had gathered together for a time of waiting upon the Lord. Since hotel rules dictated that the bar remain open whenever the conference room was in use, the bartender stood in the back of the room polishing glasses while we studied, worshiped, and prayed. Toward the end of the meeting, a fellow stood up and gave a beautiful utterance in tongues. Because there was no interpretation, the brother overseeing the meeting wisely said, “We thank the Lord for that utterance, but since there is not interpretation flowing here tonight, that will be our only public utterance of tongues.” When the meeting concluded, the bartender approached us, and with tears running down his cheeks, said, “I must talk to that man who stood up and prayed. How does he know my tongue? I’m Iranian, and he worshiped the True and Living God in perfect Farsi.” Needless to say, the bartender got saved that night.”*

You don’t *need* to speak in tongues—it doesn’t make you any less spiritual if you don’t have this gift or any more spiritual if you do. Having the gift of tongues is not an evidence of salvation or even of spiritual maturity (Corinth).

This is a *gift* of the Spirit not to be mistaken for a *fruit* of the Spirit—a gift is *given* whereas fruit is *grown*.

But for me, anything that God wants to give me—I want, because all His gifts are good and blessed.

**Acts 2:5 (NKJV)**

**<sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.**

The city of Jerusalem was packed with pilgrims in town for Pentecost.

**Acts 2:6–11 (NKJV)**

**<sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”**

The interesting thing is that though to them (those speaking in tongues) it was *glossa*, a language they did not understand, yet, those people who were there from all over the world to worship the Lord at this feast—they understood and marveled and said ***“How is it that these people are all Galileans and yet they are speaking in our own languages?”***

Here the Greek word is *dialeketos*, from which we get our word dialect—*“They are speaking in our own dialects!”*

There are some ***fifteen different dialects*** mentioned here and yet they realized that—all of the people speaking were Galileans. So, needless to say this phenomenon attracted the attention of these Jewish pilgrims throughout Jerusalem.

And what did these pilgrims hear the disciples speaking in their native languages?—**“The wonderful works of God”**—in other words, they heard them praising God!

Again, tongues are always directed toward God in the form of prayer or praise.

**Acts 2:12–13 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” <sup>13</sup> Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

Whenever the Spirit has been poured out and is working it will draw *interest* from some and *ridicule* from others.

**Acts 2:14–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. <sup>15</sup> For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day [9am].

The Jews never ate or drank before 9am, that time was for devotion and prayer—especially during a feast or on a holy day.

The statement, “**These are not drunk as you suppose**” can have a couple of interpretations:

First, it can mean, “*These men are not drunk, as you’re suggesting.*”

Or it can mean, “*These men are not drunk in the way that you think. They’re drunk with a different wine, the new wine of the Holy Spirit, not distilled spirits, but the dynamic Spirit.*”

**Acts 2:16–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> *‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*

Back in Chapter 1, you remember Jesus said, “**Wait in Jerusalem until you receive the promise of the Father of which I have been speaking to you about.**”

As we’ve already pointed out, this promise was given by Jesus in the upper room the night before He was crucified—

**John 14:16–18 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> [When I return to the Father]...I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—<sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Now what many don’t realize is that—this was not a new promise, Jesus was repeating a promise that God had made through the prophet Joel roughly 850 years earlier. How can we be sure? Because, when the Spirit was poured out, Peter immediately drew their attention to that prophecy and to that promise in Joel (2:28-32).

This tells us that in the upper room, Jesus was reaffirming what God had *already* promised many centuries earlier. So that when these Jewish pilgrims said, “**What does this mean?**”—Peter immediately answered them—“**This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel**” (verse 16) and he went on to give them a solid Scriptural basis for the experience taking place.

This is something that I feel must be emphasized, and that is—whenever there is a spiritual manifestation of some kind in the Church—we must be able to give a solid biblical foundation for the manifestation or phenomenon that is taking place.

When people come to church and see something happening in ministry or in worship and they ask, “*What is going on, what is this?*” We should be able to say like Peter—“*This is that which was spoken by the prophet or by the apostle in God’s Word...*”

This has been the main problem with much of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements—an abundance of spiritual experiences for which there is no Scriptural basis. When you challenge them on it they’ll often say (as one charismatic ‘superstar’ said), “*You have to realize more can be cooked up in the kitchen than appears on the menu. God is bigger than the Bible.*”

That may sound spiritual but don’t be fooled by it because it removes from Christians the ability to “*test all things and hold fast to what is good (of God).*” (1Thessalonians 5:21)

The Bible has to validate experience—rather than experience validating the Bible!

One pastor put it this way—

“I’m not interested in any spiritual experience I can’t find in the Bible. You cannot use *experience* as a criteria for the truth because people can come along with all kinds of weird and wild experiences. If they say, ‘*Well, it made me closer to God and all*’ I don’t care. Experience cannot be the basis for Scriptural truths or for truth in general. You see if we allow experiences to be the criteria and basis for truth, then what are you going to do when the Mormons testify that when they started to read the Book of Mormon they prayed, ‘*Lord if this is Your Word, as I read it, give me a burning in my bosom.*’ And they will testify one after another that as they began to read the Book of Mormon, they began to have a ‘*burning in their bosom*’ so they knew that the Book of Mormon was the truth! When you allow experiences to be the criteria for truth you have no authority and the result will be confusion because Satan can give people all kinds of powerful (even supernatural) experiences that will lead them down the path of deception.”

If you remember that a number of years ago, an experience became very popular in the charismatic churches called “*holy laughter.*” This was often accompanied by uncontrolled shaking and chaotic gibberish as well as people making animal noises (barking like dogs, clucking like chickens etc.).

Another very popular practice in charismatic circles is people being ‘*slain in the spirit.*’

Most of these I think are fake—but not all. It does seem that some of these phenomenon’s have a supernatural component to them—but they can’t be found anywhere in the Bible. However, if we can’t point to the experience taking place and say like Peter—“*This is what the Bible talks about in this or that book*”—stay away from it!

Nothing good ever comes from false doctrine! You are opening yourself up for deception!

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