

Chapter Two

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- According to most modern translations, the festival that was being celebrated in verse 1 was called Pentecost. This is the Greek word, meaning “fifty”, used to describe the existing and ancient festival of Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks. The Hebrew word “Shavuot” is the plural form of the word “week”. It was called this because the date of the festival was determined by literally counting seven weeks from the day after the start of Passover, according to Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:9-10 and Leviticus 23:15,16. The Bible clearly states that the counting of the seven weeks was linked to Passover, which was and is always celebrated according to Leviticus 23:5 per the lunar calendar on the 14th of the month of Nisan.
- The current practice of determining the Christian holiday of Pentecost is to count fifty days from the celebration of Easter. Is it not interesting that even

today, per Church councils that began under Constantine in 325 CE, the annual date for Easter is still determined to be the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox, according to the pagan calendar?

- What are we to make of current church traditions that rename Biblical festivals and celebrate them on the wrong days?
- The text, in verse 1, states that the believers, by now numbering 120, were all gathered together in one place. Given that “upper room” apartments in Jerusalem were small, do you think they were still all meeting there?
- The “one place” referred to is most likely the temple precincts. Where else would torah-observant Jews celebrate the annual festival of Shavuot?
- Luke specifically informs us, in verse 5, that this body of believers were all Jews. Even the visitors from Rome in verse 10 were listed as Jews and proselytes. Why is it significant that there are no gentiles present yet within this body of early believers in Yeshua? Note that “proselytes” were gentiles who underwent the man-made ritual conversion to be accepted “as Jews”.

- The text in verse 4 refers to the disciples talking in different languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak. Verse 6 states, “everyone heard them speaking in his own language”. Verse 8 states, “How do we hear, everyone in our own native language”. Verse 11 states, “we hear them speaking in our languages the mighty works of God”. Were these actual known languages or some kind of emotionally charged, ecstatic, poly-syllabic babbling like what is practiced in some Pentecostal/Charismatic circles today?
- Beginning in verse 14, the apostle Peter begins a long recitation of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 wherein this current experience of the Holy Spirit is shown to be in fulfillment of the prophecy of the Messianic age. He then proceeds to explain, in detail, how the Messiah’s death and resurrection were pre-ordained and prophesied in the Tanach. Peter also demonstrates that these specific prophecies regarding the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah were well known to King David, long before the Messianic advent. If King David knew all this about the future Messiah, how does that affect your understanding of the object of his faith? Do you think he kept this knowledge to himself? Consider all the psalms written by David that are Messianic.

- In verse 36, Peter is still addressing “all the house of Israel” with no mention of gentiles yet. If these earliest believers in Yeshua were all Jews, and obviously torah-observant and involved with the temple, how is it that many church groups paint the picture that this earliest group of believers were now called “Christians” and part of “the church” and separate from “the Jews”? Is there anything in the text to warrant such a conclusion?
- The message of repentance was preached by John the Baptist, by Yeshua and by His disciples. Here, Peter is sharing the same message. He is placing the object of identification of the immersion as “in the name of Yeshua the Messiah”. He further states that this calling is to “you and your children” referring to the Jews present but also to those “who are far off”. This could either refer to future generations of Jews or possibly a hint of including gentiles who were considered “far off” in terms of access by the standards of the Judaism of the day. Do you think God has always had a plan to include gentiles along with Jews? Consider Deuteronomy 4:1-9, Isaiah 56: 1-3. 6-8, John 10:1-18, Acts 15, Romans 11:11-24 and Ephesians 2 in deciding.

- In verse 11, the text informs us that about 3,000 souls gladly received his word and were immersed. If this event were still being held at “the upper room”, as some teach, how did they baptize 3,000 people in a small apartment?
- The temple precincts had hundreds of available facilities for immersion called “mikvah” in the singular and “mikvaot” in the plural. Everyone who entered the temple area underwent a ceremonial immersion to enter the temple grounds as required in the Torah. This was done as an outward identification of their status of ritual purity required to be in attendance. How does this outward immersion ritual depict the inner cleansing by the Holy Spirit as they placed their faith in Yeshua as the promised Messiah?
- The text informs us in verse 42 that these new Jewish believers “continued steadfastly in the emissaries’ teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.” Actually, an argument can be made that the text refers to “the prayers” referring to the daily, liturgical prayers said during the temple service and repeated in Jewish congregations everywhere. Considering the teaching of the apostles, would they teach anything contrary to

what Yeshua taught and told them to teach? Revisit Matthew 5:17-19 and Matthew 28:19,20 as you consider this.

- Recall that many of these Jews were visitors and pilgrims who came to attend the festival of Shavuot, one of the three pilgrimage festivals along with Passover and Sukkot. They came from many countries and were planning on shortly returning to their homes. Upon encountering the gospel message and coming to faith, they were eager to stay on and to learn more. Does this help explain why the text states in verses 44-45 that, “All who believed were together, and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, according as anyone had need.”? Some commentators have tried to use this text as justification of some type of communist style socialist norm for believers. Communism is a government-enforced redistribution of wealth. Why is that wrong? Is that what is being described in these verses?
- Verse 41 and 47 both describe new Jewish believers as being “added to the assembly”. The apostles and other believers were already an existing body of believers before the events of Acts 2. So, is it fair to say that a

“new” body of believers called “the church” was born on this day or that the text actually refers to these “new” believers as being added to an already existing body of believers? Why is it important to think of continuity here instead of contrast?

- Verse 47 also states that the early believers were not only praising God but “having favor with all the people”. If the early believers actually rejected the Torah and the temple service, would they have retained the favor with all the people? Is there anything in the text that suggests such a thing?