

Acts Chapter 2 Con't

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[0 : 00] Well, if you'll take your sheet now, that is the beginning of chapter 3 up in the left-hand corner. You will see the conclusion of chapter 2.

And once again, I want to remind you that what you see there in the bold print is from the King James Version. And then there are numerous other translations that are abbreviated and follow below that verse, indicating how different ones have translated it.

As we come to the end of Acts chapter 2, it is appropriate to remind you that this chapter in and of itself is perhaps the most controversial chapter in all of Christendom.

In so far as the implications of its interpretation are concerned. Because the big issue, and I want to emphasize this again so you'll not be able to forget it, I hope.

The big issue is, is this day of Pentecost and the experience that ensued, is this the official beginning of the church?

[1 : 20] Probably 99% of Christendom, Roman Catholic and Protestant would say, yes it is. But we are convinced that it is not.

And there is no place where the Bible says this is the beginning of the church. It is just a traditional position that has been taken.

And I don't suggest that we begin a campaign trying to reverse it. Nothing in the world dies harder than religious tradition, if it dies at all.

But I just want you to be aware that this is not the beginning of the church. And another implication, guys, is if this is, as the majority say, this is the beginning of the church, therefore this is the pattern for what the church ought to be, then you're really hard pressed to deny the validity of speaking in languages that were not learned, which is what tongues is, and you would be in a difficult position to deny the legitimacy of physical healing, which took place in Acts chapter 2, and again will be in Acts chapter 3.

We ought to be practicing these things. And another one is we ought to be practicing Christian communism, where everybody brings their resources to the church, and then the leaders of the church distributes it to everyone as they had need, because that's what you've got here in the book of Acts.

[3 : 07] Now, our Pentecostal friends, which is a whole denomination, and a very large denomination, by the way, Pentecostal church, they adhere to these things. They don't go so far as to the communism thing.

They don't sell their houses and lands and distribute to everybody. I don't know what their explanation is for not doing that, but if they're going to be consistent, they ought to do that.

And also, pick up the Mark 16 thing that we've talked about, and the handling of serpents. That, too, goes along with it, and the drinking of poison.

By the way, let me just inject something here. What that passage in Mark 16 is designed to teach is God's providential protection for his ambassadors, so that as people go, among others, proclaiming the gospel, if there are those who try to poison them, they will not succeed.

The poison will have no effect on them. And if they are bitten by a venomous serpent, it will not kill them. And that's the basis for the snake handling thing that we saw in one of the handouts that we gave you.

[4 : 19] But, fellas, those things are in keeping with the tribulational content when the 144,000 who have the seal of God in their foreheads, when they will go about proclaiming this gospel, they will be virtually indestructible, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes.

And they will, people will assail them and attempt to put them to death, but with no success, because they will be providentially protected. But, fellas, these are not those days.

And, as I pointed out, those who are insistent on handling the snakes as a demonstration of their faith, I doubt seriously if any of them are drinking arsenic or strychnine to prove that they have faith there, too.

But all of this comes back to this. Is Acts 2 the pattern for the church? No, it isn't. It never was. Acts 2 is the fulfillment of a promise just like Peter said when the people were questioning, what is this?

[5 : 26] And somebody said, they're drunk with wine. And Peter said, no, no, no. These men are not drunken as you suppose. It's only the third hour of the morning. It's nine o'clock in the morning. These guys aren't drunk. And Peter tells us, guys, he tells us what this is.

He said, this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. This is a fulfillment of God's promise to Israel. That's what Acts 2 is all about.

And Acts 3 is actually a continuation of it. So it is not the beginning of the church. And if you look at verse 47 in the bold print on the sheet that you have, praising God and having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved.

Now that looks like a slam dunk that that's the beginning of the church. Right there it is in black and white. And it is this translation that has largely contributed to people reaching the conclusion, this was the beginning of the church.

And it says so right here. How can you add to something that doesn't exist? So it began in Pentecost, and now they are adding to it. But that is not the case at all.

[6 : 43] And I'll be there in a moment. Back to our text, breaking bread from house to house, this means they were taking their meals together. They had a great time of fellowship.

They did eat their meat. And this isn't animal flesh meat, although it might have included that. Many times the Bible uses the word meat as a synonym for food.

And it literally means food. It may include animal flesh, but meat in the Bible in general talks about just sustenance, physical food. They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness.

This simply means this is a reflection of their attitude, of the collegiality and the fellowship.

It must have been a warm, inspiring, engaging time where people had a oneness and a commonality that is pretty rare.

[7 : 43] And the reason they do is because they have just been united together under the lordship of the very one that they had crucified.

And now they recognize that they have crucified him and that God raised him from the dead. They repented of their sin. They reversed themselves. They now embrace Jesus as their Messiah.

and they are absolutely thrilled. They are just really happy, joyous people.

They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Praising God and having favor with all the people.

that means they were not turning off those who didn't believe. Who were the all the people?

[8 : 43] The all the people was the vast majority who had not yet come to the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. They were still on the outside.

But these who are praising God and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart and fellowshiping from house to house. These are newfound believers and they are just so joyous and caught up in this.

And their enthusiasm and spirit is obviously infectious. And they are looked upon by the masses who have not believed as favorable.

They are not turned off by them. They are admiring them. And probably some are saying well you know I'm happy for them. It's not for me. I don't believe that. But you know I'm glad that they found something that satisfies them.

And it is a plus thing. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. And fellas the translations that are added here each of them is accurate really.

[9 : 54] The authorized standard version says and the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved. Weymouth says also day by day the Lord added to their number those whom he was saving.

Williams translates it and every day the Lord continued to add to them the people who were being saved. Berkeley says while daily the Lord added to the group those who were being saved and the Lord increased their community daily by new converts.

There is not a word of the church. Yeah and they're all Jews. These are all Jews. Pat I thought the church was anybody that was following that.

I thought that was the church. Well that that is the church now. That is the church now.

But let me emphasize this again. the thing that makes the church the church more than anything else is that all ethnic distinctions racial distinctions are eliminated.

[11 : 25] And the big item that makes the church the church is that this is going to move from an exclusively Jewish constituency to Jew and Gentile.

Jew and non-Jew together in one body. If you want the real scoop on this that makes it more clear than anything read the first three chapters of Ephesians where Paul talks about they twain Jew and Gentile are made into one new person one new man the body of Christ which is neither Jew nor Gentile bond nor free male nor female you are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus but this is exclusively Jewish and this is one reason why it is not the church these are going to meld into what will become the church later when Gentiles are added to it but fellas there are no non Jews in this body of believers until you get all the way to Acts chapter 10 that's Cornelius and

Cornelius was a Roman army officer not a Jew a Roman army officer and when he came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Savior it raised a lot of eyebrows there were a lot of Jews who could not believe that a Gentile was welcome into the community what is God doing and you remember the story about Peter and Cornelius what a groundbreaker that was all that was was Peter using the keys that Christ gave him in in Matthew chapter 16 when he said I give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and and Peter used them he used them he's using them here in Acts 2 and 3 and he'll use the keys again in Acts chapter 10 and the key is a symbol of authority the key is used to lock and unlock and that's exactly what Peter was doing and nobody had more credentials for doing it or stature than

Peter did he was the chief spokesman of the twelve and Christ appointed him to that Frank years years years yeah several years between Acts chapter 2 and Acts chapter 10 there are several years that will transpire in between and there's 30 years that it takes to cover the whole book of Acts so keep that in mind now the word church in the Greek is the word ecclesia from which we get the word ecclesiastes and ecclesiastical etc and it has to do of course with the church and the thing that we really need to understand fellas is that the ecclesia which means the church is not a new term to the New Testament it's a word that was around long before the New Testament ever started before Christ ever came and in fact it's kind of like the word gospel gospel we tend to think of the word gospel as a religious word and in reality in its origin it isn't what gospel means literally is good news and it could mean good news about anything you you got a promotion in your job did you hear the gospel about my job no what's the gospel about your job I got promoted I got a raised well you don't call that the gospel but technically and literally it was it just means good news Mrs.

[15 : 29] Smith had her baby that's the gospel of Mrs. Smith good news she had a baby but we always associate it in a religious context because that's the way it principally used now and the same way with the word church we associate it in a religious context but literally the word existed long before anything in the New Testament was ever written it is a Greek word and it literally means a called out group or a called out assembly for some common purpose a labor union could be an ecclesia under that description a boy scout group could be an ecclesia under that description it just means a called out group for a common purpose now if you've got your Bibles I want to give an example of this in Acts chapter 19 in

Acts chapter 19 the apostle Paul is at Ephesus and there's a big riot that's going to break out and in verse well I've just got to jump in here for time sake so let's let's just jump into verse 28 Acts chapter 19 when they heard this they were filled with rage they began crying out saying great is Artemis of the Ephesians and this is a chant the audience is engaging in a chant this is an attempt to shout down the guy who was trying to address the crowd they're trying to shout him down you know that goes on today at political rallies and things like that and the city verse 29 the city was filled with the confusion and they rushed with one look at that they rushed with one accord what's that mean means a common purpose they all had the same thing in mind into the theater dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia and when Paul wanted to go into the church but it doesn't say church does it it says assembly what is that what is the word in the Greek it's ekklesia sometimes it's translated church sometimes it's translated congregation sometimes it's translated assembly we even have a denomination of churches today it's called the

assembly the assemblies of God it's a denomination and they distinguish themselves from another group that is called the church of God so they call themselves the assemblies of God essentially we're talking about the same thing it is a group called out for a common purpose here this is an angry group of citizens that's called out to do harm to these people that are bringing a message that they don't want to hear and we read that in verse 32 so then some were shouting one thing and some another for the church this is the ecclesia the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together and some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander since the Jews had put him forward and having motion with his hand Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly it's ecclesia it is the church but you don't think of a crowd of people like this being a church technically that's exactly what they were we think of a church as being a place where people go to worship etc you know and there are prayers offered and hymns sung and so on well that's the church too but all I'm trying to give you is a broader picture of how we have allowed this text in the King James to indicate that that's the beginning of the church and it isn't indicating anything of the kind but as I've said traditions die hard Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly and there again it's the same word ecclesia and look at verse 34 but when they recognized that he was a Jew what does that mean if he's a Jew he's a monotheist he is a man who is committed to the idea that there is one God one God only and it's the God of Israel and as soon as they had him pegged and they knew he was a Jew they're not going to let him talk they're going to shout him down and a single outcry rose from them all as they shouted for about two hours two hours great is Artemis of the Ephesians Artemis another name for Diana she is the God or the goddess of the Ephesians one of their female deities and what they were doing was rubbing their polytheism rubbing the nose of of what's his name

[21 : 15] Alexander yeah Alexander was trying to make a defense to the assembly and they were shouting him down wouldn't let him speak and they were saying as much as we'll show you you who believe that there is but one God and they countered with this chant that went on for two hours and finally they just gave up they knew they weren't going to be able to speak go anywhere and the town clerk calmed them down and got everybody to dismiss so can we consider chapter two finished now or do you have other questions anybody okay we did it okay yeah Dan there one thought on the word church by our modern meaning well it didn't exist back then so there would not be a word and whenever the church became something it would be a word that would be developed after the past so today helps yeah yeah and today when most people talk about the church they're talking about the edifice down in the corner first baptist or saint raphael's or whatever that's the church no no no that's nothing that's that's an edifice that's a building that's where the church meets the church which is the body of christ is people it's made up of people who belong to jesus christ by faith they are members of the true church today so thank you and next week we'll engage chapter 3 and it is one of the most fascinating accounts in the new testament