

# THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

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TEXT: Acts 2

**PROPOSITION:** The second chapter of the book of Acts shows us great things that you and I can learn today.

## INTRODUCTION:

1. There is no doubt that there are several great chapters in the Bible!
2. Of all the 260 chapters of the New Testament, Acts 2 is one of my favorites!
3. For the next few minutes, we will be examining the second chapter of the Book of Acts.
4. I am sure that there have been many great lessons preached from this chapter. I, myself, have preached 5 different sermons from this chapter.
  - a. What I am about to tell you, I'm sure you heard it all before!
5. In this lesson we will consider some things we can learn from the beginning of the church.
6. I want us to learn some great things that we can see in Acts chapter 2. In this chapter we see...
  - a. A great multitude present.
  - b. A great fulfillment of Bible prophecies.
  - c. A great preaching of the Gospel of Christ.
  - d. A great manifestation of an obedient faith.
  - e. A great establishment of a divine institution called church and kingdom.
  - f. A great manifestation of Christian faithfulness.
7. **As we examine this lesson, let me encourage all of us to:**
  - a. Share this lesson with friends and family.
  - b. Appreciate the church for which Jesus died on the cross.
  - c. Imitate the early church and her faithfulness to God.
  - d. Be doers of the practical lessons we can glean from this lesson.
  - e. Obey the gospel of Christ, if you have not done so.
8. With this in mind, let us meditate upon what God has in store for us.

In Acts 2, at the beginning of the church we see...

### I. A GREAT MULTITUDE PRESENT (2:1-12).

- A. The Sacred text reveals that about 16 nations were present during the celebration of the Jewish feast called, Pentecost.
- B. The Standard Bible Commentary on the Book of Acts makes the following comment:

- a. "The number of people at Jerusalem for a great feast has been variously estimated to be from one to three million."<sup>1</sup>
- C. There were thousands of people present because the text reveals that about 3,000 souls obeyed the Gospel of Christ (v. 41). This amount cannot be interpreted to say that this was the total amount of people present for this feast. This amount implies the presence of more people.
- D. God's providence made it available for the church to begin in such a wonderful day when lots of people were present.
- E. What is the significance of the great multitude? Why was it important for this great multitude to be present?
  - a. The answer is simple: The Gospel of Christ was going to be taken to several nations so that churches could be established in various places of the world.
- F. We learn from the letter of Paul to the romans that he had not been there (Romans 1:8-13). How was the church established in Rome? We could assume that someone from Pentecost took the gospel to the city of Rome.
- G. So, as we can see, at the beginning of the church we see a great multitude present.
- H. Obviously, only a small amount of this great multitude decided to obey the Gospel of Christ.

*In Acts the second chapter, we also see...*

## **II. A GREAT FULFILLMENT OF BIBLE PROPHECIES (2:14-35).**

- A. At the beginning of the church we also see a great fulfillment of Bible prophecies.
- B. This prophecies could be divided into three parts:
  - a. The coming of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. The resurrection of Christ.
  - c. The establishment of the church of Christ.
- C. **With regards to the Holy Spirit, we read the following Old Testament prophecy:**
  - a. Joel 2:28-32 – God had promised to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. We see the fulfilling of this prophecy in Acts 2.
  - b. Jesus had said that the Holy Spirit would come upon the apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Luke 24:49). This promise was fulfilled!
- D. **With regards to the resurrection of Christ, we read the following Old Testament prophecy:**
  - a. Psalm 16:8-11 – God had promised not to leave Jesus in Hades, nor will His Holy One see corruption.
  - b. Even Jesus himself predicted His own resurrection (John 2:20-22; Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31).

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<sup>1</sup> Orin Root & John W. Wade. *Standard Bible Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 1965), p. 17.

**E. With regards to the establishment of the church, we read the following Old Testament prophecy:**

- a. 2 Samuel 7:12-13 – God had promised that His Son, Jesus Christ would establish the house of God, that is, the church.
- b. Isaiah 2:1-4 – God prophesized that in Jerusalem his house was going to be established.
- c. Daniel 2:44 – God had promised that in the days of the Roman kings, He would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed.
- d. Jesus himself predicted the establishment of the church/kingdom (Matthew 16:16-19; Mark 9:1). This prediction came to pass!

**F. In Acts the second chapter, we read about the fulfilling of these great Bible prophecies!**

- a. Herein we see the inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

**G. All of these great Bible prophecies teach us that God is faithful to fulfill that which He had promised aforetime!**

*In the second chapter of the Book of Acts we also see...*

**III. A GREAT PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL (2:22-40).**

- A. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He instructed His apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20).
  - a. The Gospel is God's power to save man (Romans 1:16).
  - b. This message tells us that Jesus came, die, was buried and raised on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- B. The second chapter of the book of Acts also teaches us about the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.
- C. Notice the phrase, "When they heard this" (v. 37).
  - a. What does the word "this" refers to?
  - b. In Acts 2:22-32 we read how Peter preached the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
- D. This is the message that you and I, as Christians, need to proclaim to the whole world!
- E. We also see in Acts 2 a great example of true/pure Bible preaching:
  - a. Acts 2:16-40 – About 25 verses.
  - b. In these 25 verses we see 13 Old Testament Scripture references by Peter.
  - c. 50% Scripture / 50% Explanation of these verses!
  - d. We must fill our preaching with Bible!
- F. This is a great practical lesson for us as ministers. We must preach the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Peter 4:11).
  - a. Today we see too much story telling coming out from the pulpits. We need to go back to the Bible and preach the way those faithful men did it!
- G. When the Word of God is proclaimed, great results will follow!

*After the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, we also see...*

**IV. A GREAT MANIFESTATION OF AN OBEDIENT FAITH (2:36-41).**

- A. In this second chapter of Acts we learn about a great manifestation of an obedient faith.
- B. When the Gospel of Christ was preached, great results followed!
  - a. We see honest people being pricked to their hearts (v. 37).
  - b. We see honest people seeking for salvation (v. 37).
- C. The Bible tells us that after they were told what to do (vs. 38-40), they obeyed the Gospel of Christ.
  - a. Acts 2:41 is one of the beautiful passages we can use to talk about an obedient faith.
  - b. These people did not accept Jesus as their personal Savior or prayed Jesus into their hearts.
  - c. These people showed an obedient faith by obeying the Gospel of Christ!
- D. The text tells us that they were baptized into Christ. Baptism is for several purposes:
  - a. To be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:47).
  - b. To be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
  - c. To receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
- E. Back then, one sermon – three thousand souls; today, three thousand sermons – one soul.
- F. People need to think more seriously about their eternal home!

*We also learn about...*

**V. A GREAT ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIVINE INSTITUTION: THE CHURCH/KINGDOM (2:47).**

- A. In this second chapter of Acts we also learn another great truth – the establishment of a divine institution/church.
- B. This establishment was according to the Old Testament prophecies that were made concerning the church/kingdom (Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:44).
- C. Jesus promised to establish His church/kingdom (Matthew 16:18).
- D. There are some that teach that the church and the kingdom are two separate divine institutions; the church having been already established and the kingdom is to come in the future.
  - a. There is no biblical support for this type of interpretation.
- E. **Notice what the Bible teaches regarding the church and the kingdom being one and the same:**
  - a. **The church** was prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:1-4).
  - b. **The kingdom** was prophesied in the Old Testament as well (Daniel 2:44).
  - c. Christ promised the establishment of **His church** (Matthew 16:18).
  - d. Christ promised the establishment/coming of **the kingdom** (Mark 9:1).

- e. Those who obey the Gospel are added to **the church** (Acts 2:47).
- f. Those who obey the Gospel are added to *the kingdom* (Colossians 1:13).
- g. Christians were called to the **one Body** (Colossians 3:15).
- h. Christians were called to *the kingdom* (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2:14).
- i. Through baptism a person enters into Christ (Acts 2:41, 47; Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
- j. Through baptism a person enters into the kingdom (John 3:3, 5).

F. As we can see, the biblical evidence shows that the church and the kingdom is the same divine institution established by God and Christ at the Day of Pentecost – in Acts 2.

#### **VI. A GREAT MANIFESTATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITHFULNESS (2:42-47).**

- A. Yes, brothers and sisters! In this chapter we see a great display of faithfulness to God.
- B. This faithfulness can be seen in the following:
  - a. First, they gladly receive God's Word (Acts 2:41).
  - b. Second, they were willing to obey the command to be immerse in water (Acts 2:41).
  - c. Third, they continued in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42).
  - d. Fourth, they continued in fellowship with one another (Acts 2:42).
  - e. Fifth, they continued observing the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7).
  - f. Sixth, they continued praying to God (Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
  - g. Seventh, they continued showing love for one another (Acts 2:44-46).
  - h. Eighth, they enjoyed favor with all the people. They were making a difference! (Acts 2:47).
- C. The early church has a lot to teach us today! May we always look back at those golden times when faithfulness to God and His Word was a priority in the Christian's life!

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The second chapter of the Book of Acts has a lot to teach the church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
2. In this great chapter we have seen the following:
  - a. A great multitude present.
  - b. A great fulfillment of Bible prophecies.
  - c. A great preaching of the Gospel of Christ.
  - d. A great manifestation of an obedient faith.
  - e. A great establishment of a divine institution: the church/kingdom.
  - f. A great manifestation of Christian faithfulness.
3. May we always appreciate this great chapter and may we never stop preaching from it!

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