

Acts 2 notes

Hallel Fellowship (<http://hallel.info>)

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● What is the setting of Acts 2?

○ What happened?

- Believers in Messiah Yeshua, likely the chosen 12 and possibly up to the total of 120 mentioned in chapter 1, experienced the coming of God's Spirit in a dramatic way and started praising God in the languages of the pilgrims present.
- The believers are accused of being drunk, but apostle Peter responds to the amazed and the scoffers by walking them through a study of various prophetic passages from the Scriptures that talk about the circumstances surrounding the coming of Messiah and the Day of the LORD.
- Apostle Peter accuses those present who witnessed the fulfillment of all these prophecies fulfilled in the life, suffering and death of Yeshua of killing the Messiah.
- Many were moved by Peter's Spirit-powered words, and 3,000 were immersed under the authority of Yeshua to signify that God had washed away their rebellion against Him.
- The believers worshipped and praised God together in the temple.

○ When did the events of Acts 2 happen?

- At Pentecost (Acts 2:1), which comes from the Greek **πεντηκοστή**, which means "50th."¹
- Pentecost was the Greek name for one of the three pilgrimage "feasts of the LORD."
 - The other two are Pesakh (Passover) and Sukkot (Tabernacles), all during which males were to present themselves before the LORD (Deut. 16:16).
 - This explains all the people from around the Roman empire in Yerushalayim as recorded in Acts 2.
 - In the Hebrew Scriptures, Pentecost was called:
 - Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot* שבועות in Hebrew; Ex. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:10).
 - Feast of the Harvest (*Khag haKatzir* חג הקציר; Ex. 23:16).
 - Day of Firstfruits (*Yom haBikkurim* יום הבכורים; Num. 28:26).
 - It is linked by seven weeks plus one day to the day of the Wave Offering of the Firstfruits of the Harvest (*Omer Reshit haKatzir* עמר ראשית הקציר; Leviticus 23).
 - The U.S. has one Thanksgiving day. Israel had three major ones: Reshit haKatzir, Shavuot and Sukkot.
- The celebration of Shavuot described in Acts 2 came 50 days after the timing the Gospel writers record as the day of Yeshua's resurrection.
 - Apostle Paul calls Yeshua, risen from the dead, the "firstfruits of those who are asleep" (*aparke* ἀπαρχή; 1st Cor. 15:20). *Aparke* is the same word used in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuigint, for *reshit* Lev. 23:10.
 - Early believers in Yeshua as Messiah are called God's "firstfruits" from mankind (Rom. 8:23; 11:16; 16:5; 1st Cor. 15:20, 23; 16:15; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). (See also
- Shavuot originally connected to the wheat harvest but the sages potentially by the Babylonian exile period had noted the connection between Shavuot and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.²
 - Ex. 19:1 talks about Israel's arriving at Sinai in the third month to the day the people left Egypt.
 - Sages saw that the giving of Torah on Shavuot would create a pedagogical cycle of creation at Pesakh, revelation at Shavuot and redemption at Sukkot.

○ Where did the events of Acts 2 happen?

- In the temple of the LORD (Acts 2:46).
- If there was an early connection between Pesakh, the exodus from Egypt, the creation of the "kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19) at Sinai and God's giving of His Torah there too, what connections are there between that first Shavuot after the first Pesakh and the first Shavuot after the ultimate Pesakh, i.e. the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua?

1 Thayer and Smith. "Greek Lexicon entry for *Pentekoste*." *The New Testament Greek Lexicon*. <www.studylight.org/lex/grk/view.cgi?number=4005>.

2 Stern, David H. *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Jewish New Testament Publications, Clarksville, Md. 1992. p. 219.

Shavuot after the first Pesakh	Shavuot after Yeshua as the Pesakh
God rebuilds the descendants of Abraham as an assembly of His people to represent Him to the world.	God rebuilds the assembly of the children of Abraham, who are heirs based on Abraham's faith in God and His Anointed One.
God delivers His Torah to His people written by His finger on tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18).	God writes His Torah on the tablets of our hearts (Jer. 31:31; Eze. 36:26; 2 nd Cor. 3:6–18).
<i>Torah</i> is Hebrew for “teaching” or “lesson.” So Torah means a lot more than just “law.”	God's Spirit teaches us about Him and, by extension, how life should work (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
God appeared with signs and wonders: smoke, the sound of trumpets, quaking ground (Ex. 19:18–19; Deut. 5:19–21). The Hebrew word for “sounds” is qolot קולות , which is often translated as “voices.”	God appeared as a rushing wind in the temple among the believers in Yeshua, accompanied by the pilgrims and residents hearing the believers voices in familiar languages.
A “mixed multitude” had joined Israel's journey out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38) and had a front-row seat to God's glory at Sinai.	People from all over the Roman empire, both native born and “far off,” akin to “foreigner” in the Torah, witnessed God's power.
God's glory appeared before the people as fire on the mountain, but the people were kept away (Ex. 19:21–23).	God's fire came upon individual believers.

- **verse 3 “tongues of fire”**

- Fire was a common sign of divine power in the ancient world, particularly in Greek and Roman mythology with lightning. Divinity often was heralded by a flame or an aura or such around a person. One must remember that the Adversary can appear like a blazing fire too.

- **verse 4 “filled with the Holy Spirit”**

- The “Spirit of the LORD” or the “Word of the LORD” came to different prophets and other figures in the Hebrew Scriptures when they needed it.
- The Spirit of God resided with Moshe (Num. 11:17). When Moshe felt weary of dealing with the ungrateful complaints of the people, God had him select 70 elders and shared the Spirit that was on him with them. Doing so led to them prophesying for one time only, including two who weren't with the group of elders at the time. (Num. 11:16–30) Moshe wanted all the people to have God's Spirit on them.
- Yeshua promised that God's Spirit would come when He had gone and bring them comfort (Luke 24:49; John 14:16; 20:22; Acts 1:8).

- **verse 4 “spoke in other languages”**

- The world was divided at Babel because the people were united under one language but used the unity to conspire toward greater evil.
- Here the believers are of one accord — “Behold how good and blessed it is for brothers to dwell together in unity” — but they are united in praise to God.

- **verses 9–11 nations³**

- Parthians: Parthia anciently included the northern part of modern Persia: it was situated between the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, rather to the eastward of both.
- Medes: Media was a country lying in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea; having Parthia on the east, Assyria on the south, and Mesopotamia on the west.
- Elamites: Probably inhabitants of that country now called Persia: both the Medes and Elamites were a neighbouring people, dwelling beyond the Tigris.
- Mesopotamia: Now Diarbec in Asiatic Turkey; situated between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates; having Assyria on the east, Arabia Deserta with Babylonia on the south, Syria on the west, and Armenia on the north. It was called Padan-aram by the ancient Hebrews, and by the Asiatics is now called Maverannahar, i.e. the country beyond the river.
- CAPPADOCIA: Was an ancient kingdom of Asia comprehending all that country that lies between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea.
- PONTUS: Was anciently a very powerful kingdom of Asia, originally a part of Cappadocia; bounded on the east by Colchis; on the west by the river Halys; on the north by the Black Sea; and on the south by Armenia Minor. The famous Mithridates was king of this country; and it was one of the last which the Romans were able to subjugate.

3 Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Acts 2." *The Adam Clarke Commentary*. <www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ac&chapter=002>. 1832.

- ASIA: Meaning probably Asia Minor; it was that part of Turkey in Asia now called Natolia.
- PHRYGIA: A country in Asia Minor, southward of Pontus.
- PAMPHYLIA: The ancient name of the country of Natolia, now called Caramania, between Lycia and Cilicia, near the Mediterranean Sea.
- EGYPT: A very extensive country of African bounded by the Mediterranean on the north; by the Red Sea and the Isthmus of Suez, which divide it from Arabia, on the east; by Abyssinia or Aethiopia on the south; and by the deserts of Barca and Nubia on the west. It was called Mizraim by the ancient Hebrews, and now Mesr by the Arabians. It extends 600 miles from north to south; and from 100 to 250 in breadth, from east to west.
- LIBYA: In a general way, among the Greeks, signified Africa; but the northern part, in the vicinity of Cyrene, is here meant.
- CYRENE: A country in Africa on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, southward of the most western point of the Island of Crete.
- Strangers of Rome: Persons dwelling at Rome, and speaking the Latin language, partly consisting of regularly descended Jews and proselytes to the Jewish religion.
- Cretes: Natives of Crete, a large and noted island in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, now called Candia.
- Arabians: Natives of Arabia, a well known country of Asia, having the Red Sea on the west; the Persian Gulf on the east; Judea on the north; and the Indian Ocean on the south.
- **verses 13–15 “full of sweet wine” “these men aren’t drunk ... it’s only the third hour of the day”**
 - The Greek word for “sweet wine” is *gleucus* γλευκος (Strong’s 1098).
 - Greek writers Hesychius and Suidas call it *gleukostoapostagmates staphulesprinpatethe* γλευκοστοαποσταγματης σταφυληςπρινπατηθη: “Gleucus is that which distils from the grape before it is pressed.”⁴
 - It derives from *glucus* γλυκος (Strong’s 1099), which means “sweet” with the contextual meaning of “fresh.”
 - Does a fountain send out from the same opening both **fresh** [*glucus*] and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce **fresh** [*glucus*]. (James 3:11–12, referring to the taming of the tongue)
 - Sol went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, “Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be **sweet** [*glucus*] as honey.” (Rev. 10:9–10)
 - Several different Hebrew and Greek words are used to talk about wine, per the Easton Bible Dictionary⁵:

The common Hebrew word for wine is *yayin* יַיִן (Strong’s 3196), from a root meaning “to boil up,” “to be in a ferment.”⁶ Others derive it from a root meaning “to tread out,” and hence the juice of the grape trodden out. The Greek word for wine is *oinos*, and the Latin *vinum*. But besides this common Hebrew word, there are several others which are thus rendered:

1. *Ashishah* (2nd Sam. 6:19; 1st Chron. 16:3; Cant 2:5; Hos. 3:1), which, however, rather denotes a solid cake of pressed grapes, or, as in the Revised Version, a cake of raisins.
2. *’Asis*, “sweet wine,” or “new wine,” the product of the same year (Cant 8:2; Isa. 49:26; Joel 1:5; 3:18; Amos 9:13), from a root meaning “to tread,” hence juice trodden out or pressed out, thus referring to the method by which the juice is obtained. The power of intoxication is ascribed to it.
3. *Khometz*. See VINEGAR.
4. *Hemer*, Deut. 32:14 (rendered “blood of the grape”) Isa. 27:2 (“red wine”), Ezra 6:9; 7:22; Dan. 5:1,2,4. This word conveys the idea of “foaming,” as in the process of fermentation, or when poured out. It is derived from the root Hamar, meaning “to boil up,” and also “to be red,” from the idea of boiling or becoming inflamed.
5. *’Enabh*, a grape (Deut. 32:14). The last clause of this verse should be rendered as in the Revised Version, “and of the blood of the grape [*enabh*] thou drankest wine [*hemer*].” In Hosea 3:1 the phrase in Authorized Version, “flagons of wine,” is in the Revised Version correctly “cakes of raisins.” (Compare Gen. 49:11; Num. 6:3; Deut. 23:24, etc., where this Hebrew word is rendered in the plural “grapes.”)
6. *Mesekh*, properly a mixture of wine and water with spices that increase its stimulating properties (Isa. 5:22). Ps. 75:8, “The wine [*yayin*] is red; it is full of mixture [*mesekh*];” Prov. 23:30, “mixed wine;” Isa. 65:11, “drink offering” (RSV, “mingled wine”).
7. *Tirosh*, properly “must,” translated “wine” (Deut. 28:51); “new wine” (Prov. 3:10); “sweet wine” (Micah 6:15; RSV, “vintage”). This Hebrew word has been traced to a root meaning “to take

4 Ibid.

5 Easton, Matthew George. “Entry for ‘Wine.’” *Easton's Bible Dictionary*.
www.studydrive.org/dic/ebd/view.cgi?number=T3816. 1897.

6 Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius. “Hebrew Lexicon entry for Yayin.” *The Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon*.
www.studydrive.org/lex/heb/view.cgi?number=3196.

possession of" and hence it is supposed that tirosh is so designated because in intoxicating it takes possession of the brain. Among the blessings promised to Esau (Genesis 27:28) mention is made of "plenty of corn and tirosh." Palestine is called "a land of corn and tirosh" (Deut. 33:28; Compare Isa. 36:17). See also Deut. 28:51; 2Chr. 32:28; Joel 2:19; Hos. 4:11, ("wine [yayin] and new wine [tirosh] take away the heart").

8. *Sobhe* (root meaning "to drink to excess," "to suck up," "absorb"), found only in Isa. 1:22, Hos. 4:18 ("their drink;" Gesen. and marg. of RSV, "their carouse"), and Nah. 1:10 ("drunken as drunkards;" lit., "soaked according to their drink;" RSV, "drenched, as it were, in their drink", i.e., according to their *sobhe*).
9. *Shekar*, "strong drink," any intoxicating liquor; from a root meaning "to drink deeply," "to be drunken", a generic term applied to all fermented liquors, however obtained. Num. 28:7, "strong wine" (RSV, "strong drink"). It is sometimes distinguished from wine, c.g., Lev. 10:9, "Do not drink wine [yayin] nor strong drink [shekar];" Num. 6:3; Judg. 13:4,7; Isa. 28:7 (in all these places rendered "strong drink"). Translated "strong drink" also in Isa. 5:11; 24:9; 29:9; 56:12; Prov. 20:1; 31:6; Micah 2:11.
10. *Yekebh* (Deuteronomy 16:13, but in RSV correctly "wine-press"), a vat into which the new wine flowed from the press. Joel 2:24, "their vats;" 3:13, "the fats;" Prov. 3:10, "Thy presses shall burst out with new wine [tirosh];" Hag. 2:16; Jer. 48:33, "wine-presses;" 2 Ki. 6:27; Job 24:11.
11. *Shemarim* (only in plural), "lees" or "dregs" of wine. In Isaiah 25:6 it is rendered "wines on the lees", i.e., wine that has been kept on the lees, and therefore old wine.
12. *Mesek*, "a mixture," mixed or spiced wine, not diluted with water, but mixed with drugs and spices to increase its strength, or, as some think, mingled with the lees by being shaken (Ps. 75:8; Prov. 23:30).

In Acts 2:13 the word *Gleukos*, rendered "new wine," denotes properly "sweet wine." It must have been intoxicating.

In addition to wine the Hebrews also made use of what they called *Debash*, which was obtained by boiling down must to one-half or one-third of its original bulk. In Genesis 43:11 this word is rendered "honey." It was a kind of syrup, and is called by the Arabs at the present day *dibs*. This word occurs in the phrase "a land flowing with milk and honey" (*debash*), Ex. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13: 27. (See HONEY.)

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Several emphatic warnings are given in the New Testament against excess in the use of wine (Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13; Eph. 5:18; 1st Ti. 3:8; Titus 1:7).

- The third hour was the morning prayer time.
- **verses 16–21 “spoken of by the prophet Yoel”**
 - A quote from Joel 2:28–32.
 - Other “last days” and “Day of the LORD” prophecies are in Zeph. 1:14–18 and Mal. 4:1–6.
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- **verse 24 “raised Him up again” “end to the agony of death” “impossible for Him to be held in its power”**
 - The “agony of death” or the “terror of She’ol [grave]” (Ps. 116:3) disappears through Yeshua (Rom. 6:23; 1st Cor. 15:55–56; Phil. 1:21).
- **verse 25–36**
 - Ps. 16:8–11
- **verse 29 “David died”**
 - Tradition holds that King David died on Shavuot.⁷
 - Jewish traditions call for certain Scripture readings on Shavuot:
 - Ruth (“your people will be my people ... your God my God” Ruth 1:16).
 - Apostle Paul warns believers from the nations not to forsake the tree of Israel they were grafted onto (Rom. 11:16–26).
 - Ezekiel 1–2 (glory and power of God on display)
 - Habakkuk 3 (the LORD, “my Salvation,” saves His anointed people via mighty acts of power)
- **verse 35 “sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool”**
 - Ps. 110:1
 - The passage has long been understood as messianic. R. Yudan [c. 350 C.E.] said in the name of R. Hama [ben Hina, c. 260 C.E.] that the Holy One puts King Messiah on His right hand and Abraham on His left hand, quoting Ps. 110:1. Abraham complains that his “son’s son” is on God’s right, and he is on His left. God then quotes Ps. 110:5 to Abraham to say that by being on His left, that makes God at his right hand.⁸
 - The Babylonian Talmud has three views of what Messiah would be like, based on Scripture that said He

⁷ Stern. p. 219.

⁸ Stern. p. 225.

would be humiliated and that He would be exalted⁹:

1. If the Jewish people are unworthy, Messiah will come “humble ... riding on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9.) If we are worthy, he will come “with the clouds of heaven” (Dan. 7:13).
2. The two roles of Messiah are fulfilled by two different Messiahs:
 1. Mashiach ben David (Messiah Son of David), the King Messiah.
 2. Mashiach ben Yosef (Messiah Son of Joseph), the suffering Messiah.
3. In a third view, the Messiah supposedly came to earth when the Second Temple was destroyed, and is presently suffering affliction with his people. He will bring about Israel's salvation when they hear his voice and repent.

⁹ Lewis and Harriet Lederer Foundation, Inc. “Devotion for Sivan 1 [June 4, 2008]: John 8:32.” *The Voice of the Lord*. Messianic Jewish Publishers, www.messianicjewish.net, 1998.