

# OpenTheo

## Acts 2:1 - 2:4



### Acts - Steve Gregg

In Acts 2, Jesus' promise to baptize his disciples with the Holy Spirit is fulfilled during the Feast Weeks, also known as Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit marks a turning point in the history of the church, as it becomes a general possession of believers and results in a vibrant and living community. While speaking in tongues may occur after being filled with the Holy Spirit, it is not the most important evidence; instead, the fruit of the Spirit is a better indicator of spiritual health.

### Transcript

We're turning to Acts 2. In chapter 1, we saw that Jesus gave a final commission and promise to his disciples that the Holy Spirit would be given to them. He said in 1.5 of Acts, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And in verse 8 of chapter 1, he said, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And now in chapter 2, we will read of the fulfillment of that promise. In chapter 1, just after Jesus made that promise, we find that he ascended into heaven and a couple of angels announced to the disciples that he would come back. That was a long time ago and we're still looking for that.

The first thing the disciples did after Jesus ascended was to choose a replacement apostle for Judas. And as I said, this does not set a precedent for apostolic succession. That is to say, it's not like every time an apostle died, somebody had to replace him so that there would always be a living apostle of the twelve.

But rather because Judas defected from Christ and defected from his post, he left a vacancy. Later on in Acts chapter 12, the apostle James dies. He's the second of the first twelve to die.

But he dies faithful as a martyr and he is not replaced because an apostle who dies faithful does not leave his office. The twelve apostles are forever the twelve apostles even when they're in heaven. We find that this man, Matthias, was chosen.

At the end of chapter 1, we're simply told that Matthias, from that point on, was counted

as one of the twelve. He's counted with the eleven. We will read many times in the book of Acts, especially the early chapters, about the activities of the apostles.

When it speaks of the group of the apostles, it means the twelve, and it will include Matthias, though his name will not be mentioned again in the book of Acts. However, most of the apostles' names are not mentioned again in the book of Acts. They are named in chapter 1. There's a list of the eleven without Judas in chapter 1. And they are in an upper room now with 120 people, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

But if you have the twelve apostles and Mary and the four brothers of Jesus, you still don't have 120 people. So there's quite a few people there whose names we do not know and will never know until we are in heaven. But they were the original Christians on the day of Pentecost.

They were the first people to bear the name that we and millions of other people around the world bear. And they were waiting. The Bible says they were in one accord.

They were praying. And they perhaps did not know how long it would be before the promise was fulfilled, but it turned out to be ten days. Jesus, after his resurrection, remained with them for 40 days, as it says in chapter 1, speaking to them of things concerning the kingdom of God.

And then he ascended into heaven, and it was another ten days because it was on the day of Pentecost. That's what we have in the opening words of chapter 2. Now, when the day of Pentecost had fully come. Now, Pentecost is a word that means 50 days.

And the reason it came to have that name is because it occurred 50 days after Passover, or frankly, after the first fruits offered. Passover occurred every year in the spring, and then the first Sunday after the Passover, whatever day of the week the Passover may have fallen on, because different years it would fall on different days of the week. But the next Sunday was called First Fruits.

Interestingly, Jesus died on Passover, and he rose on First Fruits Sunday morning. And so we begin to see a pattern of God fulfilling the ancient Jewish feasts with the events of Jesus, the significant events of Jesus' life. The Passover fulfilled with his death, First Fruits fulfilled with his resurrection, and now Pentecost.

Now, according to the law, they were to measure from First Fruits seven weeks, which would be 49 years. And the following year after that seven weeks, the next day, the next year would be the 50th year, and that would be Pentecost. Now, in the Old Testament, I don't believe it uses the term Pentecost.

It's called the Feast of Weeks because of the seven weeks that measure between Passover and this day. It was also sometimes called the Feast of Harvest or First Fruits.

Even though there was the Day of First Fruits on the first Sunday after Passover, that was the first fruits of the barley harvest, which came in early.

A little later in the year, a few weeks later, the first fruits of the wheat harvest came, and that's what Pentecost celebrated. At one level, that's one of the things it celebrated. It also celebrated the giving of the law of Moses.

Interestingly, the Jews decided, actually in the second century, so after the time of the Book of Acts, the Jews decided that the law was given on Pentecost. Now, the Old Testament doesn't say so, but it's entirely possible. The Jews left Egypt at Passover, and they did travel for approximately the length of time that is between Passover and Pentecost to Sinai and receive the law.

When the law prescribed that the Jews should celebrate the Feast of Weeks, it did not mention that this 50 days afterwards was the day he gave the law, but that's how the Jews today understand it as well. Pentecost celebrates the giving of the law as an anniversary of that, so it's a very significant thing. But Jeremiah said when the Messiah comes, he will write God's law on their hearts.

This is done by the Holy Spirit, and so as the Jews, no doubt, received the law from Moses on Pentecost, the church received the law written on their hearts by the Holy Spirit on that very day as well. And it also became the first fruits of the general wheat harvest. Now, the first Christians harvested into the church.

We are part of that harvest as well. James, in James chapter 1, writing to his fellow Jewish Christians, the Jewish Christians of his day, referred to himself and them as a kind of first fruits of God's creatures. If you look at James chapter 1 and verse 18.

Now, if you happen to look at James 1.1, you'll notice that it is addressed to the 12 tribes that are scattered abroad. But he's not talking about the unsaved Jews because he later speaks about that worthy name by which you're called, do not take the name of Jesus Christ with respect to persons and so forth. James's audience are the 12 tribes, but the remnant of the 12 tribes who happen to be followers of Christ, not the whole Jewish race.

And so Jewish Christians in the first century are the recipients of this letter. And in verse chapter 1, verse 18, James said of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. As the Jewish believers saved on Pentecost and shortly thereafter are the ones who are the first fruits of the general harvest.

You and I who are not Jewish, or even if you are Jewish, we who have been brought into the church at a later date are, you know, the continuing harvest. First fruits would be the very first specimens of the grain that is ripened and brought in and offered to God. So on the day of Pentecost, the first fruits of the church began to be brought in.

And this was marked by the giving of the Holy Spirit, as we shall see. So it says, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.

And it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues as a fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now, a lot needs to be said just about these opening verses, because this is, these are not just average verses. These are verses about the turning point in history. If the time of the death and resurrection of Jesus be counted as one of the, as the principal turning point in history, certainly the day of Pentecost is the turning point in history for the church.

Because the people of Israel, that is the faithful remnant of Israel who are the disciples of Jesus, received at this point the promise, not only the promise of Jesus, but of the prophets before him. Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets had prophesied a time when God would put his spirit on all his people. And Jesus had reiterated that promise.

For example, if you look at Zechariah 14 and verse 8, and if you're not accustomed to turning pages in your Bible, you may become fatigued. Of course, you have your Bible on your phone now, you can just enter the thing. In Zechariah 14, 8, the prophet said, or God said, In that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, and then it goes on to say where they will flow to.

Now, living waters, what are living waters? Jesus, when he spoke to the woman at the well in John chapter 4, said, If you knew who I was, you'd ask me and I'd give you living water. He didn't explain exactly what that was. But he did refer to living waters, again, in John chapter 7, when he was at the Feast of Tabernacles.

It would be nice if it was the Feast of Pentecost, that would connect nicely with what we're talking about here, but it doesn't matter. The Feast of Tabernacles had a water-pouring ceremony. It was a week-long ceremony in the fall, and the priests would pour water out in the Pool of Siloam, or they'd draw it from the Pool of Siloam and take it to the temple and pour it out by the altar.

This was symbolic of something or another. And during that ceremony, Jesus stood up in the crowd and made this announcement. This is in John 7, verse 37, and reading through verse 39, On the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

And he who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now, Jesus is promising again, as he did to the woman at the well in John

chapter 4, you can drink from something, living water that I'll give you. He says, as the Scripture has said, the believer, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

And we're not talking about literal water here. It's not talking about real water. This is symbolic.

The prophets also wrote, they wrote poetically. As anyone who studies the Old Testament knows, they were writing in poetry very much like the Psalms and Proverbs and Job were written in poetry. And therefore, they use flowery language.

They use metaphorical language. And when Jesus said, living water will flow out of you if you're a believer, it doesn't mean that there'll be literal water coming out of your body. In fact, John tells us what he does mean in verse 39, the very next verse.

But this he spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. That is because Jesus was not yet resurrected. The Holy Spirit could not be given generally to the people of God, but he predicted that it would.

He said, if you believe in me, you're going to find that living waters will flow out of you. And John says, he's talking about the Holy Spirit. This is going to happen later.

It wasn't going to happen before Jesus was glorified, but it was going to happen. And the living water, the rivers, he says, out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now, what's interesting, Jesus said, as the Scripture has said, he has to be referring to the Old Testament because there was no New Testament Scripture yet.

So what is it in the Old Testament that he's referring to? When he says, as the Scripture has said, out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water. Well, there's only one passage in the Old Testament that mentions rivers of living water. It's Zechariah 14.8. It says, in that day, it shall be that living waters will flow from Jerusalem.

It's the only reference to living waters in the Old Testament. And so Jesus, as the Scripture said this would happen, he must be referring to the only Scripture that mentions this. But Zechariah said the living waters will flow from Jerusalem.

Jesus said it will flow from the believer. Is there a problem with that? Not if you look at Hebrews chapter 12. In Hebrews chapter 12, writing to Jewish Christians in the first century, the writer of Hebrews made this comment in verse 22.

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are written in heaven. Now, the writer of Hebrews says the general assembly and church of the firstborn. That's the church.

There's only one church, the church of Jesus Christ. He's the head of the whole body. We have come to that church.

We have become part of that church. And the writer refers to that church as Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. The early church saw themselves as the new heavenly Jerusalem, the city of God, the people of God.

Remember Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount, You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hid. You are a city that is to be exhibited. It's the city of God.

It's the spiritual Mount Zion, the spiritual Jerusalem. And Zechariah, speaking in terms that were to be understood spiritually, obviously, because Jesus is the one who interpreted it, said living water is a flood of Jerusalem. Well, according to the New Testament, the church, the people of Christ, are the heavenly Jerusalem.

And Jesus said out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water, as the scripture said. So this is how Jesus interpreted Zechariah. The Holy Spirit would become flowing through the church to the world, watering the world.

Now Isaiah had spoken poetically about this as well. If you look at Isaiah chapter 32, quite a few prophets did, in fact, speak of this. We won't look at all of them, but we'll look at a couple of them.

In Isaiah chapter 32, it says in verse, well, verses 12 and following in chapter 32, it's talking about the desolation that will precede the coming of the Messianic age. But the coming of the Messianic age is mentioned in verse 15. It says, this will all be true.

There will be a wilderness, spiritually speaking, until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted for a forest. Now, I don't know if you've read the whole book of Isaiah previously, but if you have, you know that it's extremely common for Isaiah to talk about rivers in the desert, waters being poured out, you know, the desert shall blossom and bud and bring forth its fruit. The desert shall blossom as a rose and fill the earth with its fruit.

Isaiah has these images at least six, seven, eight times throughout the book of Isaiah if you study it. But usually he just uses the image of a desert being visited by an inundation of water, which brings forth, it transforms the desert into a fruitful place. And now Isaiah makes it very clear what he's talking about.

We're talking about spiritual water here. It's the Spirit that's going to be poured out, and then the desert will become a fruitful place. So Isaiah, like the other prophets writing in poetry, has referred to, frankly, Israel prior to the time of Messiah, being fruitless, like Jesus cursed the fig tree because it didn't have fruit.

Or Isaiah spoke of, in chapter 5 of Isaiah, of Israel as a vineyard that God planted, and he

couldn't find any fruit on it. The whole idea in the Old Testament and into the New is God is looking for fruit. When he created human beings, they'd be fruitful and multiply.

Of course, he meant by that, reproduce. But fruitfulness throughout the Old Testament then becomes a metaphor for becoming godly and spiritual. I mean, in Isaiah 5, there's the metaphor, the parable of God planting a vineyard and looking for fruit.

He said he came looking for good grapes, but he found wild grapes, not good grapes. And when he explains that parable in Isaiah 5-7, he says, I came looking for justice, but I found oppression. I came looking for righteousness, but I found the cries of the oppressed.

The point is the fruit, the good grapes that God's looking for is a metaphor for good living. God wanted his people to be people of justice and righteousness. That's the fruit he wanted from Israel, but they didn't produce it.

And when Jesus finds the fig tree that represents Israel and curses it, it's because he can't find fruit on it. Like God couldn't find fruit in Israel. And remember John the Baptist said, we saw this yesterday.

John the Baptist said in Matthew chapter 3 that already the axe is laid to the root of the tree. And every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. He's talking about the Jewish people who are not following God, just like they weren't in Isaiah's day.

And they rejected Christ too, for the most part, except for the remnant. There's always a fruitful few. There's always a fruitful righteous remnant in Israel.

And they are the ones who came to the prophets and obeyed them in the Old Testament. And they're the ones who came to Christ when he was here and obeyed him. And they became his disciples.

And they later called themselves the church. Later Gentiles were added to the group too. Like branches grafted in to an olive tree, Paul says in Romans 11.

The point here is that the church is seen in these prophecies as the Israel to whom God fulfills these promises. It's the faithful remnant of Israel who are followers of the Messiah. They are the ones that God pours out his spirit and they become refreshed, they become fruitful.

Like a desert turning into a fruitful field is the imagery that Isaiah used. Of course, Ezekiel 37 has the famous image of the dry bones. And how that they were spread out in the desert.

And Ezekiel was told to prophesy to the bones and then they assembled into bodies but

were dead. They were dead bodies but not bones. Then he was told prophesy to the spirit.

Some translations say to the breath or to the wind. These are all the same. Ruach in the Hebrew means it can be breath, spirit or wind.

But Ezekiel prophesies to the breath, the spirit and it comes into these bodies and they come alive. Now the interpretation is given later in the chapter that God's going to reassemble Israel because the dry bones represent the Jews in Babylon. God says this, are these dry bones? These are the whole house of Israel in the Babylonian exile.

They say our bones are dry, our hope is lost. And God says I'm going to reassemble them, which he did in the time of Zerubbabel in 539 B.C. He reassembled them in their land. And then he says in verse 14, this is Ezekiel 37, 14, I will put my spirit in you and you shall live.

The breath coming into these dead bodies represent the spirit coming upon the return of Israel. What we see is Ezekiel's prophesying a twofold restoration of Israel when they were in Babylonian exile. One was to restore them, assemble them as bones are assembled into a body, but they're dead.

They don't have the spirit. And so when God assembled them from Babylon into Israel and reassembled them as a nation, that's the first phase. But there was still another phase that had not yet come.

And that was I'm going to put my spirit in you. That's the second prophecy. He prophesied to the spirit in the breath and to come into these people.

Well, that's what happened on the day of Pentecost. Again and again, the prophet spoke of the Messiah's age being characterized by the spirit being given to his people. And even on this occasion of Pentecost, Peter is going to quote yet another prophet, Joel, in Joel 2, verses 28 through 32.

It's going to be quoted later in this chapter in Acts 2 when Peter is called upon to explain the phenomenon that everyone's wondering. Why are all these people talking in these languages and they're all Galileans? Well, he's going to explain this is what Joel predicted. And again, Joel says, God says, I'll pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy.

So again and again, we have this theme of God is going to pour out his spirit. And on the day of Pentecost, he fulfills this theme. It's also the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus that out of your belly, if you're a believer, will flow rivers of blood water.

Or when he said in the upper room, I'm going to send another comfort of the Holy Spirit who will abide with you forever. There's all these promises of the Old Testament and of



Jesus himself that are fulfilled at this moment. It is the turning point in God's dealings with his people.

In that in the Old Testament, only a few, a prophet here, a judge there, a king here had the Holy Spirit come upon them. But now all of God's people are to have God's spirit upon them. And that's the difference.

The Holy Spirit becomes the general possession of all believers in the New Testament. Not just a few chosen prophets here and there as in the Old Testament. All right.

So this occasion of the pouring out of the spirit is accompanied by some phenomena. Part of it was audible and part of it was visual. Audibly, they heard the sound like of a mighty rushing wind from heaven.

The fact that the sound came from heaven, of course, is to suggest that something is coming from heaven. The sound of the wind emanates from heaven. And again, wind and spirit are the same word, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek.

In the Hebrew it's ruach, but in the Greek it's pneuma. Wind, spirit. And so with the coming of the spirit is the sound of a wind.

As if God is pouring out, not liquid in this case, but wind, air, his breath upon the church. And they're coming to life as when God breathed into Adam's dead clay body the breath of life and he became a living soul. So the church becomes a living being, as Paul would describe a body, the body of Christ, which is now filled with his spirit.

And the sound of wind, there's no suggestion that there was actual wind. For example, their hair probably wasn't blowing around in there. There was a sound like a wind.

They didn't say they felt it or anything like that. It's just a sound that evoked the idea that there's a great wind here. It's like when Ezekiel prophesied to the wind, or to the breath, and it came upon these bodies that were previously dead.

So spiritually, these people come alive because the wind, the spirit comes upon them. Now, the phenomenon of little fire flames over their head, tongues of fire over their heads is unique. We don't find it ever in any other cases, although there are other cases in the book of Acts where people will be filled with the spirit.

We find at least four other occasions or five where we read of people being filled with the spirit besides this in the book of Acts. And there no doubt were many more that are not recorded. But in the recorded ones, there's no mention of these tongues of fire over their heads.

And what's that about? Now, I've never heard anyone suggest that they knew why these tongues of fire were there, what their significance was, except perhaps to suggest that

each person was a dwelling place of God. And as in the tabernacle in the Old Testament, God dwelt on earth among his people, and there was a pillar of fire. That in which God's presence was seen at night as a pillar of fire, pillar of cloud in the daytime.

That God's presence rested on the tabernacle and in the tabernacle, and every person now becomes, as it were, a tabernacle or a dwelling place of God, because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. In order to understand this, I think we need to compare two passages of Scripture, one in the New Testament, one in the Old. One of them is in John chapter 14.

The other will be in Isaiah chapter 4. In John 14, Jesus has promised, beginning in verse 16, John 14, 16, he promises he's going to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. But he goes on, and he says in verse 23, he answered and said to him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. That is, the Father and Jesus will come and make their home with the person who loves Jesus and keeps his word.

That's what he says. If you love me, keep my word, the Father will love you, and we will come and make our home with you. In what way does the Father and the Son make their home with us? By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, certainly.

And that's, of course, the context. He's talking just a few verses earlier about sending his Spirit to abide with him. The Holy Spirit and the Father and the Son are one God.

They're three persons, but they're one God. And as the Holy Spirit comes within us, it's the Spirit of God. It's the Spirit of the Father.

It's the Spirit of Christ. It's the Father and Christ dwell with us in the form of the Spirit. When we say, Jesus lives in my heart, we don't mean that the man, Jesus, with holes in his hands and feet is inside of our heart.

He's at the right hand of God in heaven, and he's there until he returns. Who's in our heart, then? Well, the Bible makes it clear. It's the Spirit of Christ that's in us.

Christ is in us through his Spirit being in us. It's the Spirit of God by whom God dwells in us. And it says, we will come and make our home with him.

The word home there in John 14.23 is the word *monē* in the Greek. This word *monē* is related to the verb *minō*. In the Greek, *minō* is the verb to abide or to dwell.

That's when Jesus said, if you abide in me, and my word abides in you. Or, you know, every branch that abides in me brings forth good fruit. So the word abide means to remain or to dwell.

And that's a verb. *Minō* is a verb. The noun form of that is *monē*.

You actually just switch the verbs around from m-e-n-o to m-o-n-e. But monē is a rare noun in the Bible, only found twice in the New Testament. But its literal meaning is a place of dwelling, a dwelling place or an abiding place.

It is an abiding. The verb means to abide. The noun means an abode, a dwelling.

Okay? Here Jesus says, you who love me and keep my commandments, my Father will love you, and we will come make our dwelling place with you. Now, keeping that wording in mind, look over at Isaiah chapter 4. You probably thought, I thought we're studying Acts. We are.

This is how you study Acts. Because Acts is not a lone book. It's in the context of the whole Bible.

And what God did in Acts is in the context of what God promised throughout the whole of the Scripture. And you won't understand the significance of Acts if you don't know what God was doing in connection with what he said he was going to do. And so we have to see what goes before.

In Isaiah chapter 4, verses 5 and 6, this is talking about the age of the Messiah. How do I know that? Because verse 2 says, in that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious. And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those in Israel who have escaped.

That is from the faithful remnant of Israel. There will be fruit. And the branch, which is a name for the Messiah, will be glorious at that time.

So Jesus is glorified in his resurrection. But notice what it says in verses 5 and 6. Then the Lord will create above every dwelling place. Remember what Jesus said? My Father in heaven will make our dwelling place in you.

You're a dwelling place of God. And above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, we saw in Hebrews that the church saw themselves. The church is Mount Zion, as the heavenly Jerusalem and so forth.

The general assembly and church of the firstborn. So every dwelling place in Mount Zion. Now Mount Zion would be, in the New Testament, regarded as the church.

The dwelling places are you and me. I'm a dwelling place. You're a dwelling place.

Jesus said so. In that verse we read. And above her assembly.

So every dwelling place and the assembly of the dwelling places. The church assembled and the Christians individually. Above them shall be a cloud and smoke by day and a shining of a flame of fire by night.

For over all the glory there shall be a covering or a tent, a tabernacle, a canopy. And there shall be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat and a place of refuge. And for a shelter from storm and rain.

Now this is all very poetic, of course. He's basically saying in the messianic age there will be a tabernacle. A dwelling place of God.

In fact, there will be an assembly of tabernacles into a greater tabernacle. There will be many dwelling places. Each of them will have a flame of fire above them.

Like the tabernacle of Moses had the fire above it. Now Jesus said if you love me, you're going to be one of those dwelling places. But there's also above the assembly of them, there's another canopy.

That is every Christian is a dwelling place of God. But the Christians corporately assembled as the church is the dwelling place of God in a fuller, a different sense. God dwells in the church corporately.

He dwells in you individually. That's the point. And over every dwelling place there will be a fire.

Now this is no doubt what is fulfilled when they saw a fire. Over every person when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in them. Each person became a dwelling place of God.

And above every dwelling place was a fire by night. But it's not necessary to see Isaiah as literal because he's simply using imagery that reminds us of the tabernacle in the Old Testament. And that as God dwelt in a tabernacle and his presence was noted by the presence of the tower of fire above, the pillar of fire.

So in the messianic age, the place where God dwells will have, will be distinguished by the presence of this fire. Now it doesn't mean that every Christian throughout history is going to walk around with visible fire in their head. But when the church first became the habitation of God through the Spirit on Day of Pentecost, that fire appeared as an emblem that this prediction had come true.

Now if you look at John 14 again, I don't want to confuse you. But I said that that word, Mone, dwelling place, which we found in John 14, 23, that it appears only twice in the New Testament. How many of you know where the other place is? It's also in John 14.

It's in John 14, 2. Now in the older translations, John 14, 2 says, in my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

The word mansions is the only other place in the Bible that has this word Mone in the Greek. It doesn't mean mansions. It means dwelling place.

In my father's house are many dwelling places. Most modern translations have rendered,

in my father's house are many rooms. Why that? Because in a house you live in a room.

So a room is where people dwell in a house. And the word Mone means a dwelling place. The word mansions is a crazy translation.

I don't know how a word in the Greek that means dwelling place, somehow someone chose, let's use the English word mansion. That's a great one. Well, mansion has a very specific connotation of a wealthy, large house.

It's not talking about mansions. It's talking about dwelling places in God's house. God dwells in his house.

And he has many dwelling places in his house. And later in the chapter it says, if you love me, you'll become one of those dwelling places. My father and I will make our dwelling place with you.

The only two times Mone is found in the Bible. Jesus says, my father's house has many of these Mone's. And you can be one of them.

Well, what's his house then? His house is the whole body of Christ. The whole temple of God, the whole church is the father's house. Now, I won't go into, I won't let myself get distracted too much into this.

But I know that we've all been led to understand that when Jesus said, in my father's house, he meant heaven. The Bible frequently mentions the house of the Lord or God's house. And never is referring to heaven.

Now, God is in heaven. But he's everywhere else too. David said, if I make my soul and make my bed in a shale, you're there too.

There's no place that God isn't. The question is, what is called his house in the Bible? In the Old Testament, the tabernacle that Moses built was called the house of the Lord. When Solomon built the temple, it became known as the house of the Lord.

And the temple was still called the house of God early in Jesus' ministry when he said, do not turn my father's house into a house of merchandise. Then he drove the money chains off. My father's house is the term he used.

He was talking about the Jewish temple. Solomon's temple and Zerubbabel's temple, they were the house of the Lord. In the Bible, the house of the Lord is always somewhere on earth.

The tabernacle, the temple, or when God comes to make his house with us through his spirit. Now, God is in heaven. But he's also here.

And it's simply a fact. I'm not trying to twist anything. It's simply a fact that you will

never find a reference in the Bible to heaven as God's house.

But you'll find many references to God's house. Always referring either to the tabernacle or the temple or the body of Christ. God's house has many dwelling places because you're among them.

You are a dwelling place. You're a dwelling place. There's many of us dwelling places.

God dwells in us by his spirit. And collectively, the church is his house. And the Bible makes that very clear.

Peter says in 1 Peter 2, 5, that we are like living stones built up into a spiritual house, a holy temple. In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul says that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole house fitly framed together grows into a habitation of God in the spirit. The church he's talking about there.

The house. He writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3, 15. He says, if I'm delayed, I want you to know how to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.

The house of God is the church, Paul said. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 3 and verse 6 said, Christ is the Lord over his own house, whose house we are. We are his house.

The body of Christ, the church, is God's house. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The temple built by Solomon, the tabernacle built by Moses, those were God's house when he dwelt in temples made by hands.

He no longer dwells in temples made by hands. He dwells in people. And the church, his community, is his house.

You, as individual members of the community, are his dwelling places. In his house are many dwelling places. And so the Holy Spirit coming on Pentecost brings to reality this phenomenon, as Isaiah said, over every dwelling place there will be fire.

And this, I think, is what God is communicating by putting a visible tongue of fire over every individual Christian in the upper room. It's not necessary. It's only for a visual aid.

I don't think that later on in the book of Acts when people were filled with the Spirit and there was no tongue of fire, I don't think that those people lacked anything that those in the upper room experienced. It's just that at the initiation of the church, God wants to make it very clear, as I dwelt in the tabernacle, I now dwell in you. As my presence was seen in a pillar of fire over the tent, I now have a little tiny pillar of fire over each one of you because each of you are a little tiny dwelling place of God individually.

And I think that that's what the fire over the heads represented. That's how I've come to understand it. All right.

Now, verse 4 says, They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus had predicted that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1.5. He had predicted that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them in Acts 1.8. And now we're told they are filled with the Holy Spirit, which is the same thing.

So we can see that Jesus used the term baptized with the Holy Spirit to be referenced to being filled with the Spirit. Now, filled with the Spirit isn't necessarily the same thing as simply having the Holy Spirit. It's very important that we note this and Paul makes that clear in Ephesians.

If you look at Ephesians 1 and verse 13, Paul is writing to Christians, saints in Ephesus. He says in Ephesians 1.13, In him you also trusted after you heard the word of the truth of the gospel. And he says, and having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Now, Paul says to all the believers, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. What does seal mean? A seal was a wax blob with a signet pressed into it that hardened, usually on a document or something, to show the authenticity of the document. A king who sent a letter, it's very important that people know it's really from him and not from someone else.

So he had his own ring with a signet that nobody else had that could leave an impression in a wax blob. And he put a wax blob on the bottom of his letter and stick his ring in it. And then anyone who saw the letter knew that's really from the king because no one else has that signet.

That's his. A seal, therefore, was that which demonstrated authenticity. And Paul says we have been sealed as God put his seal on us, which is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has in the possession of the Holy Spirit. God has shown you to be an authentic Christian. And first John says by this we know that he dwells in us and we in him because he's given us of his spirit.

Paul said in Romans 8, 9, if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he's not one of his. The genuineness of the Christian life is seen in the fact that God's spirit is given to you because everyone who's born again is born of the spirit and possesses the spirit. Now Paul says that about the Ephesians in Ephesians 1. But if you'll turn to Ephesians 5, talking to the same people in verse 18.

Ephesians 5.18 Paul says and do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the spirit. Be filled with the spirit. He's telling them to do that.

And the verb suggests he means continually be filled with the spirit. This is a condition to maintain. Be being filled with the spirit is a good translation of this verb.

Now notice they have the Holy Spirit already. So why does he have to tell them to be filled with the spirit? They've been sealed. They possess the spirit.

So isn't it like a given that they are filled with the spirit? Apparently not because you don't have to command people to do something that's already automatically done. He considers that all Christians have the Holy Spirit, that not all people are always filled with the spirit. That something has to be maintained, just like this bottle of water right here is not filled.

It's pretty close, but it could be fuller. It has water in it. It is not dry.

It is not lacking in water, but it is not filled with water. We are not. If you're a Christian, you do not lack the Holy Spirit.

You possess the Holy Spirit. But we are told we who possess the spirit are told to be filled, to be continually being filled with the spirit. Now, I mentioned that the apostles had received the spirit the day Jesus rose from the dead.

According to John 20, 22, he breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. But it was 50 days later that they actually were filled with the spirit. What I understand that to mean is that when you become a Christian, if you're really born again, you have the spirit.

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit in them. But being filled with the spirit is not a given. Filled is a quantitative thing.

Filled is a measured thing. You can be more or less filled with the spirit. And we have the privilege and in a sense the obligation to be filled with the spirit because we're commanded to do so.

Now, these people were filled with the spirit. And as Jesus had said, you'll receive power. They received power to speak in languages that they had not learned.

That's a supernatural thing. Now, some people say, well, maybe it's not that. Maybe they were just all speaking the same language.

But the miracle was in the hearers, that the hearers, you know, God translated the speaking into the language of the hearers in root. And that the apostles were not necessarily speaking unusual languages. But this is an unnecessary way to impose a meaning on this.

It says they spoke with other languages. The word tongues means languages. They spoke other languages.

And other people later in the book of Acts did too. So, we might as well make it, you know, just as plain as it is on the page. These people spoke languages which they did not



know.

How do I know they didn't know them? Well, because Paul talks about speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians 14. He says in verse 2, 1 Corinthians 14, he says, he that speaks in a tongue, no one understands him. In the spirit he speaks mysteries.

Later on he says, if I speak in a tongue, my understanding is not fruitful. My spirit is praying, but my understanding, not so much. A person who's speaking in tongues does not know what they're saying.

But in this case, somebody did. And there's a few other cases in the book of Acts where we read of people speaking in tongues. In each case, it's on the occasion when they got filled with the spirit.

One of the other occasions is chapter 10. When in the house of Cornelius, Peter was preaching. And while he was preaching, the spirit came upon the hearers and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Later still in the book of Acts, in Acts 19, in the first seven verses, Paul finds 12 men in Ephesus. He baptizes them in water. Then he lays hands on them.

They're filled with the spirit and they spoke in tongues again. Now, based on this, there are many people who've argued that speaking in tongues is an inevitable accompaniment to being filled with the spirit. We have three cases in the Bible that tell us of people being filled with the spirit and on that occasion speaking in tongues.

And that's become the basis of the Pentecostal doctrine, which I think goes further than the Bible does. The Pentecostal doctrine is they have a doctrine called the doctrine of initial evidence. They say speaking in tongues is the initial evidence that you've been filled with the spirit.

What that would mean to them is that if you don't speak in tongues, you're not filled with the spirit because you don't have the evidence of it. And therefore, in Pentecostal circles, which is a movement that began in 1906 in Los Angeles and has spread to the whole world is very major movement within evangelical Christianity. In Pentecostal circles, speaking in tongues is a rite of passage.

If you grow up in a Pentecostal church, you know, they want you to get saved at some point. But then later they want you to also get baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak with tongues. And if you don't do it very naturally, they'll help you.

They'll prime the pump. Repeat after me. Shondala, bondola, whatchamacallit, you know, I mean, you can start.

You can they call it priming the pump. OK, just repeat these words and then I'll stop and

you keep going. You know, sort of like a child on a bicycle when you take the training wheels off.

Well, I'll take the training wheels off and you just keep riding. That's the Pentecostal understanding. Now, at the other extreme are those who believe that speaking in tongues is only for the apostolic age.

But there's no speaking in tongues since the time of the apostles. It was just for the inauguration of the church, just like the tongues of fire on their head. That never was repeated.

So you've got two extremes in the church. There's those who think you have to speak in tongues to be filled with the spirit. In fact, some extreme Pentecostals called the United Pentecostals, they believe you're not even saved until you've spoken in tongues.

That's really at the far left, you know. But then there's the at the far right, you've got the cessationists. Cessationists believe that speaking in tongues is one of those gifts that just doesn't exist anymore.

And then if you hear people who do speak in tongues, they're probably speaking in the flesh or maybe even worse. Maybe they have a demonic counterfeit. But it isn't from the Holy Spirit, they say, because tongues is not for today.

That's the cessationist view. It's called cessationist view because of cessation, the ceasing, the ceasing of the gifts. The same people believe there's no gift of healing, no gift of prophecy, no gift.

Some of the gifts are no longer with us. They call it the sign gifts are gone. They would agree that the gift of giving is still around.

Ask any preacher if he believes in the gift of giving. Or the gift of showing mercy or the gift of helps or the gift of teaching. These are gifts of the spirit too in the same list, but it's kind of arbitrary.

They say, well, the gifts that we like having in the church, those are still with us. The gifts that we don't have in our church, those, I guess we're not supposed to. It's easy to interpret the norms of Christianity in terms of what's going on in our church because we, after all, are normal.

Right. God forbid that we should be thought to be subnormal. If they don't do it in our church, it must not be supposed to happen.

I was raised in a cessationist church, and that's pretty much, I think, the mentality. If we don't do it, no one's supposed to do it. Well, that's an extreme also because the Bible nowhere says that any of the gifts would cease before the second coming of Christ.

So you've got some say you need to speak in tongues to be saved. Others say you never should speak in tongues. It's probably demonic if you are.

Let's just be biblical. The Bible gives evidence that there was a phenomenon in the time of the New Testament, and there's no evidence that it would end at any particular time prior to the second coming of Christ. And that at least some people, when they were filled with the Spirit, spoke with other languages.

Now I say some because there's no suggestion in the Bible that everybody did. There's no suggestion in the Bible that speaking in tongues always occurred whenever anyone was filled with the Spirit. We have, in fact, five or six cases in the Bible of people being filled with the Spirit.

In three of them, it is mentioned they spoke with tongues. Now it may have also happened on the other three occasions, but we're not told, and therefore it might not have. We don't have any affirmation in Scripture that every time people are filled with the Spirit, they speak with tongues.

So it's wrong to suggest that that would be the case. We have no scriptural authority for it. And I know a lot of people who have every evidence of being filled with the Spirit, but they've never spoken in tongues.

Speaking in tongues is not an extremely important thing to do in most cases. I'm not saying there's no value in it. If God has given you the gift of tongues, then who am I to say a gift from God isn't a good thing? It is a good thing.

It's just not the most important thing. The best evidence that you're filled with the Spirit is that you have the fruit of the Spirit. Because a tree produces fruit according to its own life quality.

A good tree produces good fruit. A bad tree produces bad fruit. You can tell how spiritual a person is by how spiritual the fruit is.

If they have the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, self-control, patience. These are spiritual character traits that if someone's got those traits in good abundance, then they're spiritually healthy. The Spirit produces that.

Now, people can have gifts of the Spirit, including miracle working, and not even be saved. In which case, it's a counterfeit gift. But there are even people who are Christians who have had some of these gifts, probably genuinely, and yet they were not evidence of being spiritual people.

I mean, think about it. Balaam in the Old Testament. He was a false prophet, but the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied.

Caiaphas was plotting the death of Jesus, and the Spirit of God spoke to him prophetically. The Bible says so. Saul, the king, when he's pursuing David to kill him, falls in among prophets.

The Spirit comes on him, and he prophesies briefly. I mean, prophecy, speaking in tongues, spiritual gifts, they don't prove that you're spiritual. Why is that? I like the illustration that Juan Carlos Ortiz gave.

He was an Argentine pastor. He was the Assembly of God at one time. I think he's probably non-denominational now.

I don't know what he's doing now. But he was in Buenos Aires, and he wrote a book years ago, back in the 70s, called Disciple. And he gave a really good example.

He said, we Pentecostals, which is what he was, we have been fond of saying, we believe in the fullness of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2.4, meaning we Pentecostals believe in speaking in tongues, if you're full of the Spirit. He says, we should say, we believe in the filling of the Spirit according to Galatians 5, 22, and 23, which is the fruit of the Spirit. And then he gives this illustration.

He says, in Argentina, where I live, I'm more or less quoting him. He says, we don't have very many trees in Buenos Aires. And at Christmastime, everyone wants a Christmas tree, but trees are very expensive because there are very few.

So most people buy an artificial tree. He says it's a cheap thing, made of wire and cellophane and things like that. He says, but on Christmas Eve, it's often decked with many gifts.

A very cheap tree that you can buy for a dollar or two, he said, might have a Rolex watch or a diamond ring on it, because they would hang their gifts for people on their tree. Now, he says, you might think that's a very great tree, that it has a Rolex watch on it and a diamond ring. But, you know, Christmas afternoon, the tree is out on the curb waiting for the garbage collector to take it away, because the tree has no innate value, because it didn't produce the gifts.

Somebody else put the gifts on it. They don't tell you anything about the quality of the tree, but the quality of the person who gives the gift. The person who put the gift on the tree.

But he said, if you have an orange tree, and it produces good oranges, that tells you something about the tree, because a tree is known by its fruit, as Jesus said, not by its gifts. He said, if you would say to an orange tree, why don't you have any Rolex watches on you? The orange tree could gladly say, well, I'm sorry, but no one has hung any Rolex watches on me. I produce oranges.

And that would be entirely legitimate. If someone says, why don't you have the gift of tongues? You could say, I'm sorry, no one has put the gift of tongues on me. That's a gift that has not been hung on me.

But if I'm producing love and joy and peace and gentleness and patience, that's good fruit. That's the mark of being a spiritual Christian. Not how many gifts you have or what kinds of gifts, because those gifts don't say anything about you.

They only say something about God, who has chosen to give a gift to you, and he may have done so without any reference to how good a Christian you are. Unfortunately, he doesn't always give them to the best Christians. I don't know why.

But the mark of spirituality is not that you can speak in tongues or that you have any particular gift of the spirit. However, it is my conviction that when a person is filled with the spirit, they also receive some gift of some kind. Not all of them are spooky gifts like speaking in tongues or amazing gifts like miracles that I mentioned.

Paul lists the gifts of helps, the gift of giving, the gift of leading, the gift of exhortation, the gift of teaching. These are gifts that when people have them, it's not so sensational, but it's very useful. Frankly, I'd rather be around someone who's got a good gift of helps or giving or teaching even than someone who can speak in tongues all day long.

Paul said, I speak in tongues more than you all in 1 Corinthians 14. He says, but in the church, I'd rather speak five words that people can understand than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. So Paul didn't think that speaking in tongues made you a particularly important person or a particularly spiritual person.

But he did say in 1 Corinthians 14 that tongues is a sign to the unbeliever, and that's what it was on the day of Pentecost. It was a sign. There were unbelieving Jews.

The city was full of them. It was a festival. Jews from all over the world came to Jerusalem for the festivals, and they didn't know Christ, so they were unbelievers.

And speaking in tongues was a sign to them. A sign of what? Well, a sign that something was happening out of the ordinary, a sign that there was something supernatural happening. Now, they didn't understand what it was, and when we come back from our break, we'll see what they speculated.

They thought these people were drunk. But Peter got up, and he spoke to them and explained the phenomenon. So we have the first Christian sermon in the Bible in Acts chapter 2. It's very instructive to us because we've heard lots of sermons, and looking at what Peter preached may be an interesting contrast between that and what we commonly hear preached because we live 2,000 years later where lots of traditions have come in, including the way that the gospel is usually presented.

The way the apostles presented the gospel may surprise us. But we'll take a break at this point.