

## THE BOOK OF ACTS

### Lesson 6, Chapter 2 continued 2

Let us continue today in Acts chapter 2. We're spending an inordinate amount of time in this chapter because there is an inordinate amount of information contained here concerning one of the most monumental events in human history: the arrival of God's Holy Spirit to indwell God's worshippers. But also because there are underlying Scriptures that form the basis for Peter's thought provoking argument to accept the deity of Yeshua and His position as Lord and Messiah. I have no doubt that this elegant speech that Peter gives is a result of the training that he received at the feet of Jesus; for only a Jewish scholar with intimate knowledge of the Torah could have pieced this together, and Peter was no Torah scholar; he was a common Galilean, a blue collar fisherman. We're going to examine some of that Scriptural foundation today that Yeshua must have taught Peter so keep your Bibles handy.

Let's review a few points from last week, if only briefly. First, what is called Pentecost in English is **Shavuot** in Hebrew, and it's the 4th in the series of the 7 Biblical Feasts that God ordained at Mt. Sinai. Originally Shavuot was an agricultural feast that celebrated the harvest of the Wheat crop; but later Jewish Tradition added the meaning that it was the day that Moses received the Torah on Mt. Sinai (which is likely). The Jewish commentaries and Rabbinic *midrash* about the giving of the Torah to Moses on Pentecost (**Shavuot**) tended to focus on the elements that excited the senses: the fire and flames, the ear-piercing noise, and the many voices of God (that represented all human languages). This notion of the Torah arriving in this manner on **Shavuot** 1300 years earlier had become a given in Jewish society; it was universally accepted in Judaism as truth and woven into Jewish thought.

Thus when we read Acts chapter 2 we can more readily see that Luke wrote about the mysterious events of this particular Pentecost (**Shavuot**) that follows Messiah's ascension to Heaven within this understanding; and shortly I'll point out how Peter did the same.

Another point I made from last week was to understand that to Peter the advent of Messiah and the arrival of the Holy Spirit to indwell humans signaled the prophesied entry into the era of the Last Days and, with equal importance, the arrival of the Kingdom of God. He quotes the Prophet Joel and some Psalms to make his point. But he also has in mind the Prophet Isaiah, which although he doesn't directly quote, he borrows some of Isaiah's prophetic thoughts. Specifically he borrows from Isaiah 2, 55, and 56. Since we've already looked at Isaiah 2, we'll talk a bit about Isaiah 55 and 56 today.

Yet another matter we took up last week was for the purpose of defining a pivotal Biblical term: lawlessness. Evangelical Christians immediately tend to think of the coming Anti-Christ as the "Lawless One", and so they envision a very bad man who scoffs at societal laws or sees himself as above the law (somewhat like a tyrant, an outlaw or a gang member). But that is an incorrect mental picture. In fact Biblically speaking, this term "lawless" specifically applies to all who turn their backs on God's Torah. The Greek word for law is **nomos**, and for lawless (without law, or outside of the law) it is **anomos**. I urge you to commit those two Greek words to memory. It shouldn't be terribly hard to do because English uses similar grammatical word structure. Example: we call a set of agreed to ethical principles "moral"; and the lack of adherence to proper ethical principles "amoral" (without morals). Amoral however is not the same as immoral. Immoral means a person recognizes the ethical principles but decides to break them. However an amoral person recognizes no ethical principles as valid, binding or pertaining to them. So **nomos** and **anomos** work exactly the same way. **Anomos** doesn't mean to break the law, it means to refuse to recognize the law as valid or pertaining to oneself. But what is essential for us to remember is that in the Bible the term law is always referring to either God's law or to Hebrew Traditions that purport to convey the underlying principles of God's law. And the only Biblical law that exists from God's perspective is the Law of Moses, the Torah. So lawless or lawlessness is not referring to the breaking of societal laws or international law, or any set of laws that are manmade.

I don't want you to think that this understanding that is a foundational belief and teaching at Seed of Abraham Ministries concerning the continuing relevance of

the Torah Law is a unique one for us. F.F. Bruce, in his New International Commentary on the Book of Acts says this about the use of the word lawless in the Bible: “.....lawless men (are meant) in the sense of being outside of the law of Israel”. And what is the law of Israel? The Torah, the Law of Moses.

So before we re-read part of Acts chapter 2, let's move from theory to practice as I hit you right between the eyes with an inescapable and uncomfortable reality that each Believer is faced with. Being labeled as **anomous** is always a wicked negative thing in the Bible (Old and New Testaments). And, sadly (dangerously) most of Christianity today (just like the Romans who crucified Christ) says that God's Torah, the Law of Moses, doesn't pertain to them. Thus most of Christianity today by every Biblical definition has classified itself, and proudly proclaims to be, **anomous**. Without God's Law. I'll let you ponder that as we move on.

### RE-READ ACTS CHAPTER 2:22 – 36

Verse 22 begins with “Men of Israel, listen to this!” some Bibles say it only slightly differently. Remembering that to Luke and to Peter the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (**Shavuot**) is the 2nd coming of the Torah, accomplished in essentially the same way that the Jewish religious leaders and teachers said that it happened at Mt. Sinai with Moses, then we need to be alert to why Peter chose the words he did to speak to this huge crowd of bewildered religious Jews who were in Jerusalem (some journeying extraordinarily long distances) in obedience to God's commandment to come to the Temple for Shavuot.

Listen to the words of Moses as he recalls the events of Mt. Sinai in Deuteronomy 5:1.

**CJB Deuteronomy 5:1 *Then Moshe called to all Isra'el and said to them, "Listen, Isra'el, to the laws and rulings which I am announcing in your hearing today, so that you will learn them and take care to obey them.<sup>2</sup> ADONAI our God made a covenant with us at Horev.***

And a few verses later in the same setting, during the same speech to the Israelites, Moses said this in Deuteronomy 6.

### Deuteronomy 6:3-5 CJB

**<sup>3</sup> Therefore listen, Isra'el, and take care to obey, so that things will go well with you, and so that you will increase greatly, as ADONAI, the God of your ancestors, promised you by giving you a land flowing with milk and honey.**

**<sup>4</sup> "Sh'ma, Yisra'el! ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad [Hear, Isra'el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is one];**

**<sup>5</sup> and you are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart, all your being and all your resources.**

And, by the way, even though we read the word Adonai in our CJB's, and the word Lord in virtually all English Bibles that I've ever come across, that is NOT the original Hebrew. Rather the word is YHWH, Yahweh or Yehoveh. That's right; God's formal name is used in every instance, not the rather generic "Lord" or Adonai in Hebrew that we read in our modern Bibles.

It is common in all societies in all ages to invoke phrases and sayings that are easily recognizable by every citizen; sayings that evoke memories and mental pictures (cherished or solemn) of people and places and events. In America, and I dare say in most of the world, one only has to invoke the words 911 or World Trade Center and your audience fully understands your context and any comparison you are making. And so it was for Luke as he quotes Peter. The Jews hearing Peter instantly grasped the connection when Peter says in Hebrew "Shema Israel" (Listen Israel!) and then goes on in paraphrase of Moses to explain the very nature of God and His unity; only this time it is in relation to the Son of God, Yeshua. Of course not all the Jews present agreed with Peter's proposed connection between God and Yeshua, or between Mt. Sinai and what they just witnessed happen on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

And since we're on the subject of Moses and the pattern of Mt. Sinai being repeated at Pentecost, I'll expound just a bit on something I quoted from last week.

### **Numbers 11:25 CJB**

**<sup>25</sup> ADONAI came down in the cloud, spoke to him (Moses), took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy leaders. When the Spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied- then but not afterwards.**

I pointed out last week that this event in Numbers 11 set the pattern for what happened at Pentecost in Acts 2. What I failed to point out is just how nearly identical the two events happened, both centered on the Holy Spirit. And although this opens up its own theological can of worms, we'll open that can just a wee bit and hopefully close the lid before too many crawl out! Notice that the 70 Elders began prophesying (that is, speaking ecstatic speech), but then not afterwards (meaning they spoke this way for perhaps minutes or hours and then it ended). It was the same for the 12 Disciples and all the 120 Believers that were there at Mt. Zion. That is, when the Holy Spirit came upon them they began to talk ecstatic speech (in this case, employing different languages). But there is no record in the Bible or elsewhere, not even a hint or implication, that all of these Believers who were speaking in tongues (in foreign languages) in the immediate aftermath, and as a consequence, of the Holy Spirit event continued to do so for more than a few minutes or hours. That is, just like Moses' 70 Elders, they prophesied (using foreign languages), but not afterwards.

Paul says that speaking in tongues is one of several possible gifts that one can receive as a result of the Holy Spirit indwelling.

**CJB 1 Corinthians 12:1 *But, brothers, I do not want you to go on being ignorant about the things of the Spirit.***

**<sup>2</sup> *You know that when you were pagans, no matter how you felt you were being led, you were being led astray to idols, which can't speak at all.***

**<sup>3</sup> *Therefore, I want to make it clear to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Yeshua is cursed!" and no one can say, "Yeshua is Lord," except by the Ruach HaKodesh.***

**<sup>4</sup> *Now there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.***

**<sup>5</sup> *Also there are different ways of serving, but it is the same Lord being served.***

**<sup>6</sup> *And there are different modes of working, but it is the same God working them all in everyone.***

**<sup>7</sup> *Moreover, to each person is given the particular manifestation of the Spirit that will be for the common good.***

***<sup>8</sup> To one, through the Spirit, is given a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit;***

***<sup>9</sup> to another, faith, by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing, by the one Spirit;***

***<sup>10</sup> to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the ability to judge between spirits; to another, the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues; and to yet another, the ability to interpret tongues.***

***<sup>11</sup> One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distributing to each person as he chooses.***

So speaking in tongues is one of a range of possible gifts from the Holy Spirit. It is obvious from Paul's perspective that the gift of speaking in tongues is not universal among legitimate Believers and that the Holy Spirit chooses to whom He shall give each particular gift. Not only in our day, but even in Paul's, this issue of speaking in tongues as a sign of having received the Holy Spirit evokes great passion and strong disagreement. The Believer's fellowship at Corinth where Paul was, was struggling with this, no doubt with much dissent and bad feelings towards one another. So in 1Corinthians 14 Paul attempts to give the issue some balance and context.

***CJB 1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love! However, keep on eagerly seeking the things of the Spirit; and especially seek to be able to prophesying.***

***<sup>2</sup> For someone speaking in a tongue is not speaking to people but to God, because no one can understand, since he is uttering mysteries in the power of the Spirit.***

***<sup>3</sup> But someone prophesying is speaking to people, edifying, encouraging and comforting them.***

***<sup>4</sup> A person speaking in a tongue does edify himself, but a person prophesying edifies the congregation.***

***<sup>5</sup> I wish you would all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you would all prophesying. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in tongues, unless someone gives an interpretation, so that the***

**congregation can be edified.**

**<sup>6</sup> Brothers, suppose I come to you now speaking in tongues. How can I be of benefit to you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?**

**<sup>7</sup> Even with lifeless musical instruments, such as a flute or a harp, how will anyone recognize the melody if one note can't be distinguished from another?**

**<sup>8</sup> And if the bugle gives an unclear sound, who will get ready for battle?**

**<sup>9</sup> It's the same with you: how will anyone know what you are saying unless you use your tongue to produce intelligible speech? You will be talking to the air!**

So my position on the challenging issue of speaking in tongues is this: speaking in tongues is a real, valid, ongoing and valuable spiritual gift. But just because this gift happened at a particular Pentecost to the 120 Believers and 12 Disciples (and only lasted for a short time, apparently), that doesn't mean that it is automatic that every new Believer from then forward would speak in tongues. At Pentecost it happened for a specific divine purpose: Jerusalem was filled with Diaspora Jews coming from all over the Roman Empire, and they spoke different languages. Most did NOT speak Hebrew or Aramaic. It is my speculation that if all the Jews at Mt. Zion spoke Hebrew or Aramaic, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit that caused this speaking in tongues would not have happened as it did because it would have served no useful purpose.

Just as at Mt. Sinai when God wanted people of every language to understand His Torah, so God wanted every Jew present at Pentecost to hear and perceive what was happening in his/her own language. Thus speaking in tongues is one of several unique and specific gifts of the Spirit, and having or not having this particular gift has nothing to do with one's level of faith or personal merit. It is a sovereign decision of God for whatever purpose He has for you, or maybe in whatever circumstance you find yourself. But the use of the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues (and interpreting) must be proper and not contrived, and should not ever be divisive. Nor should we judge one another on account of having this gift, or not having this gift. And Paul goes to great lengths to explain this to the Corinthians. In fact, Paul goes on to say that he feels that prophesying

is a greater and more useful gift than speaking in tongues.

Let me also mention that in the New Testament the word “prophecy” takes on a different meaning from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament most of the time (not always) prophesying involved predicting the future and/or establishing new Scripture. But in the New Testament predicting the future is the exception when it comes to the meaning of prophesying. In Christ’s era prophesying meant to teach, or to expound upon God’s Word (existing Scripture) in an inspired or profound way. The belief in the era of Paul was that God’s Word to mankind was complete and locked up. The Books that formed the Hebrew Bible, and especially the Prophets, represented the entirety of God’s Word to mankind. Thus Bible and Torah teachers were said to be prophesying when they taught; not predicting the future but also NOT adding to the Holy Scripture. Usually it simply meant interpreting what the Bible (the Old Testament) had to say about any matter, including the future. And that was essentially what Hebrew *midrash* was attempting to do. So in New Testament Bible speak, as your Torah Teacher, it could be said that I am prophesying to you the congregation. In modern terms, I am interpreting the Bible and teaching it.

In verses 23 and 24, Peter speaks of what man did versus what God did in response to the signs and miracles that Yeshua used to prove who He was. Man judged Yeshua and condemned Him. Many ordinary Judean Jews in conspiracy with the High Priests and the Roman Governor had Yeshua nailed to a stake and killed. But God reversed their decision. Humans killed Messiah; God put life back into Him. Humans put Christ into the grave; God rescued Him from the grave. Humans despised Yeshua and thought Him worthless; God exalted Him and placed Him at His right hand.

But now Peter deals with a matter that Jews then, and modern Jews today continue to wrestle with; the issue of the relationship between King David and Messiah. Judaism has different takes on this matter, so there is no consensus. Some hold that King David himself will either be resurrected or will be reincarnated in a different body. And this is why Judaism in general works very hard to find David a perfect man who never sinned (a happy fiction to be sure, according to the Scriptures). So with that in mind, we can begin to comprehend why there was great interest, but no doubt much disagreement, within the crowd of Jews listening to Peter as he explains his view of the relationship between David and Yeshua. So in verse 25 Peter begins the topic by invoking a Psalm of David. Psalm 16:8 – 11 is quoted. And because in the New Testament everything



is rendered in Greek, we find a few minor differences between this Old Testament quote versus what we find in the original Hebrew quote. Here it is from the Old Testament.

### **Psalm 16:8-11 CJB**

***<sup>8</sup> I always set ADONAI before me; with him at my right hand, I can never be moved;***

***<sup>9</sup> so my heart is glad, my glory rejoices, and my body too rests in safety;***

***<sup>10</sup> for you will not abandon me to Sh'ol, you will not let your faithful one see the Abyss.***

***<sup>11</sup> You make me know the path of life; in your presence is unbounded joy, in your right hand eternal delight.***

So the two are very close but not exact. The Hebrew speaks of eternal delight in God's right hand, which is not there in the Greek NT quote. But what is Peter's point of basing what he's about to say on these few verses? The issue is as I mentioned a few moments ago: much of 2nd Temple Judaism believed that King David was the Messiah and thus would somehow return and reappear as the Messiah during their day. Peter needed to explain that this was an incorrect understanding of this passage, and he would use logic, history and some more Scripture (even David's own words) to prove His point.

So in verse 29 he lays it out: David died and he was buried. In fact Peter points in the direction of David's tomb that was likely on the eastern slope of the City of David at that time and visited by virtually every Jew that ever made his/her way to Jerusalem. So of this fact there was no dispute, and his tomb made it self-evident. But, says Peter, David in addition to being a king was also a Prophet (and Judaism certainly agreed with that) and so when there was prophetic Scripture about the Messiah and David's name was included, it was referring not to David himself but rather to one of his descendants (a literal descendant, not a reincarnation of David). So David could not possibly have been the Messiah; but Yeshua, a descendant of David, is.

What is the proof of this? Again, Peter says David was buried and his body was in a tomb that was visited every day in Jerusalem. Christ too was buried but His

body came alive and He walked out of that tomb because the grave couldn't hold Him. Even more, while David's bleached bones lay in that much-visited tomb, Christ is nowhere to be found on earth because unlike King David, Yeshua bodily ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of Yehoveh (and to this there were many witnesses). Further Yeshua received "what the Father promised", the ***Ruach HaKodesh***, and now has poured out this same Spirit on His followers. And to this fact, thousands were (on this very day) witnesses to it.

So in Acts 2 verse 35 Peter quotes Psalm 110 verse 1, stating that the person identified as "my Lord" in that passage will sit at God's right hand. Much of Judaism felt, and still feels, that "my Lord" is referring to King David. Yet, says Peter, it can't be King David because he didn't ascend into Heaven; he's dead and buried. Therefore Peter says in verse 36 that the whole house of Israel (meaning Judah and the 10 tribes of Ephraim/Israel) needs to recognize and acknowledge that Yeshua is the Messiah the Prophets and King David spoke about.

Now at this point I want to pause and change gears and discuss with you a couple of chapters in Isaiah that Peter no doubt was using as a foundation for his understanding of the relationship between David and Messiah Yeshua. Open your Bibles to Isaiah 55.

### **READ ISAIAH 55:1 – 5**

The key words in Isaiah 55 as pertains to our subject today are these: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, **the grace** I assured David." The grace (the ***chesed*** in Hebrew) that YHWH assured David was that a descendant of His would rule forever. The best place I can think of where this everlasting covenant that shows grace towards David is summed up is in Ezekiel 37. There we hear this:

### **Ezekiel 37:24-28 CJB**

***<sup>24</sup> My servant David will be king over them, and all of them will have one shepherd; they will live by my rulings and keep and observe my regulations.***

***<sup>25</sup> They will live in the land I gave to Ya'akov my servant, where your ancestors lived; they will live there- they, their children, and their***

***grandchildren, forever; and David my servant will be their leader forever.***

***<sup>26</sup> I will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant. I will give to them, increase their numbers, and set my sanctuary among them forever.***

***<sup>27</sup> My home will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.***

***<sup>28</sup> The nations will know that I am ADONAI, who sets Isra'el apart as holy, when my sanctuary is with them forever.'"***

Since David is not immortal or eternal, then this has to be referring to a very special descendant of David who became immortal and eternal. Otherwise his rule forever was not possible. That descendant was Yeshua of Natzeret, Jesus the Christ.

Let's switch gears one more time and talk now about Isaiah 56. The reason I want to deal with this now before we finish Acts 2 is because I mentioned last week that as Jeremiah 31:30 so vividly explains this "new covenant" that is sealed in the blood of Christ (that Christianity claims is the foundation for the so-called New Testament Church) is actually explicitly said to be for the House of Judah and the House of Israel.

***<sup>30</sup> "Here, the days are coming," says ADONAI, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah.***

The Church rightly points to this verse as the prophecy of a new covenant that will be sealed in Christ's blood. However the verse is explicit that this covenant is for Judah and Israel; there is not a thing here about gentiles or foreigners. As I have stated many times: there is no such thing in the Bible as a covenant between God and gentiles. All divine covenants after Noah are between God and the Hebrews.

And certainly this passage is emphatic that the new covenant is for Israel. Even so the Church has got it right that gentiles can be included, grafted in. But the Church has also gotten it wrong by making Christianity a new and separate religion, whose God is Jesus, and this to the exclusion of the God of Israel, Yehoveh, His Word, the Torah and even the Jewish people. God speaks in a

number of places in the Bible about including gentiles in the blessings and covenants He has given to Israel, but always there are caveats and requirements. Among other things Isaiah 56 explains God's view on this eventual gentile inclusion into the Hebrew faith.

### READ ISAIAH 56 all

So here are the key verses. First, a foreigner joining **Adonai** (it actually reads YHWH) should not say "Adonai will separate me from His people". Thus here is a promise that God will freely accept gentiles who want to join.....who? Him. It doesn't say "join Israel". This means that joining God is to make the God of Israel your God. But then there is verse 6 that sets some stringent stipulations for those gentiles who want to join HIM (not join Israel, not become Jews per se). He says gentile foreigners must 1) serve Him, 2) love Him, 3) be His workers, and 4) keep His Shabbats and not profane them. And if a gentile foreigner will do these 4 things his/her sacrifices will be accepted. And this is because God's house will be a house of prayer for **all peoples**. There are some other fascinating prophetic words contained in Isaiah 56 that aren't appropriate for our study today, but are worth your time to consider alone and in prayer.

Let's end today with this thought. Seed of Abraham Ministries, Torah Class has never advocated for gentiles taking up Judaism in order to follow Christ; but we have also never advocated against Judaism except as regards its rigidity against accepting Yeshua as Messiah and essentially excommunicating Jews who do accept Him. However Judaism and following God's Biblical Torah are often not on the same page, anymore than Christianity and following God's Scriptures are. This chapter in Isaiah 56 is a shining example to both Judaism and Christianity that it is long past time to set aside our dubious manmade traditions and doctrines and theological arrogance to rediscover God's Word, from Genesis to Revelation.

Here in Isaiah 56 we see the Lord emphatically stating His insistence that **Shabbat** observance is **mandatory** for gentiles who wish to join **Him** (again, it doesn't say join Israel). I emphasize that part about who or what it is that gentiles join because this makes it clear that while through faith in Yeshua gentiles are grafted into Israel's covenants, we who are gentiles are not grafted into **national** Israel so we don't become Israelites, or Hebrews, or Jews, or the new Israel (that is, Replacement Theology). The Hebrew people, who later became known as Israelites, will always be God's precious treasure; a special

people set apart from all others. They have endured more than any people group on this planet for over 3500 years because of their connection and devotion to the One God, the God of Israel, Yehoveh. Indeed they have stumbled and fallen many times and paid dearly for it; only to get up, repent, and have God forgive them and begin anew. And they will always hold a special place in the Kingdom of God for that reason.

Do you want to come to God's holy mountain? Do you want to be joyful in God's house of prayer in Jerusalem, soon to be the world capital with Messiah Yeshua as King of the Kingdom? Do you want your sacrifice, who is Christ, to be accepted by God the Father so that you can be clean and atoned for? Then God says: serve Him, love Him, be a worker for Him, and keep His **Shabbats**. Not my words, not my rules; they are God's.

We'll complete Acts 2 and move into chapter 3 next time.