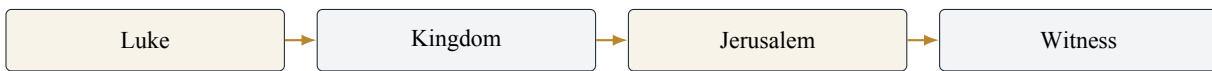


Session 5 Pentecost, Tongues, and the Jerusalem Multitude

Acts: The Book That Explains Everything

Session 5 | Acts 2:1-13



Before You Read

Big idea: Acts 2:1-13 records the day of Pentecost, the filling of the Holy Ghost, the speaking with other tongues, and the amazed Jewish multitude in Jerusalem. The passage describes a real sign event in Israel's feast calendar, not the revelation of the mystery body of Christ.

How to use this guide: Read each KJV verse first. Then mark what the verse says before deciding what it means doctrinally.

Three words to keep watching

- **Pentecost** - A Jewish feast day already on Israel's calendar, not a new Christian holiday invented in Acts 2.

- **Tongues** - Real languages understood by hearers from many lands.

- **Jerusalem** - The event happens where Jesus told the apostles to wait, among Jews gathered from many nations.

A simple right-division reminder: Acts 2 is before Saul's conversion, before Paul's apostleship, and before the revelation of the mystery of the body of Christ through Paul. Peter will explain Pentecost by prophecy, not by the mystery later revealed to Paul.

Acts 2:1

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

What does the passage say?

- The day of Pentecost had fully come.
- The gathered company was together in one place.
- The event happens after the waiting period commanded in Acts 1.

Words to notice

- **Pentecost** - The fiftieth-day feast connected with Israel's feast calendar.
- **Fully come** - The appointed day had arrived.
- **All** - The gathered company from the previous context

is together.

- **One accord** - United in purpose and place.

Cross-references worth marking

- Leviticus 23:15-21 - The feast connected with fifty days after the wave sheaf.
- Deuteronomy 16:9-12 - The feast of weeks brought Israel together before the Lord.
- Luke 24:49 - The apostles were told to tarry in Jerusalem.
- Acts 1:4-5 - They were commanded to wait for the promise of the Father.

Do not miss

- Pentecost is not introduced as a surprise date on a church calendar. It is an Israel feast day, and the apostles are still in Jerusalem waiting as commanded.

Acts 2:2

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

What does the passage say?

- A sound came suddenly from heaven.
- The sound was “as of a rushing mighty wind.”
- The sound filled the house where they were sitting.

Words to notice

- **Suddenly** - The event begins by divine action, not human planning.
- **From heaven** - The source is above, not from the gathered group.

ered group.

- **As of** - Luke describes the sound by comparison. The verse says it sounded like a rushing mighty wind.
- **Filled** - The house was filled with the sound.

Cross-references worth marking

- Ezekiel 37:9-14 - Breath, Spirit, and Israel’s promised restoration belong together in prophecy.
- John 3:8 - Wind is used in connection with the Spirit’s working.
- Acts 4:31 - A later gathering is shaken and believers speak the word of God with boldness.

Do not miss

- The verse does not say the apostles created an atmosphere. The action comes suddenly from heaven.

Acts 2:3

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

What does the passage say?

- Something visible appeared to them.
- Luke describes it as cloven tongues like as of fire.
- It sat upon each of them.

Words to notice

- **Appeared** - The sign was visible.
- **Cloven tongues** - Divided tongues, fitting the language sign that follows.
- **Like as of fire** - Luke compares the appearance to fire; the verse does not say the house burned.

- **Each of them** - The sign rested individually on those gathered.

Cross-references worth marking

- Matthew 3:11 - John announced that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.
- Luke 3:16 - John contrasted his water baptism with Christ’s greater baptism.
- Exodus 19:16-18 - Fire and divine manifestation appear at Sinai.
- Isaiah 6:6-8 - Fire is connected with cleansing and prophetic speech.

Do not miss

- Tongues of fire are a sign in the text. Do not turn the image into a vague feeling of spiritual excitement.

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

What does the passage say?

- They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.
- They began to speak with other tongues.
- The Spirit gave them utterance.

Words to notice

- **Filled with the Holy Ghost** - The promised divine enabling arrives.
- **Other tongues** - Other languages, as the next verses prove by the hearers' understanding.

- **As the Spirit gave them utterance** - The speaking was enabled by the Spirit, not learned by normal study in that moment.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 1:5 - Jesus had said they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
- Acts 1:8 - The Holy Ghost would give power for witness.
- Mark 16:17 - Speaking with new tongues appears among signs connected with the apostolic commission.
- 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 - Tongues are for a sign, with Isaiah as the background.

Do not miss

- Acts 2 tongues are not meaningless sounds. The passage will identify the tongues as languages understood by people from many nations.

Acts 2:5

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

What does the passage say?

- Jews were dwelling at Jerusalem.
- Luke calls them devout men.
- They came from every nation under heaven.

Words to notice

- **Jerusalem** - The city remains central.
- **Jews** - Luke identifies the multitude before listing their many lands.
- **Devout men** - Religious Jews, not pagan Gentiles being evangelized as Gentiles.

- **Every nation under heaven** - A broad expression for the wide dispersion represented in Jerusalem.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 1:8 - Witness begins in Jerusalem.
- Deuteronomy 16:16 - Israelite males were to appear before the Lord at the appointed feasts.
- John 7:35 - The Jews knew of Israelites dispersed among Gentiles.
- James 1:1 - James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

Do not miss

- The multitude is Jewish, even though the Jews have come from many nations. Acts 2 is international in geography, but Jewish in audience.

Acts 2:6

Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

What does the passage say?

- The sound drew a multitude together.
- The multitude was confounded.
- Every man heard the speakers in his own language.

Words to notice

- **Noised abroad** - The event became widely known and drew attention.
- **Multitude** - A large gathered crowd.

- **Confounded** - Perplexed, thrown into amazement and confusion.
- **His own language** - The language native or familiar to each hearer.

Cross-references worth marking

- Genesis 11:1-9 - Babel divided men by language.
- Acts 2:11 - The hearers understand the wonderful works of God.
- Acts 10:46 - Gentiles later speak with tongues and magnify God.

Do not miss

- The miracle is understandable speech. The hearers recognize their own languages.

Acts 2:7

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

What does the passage say?

- The multitude was amazed and marveled.
- They recognized the speakers as Galilaeans.
- They were surprised that Galilaeans were speaking these languages.

Words to notice

- **Amazed and marvelled** - The response is astonishment, not ordinary religious enthusiasm.
- **Galilaeans** - Men from Galilee were not expected to know all these languages.

- **These which speak** - The sign is centered on what the speakers are saying.

Cross-references worth marking

- Matthew 26:73 - Peter's speech identified him as a Galilaeans.
- Acts 1:11 - The apostles are called "ye men of Galilee."
- John 7:52 - Galilee was often looked down upon by Judean religious leaders.

Do not miss

- The sign gains force because the speakers are known as Galilaeans. The multitude is not impressed by trained linguists.
- The verse points to the Galilaeans, especially the apostles, and supports the conclusion that the miracle was Spirit-given speaking in real languages.

Acts 2:8

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

What does the passage say?

- The hearers ask how this is possible.
- Each man hears in his own tongue.
- The languages are connected to the places where the hearers were born.

Words to notice

- **Hear we** - Luke emphasizes the hearers' recognition.
- **Our own tongue** - Native language or dialect.

- **Wherein we were born** - These are real earthly languages, not private prayer sounds.

Cross-references worth marking

- Nehemiah 13:23-24 - Jewish children could speak languages connected with surrounding peoples.
- Esther 8:9 - The Persian empire contained many peoples and languages.
- Revelation 7:9 - Nations, kindreds, people, and tongues are distinct categories.

Do not miss

- Acts 2 defines its own tongues. They are the languages of birthplaces represented in the crowd.

Acts 2:9-11

Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

What does the passage say?

- Luke lists many regions represented in the Jerusalem multitude.
- The list includes Jews and proselytes.
- The hearers say they hear the speakers in their own tongues.
- The content they hear is "the wonderful works of God."

Words to notice

- **Parthians, Medes, and Elamites** - Eastern lands are represented.
- **Judaea** - The local land is included among the listed

regions.

- **Strangers of Rome** - Visitors or sojourners from Rome.
- **Jews and proselytes** - Natural-born Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism.
- **Wonderful works of God** - The tongues are used to declare God's mighty works.

Cross-references worth marking

- Isaiah 11:11-12 - Israel regathered from many lands is a prophetic hope.
- Zephaniah 3:9 - A future pure language is connected with calling on the Lord.
- Acts 13:16 - Paul later addresses "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God."
- Acts 18:2 - Jews from Rome appear later in Acts.

Do not miss

- Proselytes are not the same as uncircumcised Gentiles in the later Pauline sense. They are Gentile converts attached to Israel's religion.
- Later, in Corinth, tongues required an interpreter. Here, the tongues themselves communicate clearly because the hearers understand God's works in their own languages.

Acts 2:12

And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

What does the passage say?

- The crowd remains amazed.
- They are in doubt about the meaning.
- They ask one another what the event means.

Words to notice

- **Amazed** - Astonishment continues.
- **In doubt** - Perplexed, uncertain about the meaning of the sign.

- **What meaneth this?** - The crowd asks for understanding of the event.

Cross-references worth marking

- Acts 2:16 - Peter will answer by saying, “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.”
- Luke 24:17 - The disciples on the road to Emmaus were troubled before Scripture was opened.
- Acts 17:20 - Hearers later ask about the meaning of strange things.

Do not miss

- The sign itself needs explanation. Peter’s answer in the next paragraph will be prophetic, from Joel, and addressed to Israel.

Acts 2:13

Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

What does the passage say?

- Not everyone responds with sincere inquiry.
- Some mock the speakers.
- The mockers accuse them of being full of new wine.

Words to notice

- **Others** - The crowd has mixed responses.
- **Mocking** - Ridicule instead of honest interpretation.

- **New wine** - Sweet or fresh wine; the accusation is drunkenness.

Cross-references worth marking

- 1 Samuel 1:12-15 - Hannah was wrongly accused of drunkenness.
- Luke 7:33-34 - Both John and the Son of man were slandered by critics.
- Acts 26:24 - Paul is later accused of being mad.

Do not miss

- Mockery does not explain the event. Peter will reject the drunkenness charge and interpret the event by Scripture.

Text And Translation Helps

- In Acts 2:1-13, no Textus Receptus vs critical text difference materially changes the doctrine of the passage.
- One wording issue appears in Acts 2:1. The KJV says “with one accord in one place.” Many modern versions read more simply that they were all together in one place. The difference does not change the event: the gathered company was together when Pentecost came.
- The KJV word **tongues** means languages here. Acts 2:6, 2:8, and 2:11 define the tongues as languages understood

by hearers from their birth regions.

- The KJV phrase **new wine** in Acts 2:13 refers to the mockers’ accusation of drunkenness. Peter answers that accusation in Acts 2:15.
- The main interpretive issue is not textual. It is whether the reader lets Peter explain Pentecost by prophecy in Acts 2:16-21, or reads later Pauline mystery truth backward into the event.

Common Ideas To Test

- “Pentecost is the birthday of the body of Christ.”
 - Test it by Acts 2:1-13: the setting is a Jewish feast, Jerusalem, Jews from many nations, signs, and languages. Peter has not yet preached Paul’s later gospel of grace.
- “Tongues in Acts 2 are ecstatic sounds no one can understand.”
 - Test it by Acts 2:6, 2:8, and 2:11: the hearers understand their own languages and hear the wonderful works of God.
- “The crowd in Acts 2 is a Gentile mission field.”
 - Test it by Acts 2:5 and 2:10: Luke identifies Jews and proselytes gathered at Jerusalem.
- “The miracle proves every later believer should seek the same experience.”
 - Test it by the setting: Pentecost comes on Israel’s feast day, in Jerusalem, through the promised Holy Ghost, with a sign to a Jewish multitude.

Session Summary

- Pentecost came on an appointed Jewish feast day.
- The gathered company was together in one place as Christ had commanded.
- A sound from heaven, visible tongues like fire, and Spirit-given languages marked the event.
- The tongues were real languages understood by Jews and proselytes from many lands.
- The multitude was amazed, confused, and divided in response.
- The passage prepares for Peter’s explanation from Joel, not for a Pauline explanation of the mystery body of Christ.

For Long-Term Study

Mark these themes as Acts unfolds

- Pentecost as promise and prophecy.
- Jerusalem as the starting point.
- Jews addressed first.
- Signs connected to apostolic witness.
- Tongues as a sign language event.
- Peter’s leadership in the early Jerusalem witness.
- Paul’s later distinct apostleship and gospel.

Questions to keep asking

1. Who is gathered?

2. What feast day is in view?

3. Who hears the sign?

4. What does Luke say the tongues are?

5. How does Peter explain the event in the next paragraph?

6. Has Paul yet received the mystery revelation?

One sentence to remember

At Pentecost, the promised Holy Ghost came upon the gathered Jerusalem company with visible and audible signs, and Jews from many nations heard the wonderful works of God in their own languages.