

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=  
Lesson 2  
The Condition of the Early Church - Acts 2

AIM: to teach my pupils the kind of churches we ought to have today.

POINT OF CONTACT: Since this chapter deals with the use of tongues in the Bible, and since we are going to find out what it means in the lesson, ask the class members how many of them can speak some words of a foreign language, even one or two words. See how many different foreign languages are represented and how many words of each can be said.

INTRODUCTION: Though the second chapter of Acts is not necessarily the founding of the church, at least it is a picture of the church at its peak service for Christ. Let us notice the attributes of a successful church as we study Acts 2.

- I. "...THEY WERE ALL WITH ONE ACCORD..." Notice Acts 2:1. It is interesting that of all the things we are going to learn in this chapter concerning the condition of this church and any church which can be used of God, the first thing is to be in one accord. This is certainly an essential for ultimate effectiveness. The words, "one accord," here come from two Greek words—one which means "same" and the other which means "mind." In other words, to be in "one accord" means we are of the "same mind."
- II. "...IN ONE PLACE." Review Acts 2:1. The second attribute of this church was faithfulness. If a church is going to be what it ought to be, its members must be faithful. (Explain to the class members what we mean by faithfulness to the services of the church.)
- III. THE POWER OF GOD. We have the first mention of "tongues" in Acts 2:3-13. A very careful scrutinization of these verses should be done, and it will certainly reveal exactly what "tongues" mean in the Bible. The word "tongues" comes from the Greek word, "glossa," which means two things in the Bible. It means "foreign language," and it means the literal "tongue" or, in other words, the part of the body we call the tongue. In this case, it means a foreign language, which is evidenced by the context. These people were simply given the power to speak in the languages of the world since many people from all nations were there who could not understand the native language. This is very simply what the Bible teaches about tongues.
- IV. PREACHING. See Acts 2:14-40. It is very interesting that of the 47 verses in this model chapter concerning the condition of the local church, 27 of them are given to the preaching of the Word of God. This certainly emphasizes the importance of preaching in a New Testament church. Far too many churches have substituted other things for the preaching of the Word of God.
- V. CONVERSIONS. Notice Acts 2:41. The preaching was the kind that brought conversions. Could we not say then that if a church is in one accord, is faithful, has the power of God, and preaches the Gospel, then conversions will be the inevitable result? In one day there were about 3,000 souls converted. This does not mean that 3,000 came in the one service where Peter preached. No doubt scattered all over the city were the different apostles preaching in other languages to different nationalities. When the day was ended, 3,000 people had been converted. A church cannot be a New Testament church without conversions.
- VI. BAPTISM. Review Acts 2:41. You will notice that as soon as these people were converted they were baptized. It happened the same day, which is always the Scriptural plan. This was the case of the eunuch in Acts 8, of Lydia in Acts 16, and of the Philippian jailer in Acts 16. It is the Bible plan. A person is to be baptized the same day he is converted, even if it is difficult for him. Perhaps in no place has it ever

been any more difficult than it was here. When a Jew was baptized in the name of Christ, he was disowned by his family, disinherited from his inheritance of physical possessions, and became an outcast. Often funeral services were conducted for him, treating him as a dead person. This certainly would overshadow the excuses of today as to why folks wait to be baptized. (Teacher, see if you have any unbaptized people in your class. Suggest they be baptized today, regardless of the consequences.)

- VII. ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH. See Acts 2:41b. Once again note that this was all done the same day. It actually means they changed parties; they left Judaism and came to hold membership in the local New Testament church. This should be done by every Christian. (See if you have anyone in your class who has not transferred membership or who does not hold membership in a local church. Encourage them to transfer their membership in the service today.)
- VIII. THEY STUDIED THE BIBLE. In verse 42, notice the words, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine....” A New Testament church is a Bible-teaching church, and certainly people should avail themselves of the opportunity to study the Bible. At our church, though this is done at every service, it is primarily done in the Sunday school and in the Wednesday evening service. (Teacher, encourage attendance in all our services as you teach your class this Sunday.)
- IX. “...AND FELLOWSHIP...” In verse 42, the word “fellowship” actually comes from the word “community,” meaning that they walked in a community of Christian people. They lived with God’s people. In other words, they ran with the right crowd. (Emphasize the importance of this to the class, how that we ought to be careful of our associations. Teach the importance of having the proper associations.)
- X. “...AND IN BREAKING OF BREAD...” See Acts 2:42. This probably means the Lord’s Supper. The unleavened bread represents the broken body of Jesus. Leaven represents sin; consequently, there was no leaven in this bread. The fruit of the vine represents His shed blood. This ordinance is given to the New Testament church.
- XI. “...AND IN PRAYERS.” In Acts 2:42, the word “prayer” here means “supplication.” It means pleading with God for His blessing; interceding for others; praying for the needy, the lost, the sick, the backslidden, etc.
- XII. LIBERALITY. Notice Acts 2:45. The Jews had already been taught to tithe. Now they are going beyond the tithe and helping others. A characteristic of a spiritual church is always liberality. (Teachers, discuss the tithe and the importance of giving God 10% of the income and more.)
- XIII. “PRAISING GOD....” See Acts 2:47a. The church is to be an organization of praise. There’s no deadness here; there’s joy and delight and praise to God.
- XIV. “...AND HAVING FAVOUR WITH ALL THE PEOPLE....” (Acts 2:47b) In other words, they lived their Christianity. It does not mean all the people believed them and agreed with what they stood for. It simply means the people respected them because of their stand.
- XV. “...AND THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH DAILY SUCH AS SHOULD BE SAVED.” In Acts 2:47c, we see that converts were added to the church daily. People were being saved every day. The Christians were scattered abroad everywhere spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION: When people think of Acts 2, too often they think only of Pentecost as a once-for-all situation. Nothing could be further from the truth. We should think of it as the regular condition of the church. Let us ask God to help us be the kind of church member who would make our church the kind of Acts 2.