

## CHAPTER 2

### READING NOTES

**Pentecost** – The day known as "the birthday of the Church." The Greek term Πεντηκοστή was adopted as the new name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks, sometimes called the Festival of Harvest. On the day after the seventh Sabbath after Passover, the festival began. This festival is described in Leviticus 23:15-21.

**Tongues of fire** – They are a symbol of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

**Third hour of the day** – This is 9 a.m. Some cultures measure the beginning of the day as the first hour of light. Therefore, 6 a.m. is the beginning of the day and 6 p.m. is the beginning of the night. The third hour of the day would be 9 a.m.

**The prophet Joel** – Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32, which foretold the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the end of the age. This quote shows that Luke views the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit as the dawning of a new age in the history of the world.

**Patriarch** – In verse 29, David is referred to as "the patriarch David." A patriarch is the father of a group or founder of a movement. Usually David is not recognized as one of the great patriarchs of the Old Testament, who are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. In Acts, David becomes an example of faith and can be referred to as a patriarch in the sense of being a model of faith.

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Give a short list of the miraculous events that occur suddenly on the day of Pentecost (verses 1-13).  
The rushing wind, the tongues of fire, and the speaking in other tongues  
Verse 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.  
Verse 3: And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.  
Verse 4: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.  
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2. In verses 9-11, Luke writes that Jerusalem is filled with people from many nations. Why does Luke make the point that people from a variety of nations hear the preaching of the apostles? (See Genesis 22:18 and Psalm 96:1-3.)  
The Old Testament prophesied that the people of God would be a blessing to all the nations and that all nations would hear of the love of God.  
Verse 5: And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.  
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### CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Holy Spirit descends on the apostles just as Jesus promised. Then Peter stands up and preaches about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a result, 3,000 people join the Church.

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The Tower of Babel  
(Genesis 11:1-9)

### KEY READING NOTE

Pentecost

### READING QUESTIONS TO REVIEW

1, 5, 6, 7

### NOTES

- The Feast of Weeks began fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits, a feast initiated by an Israelite priest symbolically waving a sheaf of grain before the people. Seven weeks and one day later, the people brought two loaves of bread, both baked with fine flour and oil, along with seven lambs, one ram, one bull, and one goat. The Israelites sacrificed a goat for the sin of the people and two lambs for peace. The priest would then raise the two loaves and wave them over the sacrifices before they were burnt. Finally, after celebrating their harvest, the people gathered the leftover portions of their harvest and distributed them to the poor. Following the sacrifices, the people of Israel had a service of worship, and for the rest of the day, they did not work. This feast remained important to Israelites well into the time of Jesus and is called by its Greek name, Pentecost, by Tobit, 2 Maccabees, Josephus, and Philo.
- In verse 36 at the seminal moment of Peter's sermon, he says that God made Jesus "both Lord and Christ." People commonly assume that Christ is merely Jesus' surname. The Greek word χριστός (Christ), however, has the sense "Messiah." Also, the Greek word κύριος (lord) is an important word in the Bible. In the Old

3. All those who hear the apostles speak in their own languages ask, "What meaneth this?" What do you think is the significance of their new miraculous ability to overcome the language barrier? (You will find an answer in Genesis 11:1-9.)  
It is a reversal of the Tower of Babel, where humanity was separated by language.  
During Pentecost, humanity is brought together by language, rather than separated.  
Verse 12: *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*
4. As the apostles speak, what message do the people hear in their own languages?  
Verse 11: *The wonderful works of God.*
5. On what act of Jesus does Peter's sermon focus?  
The resurrection  
Verse 24: *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*  
Verse 27: *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*  
Verse 31: *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*  
Verse 32: *This Jesus hath God raised up.*
6. After Peter's sermon about Jesus, how do people react, and what do they do?  
Many accept his message, and those who do are baptized.  
Verse 41: *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.*
7. How many people are added to the Church on the day of Pentecost?  
About 3,000  
Verse 41: *And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*
8. What do the followers of Jesus do in order to help those in need?  
They sell their possessions and goods.  
Verse 45: *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

Testament, the name of God is Yahweh, the "Divine Name," but Hebrew did not originally have vowels, so this name was represented by four consonants as "YHWH." The Jews revered God and feared that they might misuse His name. So whenever they read the Scriptures and came across the "Divine Name," they would instead read the Hebrew word *adonai*, which has the sense "lord." When Greek speakers translated the Old Testament, they decided to keep the sense of *adonai* and used the Greek word for lord (κύριος) to render Yahweh. So by calling Jesus "Lord" and "Messiah," Peter identifies Jesus with Yahweh, the one true God.

- In verses 42-47, Luke summarizes the response of the people in Jerusalem to Peter's sermon. This section transitions the story from Peter's sermon at Pentecost to the miracle at the Beautiful Gate. The transitions in the plot of Acts put the story together and provide clues for how the story ought to be read. For instance, this summary shows that Peter's sermon is successful and many people in Jerusalem accept it, which creates a new community. The creation of a new community becomes a significant theme in the book of Acts.

9. Where do the followers of Jesus gather?

In the temple courts and from house to house

Verse 46: *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house.*

10. How are the followers of Jesus received by others?

They enjoy the favor of the people.

Verse 47: *And having favour with all the people.*

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Peter's sermon focuses on the resurrection of Jesus. What does Peter mean by saying that God made Jesus both Christ and Lord? How does Jesus' resurrection change everything for the Church?
2. Acts tells of how the early Church quickly grew. What is the key to the rapid growth of the early Church? How does that apply to the Church today?



People from many of the places on this map were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11)

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## ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Peter quotes King David in the Psalms; he prophesied that one of his descendants would sit on the throne of Israel forever (verse 30). Unfortunately, David and all but one of his descendants died, which prevented them from fulfilling this prophecy. One descendant, Jesus, was raised from the dead, and He ascended to the throne room of heaven where He now reigns (verse 33). So Peter says Jesus is Christ ("the anointed one") and Lord ("the ruler"). Jesus' resurrection changes everything by fulfilling David's prophecy that one of his descendants would rule forever. So the Church does not have ultimate submission to any earthly, political ruler, but to King Jesus.
2. The text doesn't specify exactly why the Church grows quickly, but there are a few hints in this chapter. First, the growth in the Church appears to be a response to Peter's sermon. Also the growth corresponds to the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the story of Acts.