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# The Ruach Ha'Kodesh Comes at Shavu'ot 2: 1-13

**30 AD**

**About this time, Yeshua was crucified under Pontius Pilate. In addition, the resurrection appearances, Shavu'ot, the initial growth of the Messianic community in and around Yerushalayim are in view.**

**The Ruach Ha'Kodesh comes at Shavu'ot DIG: Given that Shavu'ot was a celebrative harvest festival (Deuteronomy 16:9-10), why did ADONAI choose that day to give the Ruach Ha'Kodesh? If you had been in that room, what would you have seen, heard, and felt? How far have these pilgrims come (2:9-10)? What does the word tongues mean here? Languages ecstatic utterances? What connects being filled with the Spirit and bearing witness to Jesus? If you were one of the crowd, would you respond more like those in verse 12, or those in verse 13? Why?**

**REFLECT: When have you experienced an empowering from ADONAI to witness about Messiah? What will you do this week to be better prepared for God's use? Everyone is immersed with the Ruach Ha'Kodesh at the moment of salvation. It is a once in a lifetime event. But being filled with the Spirit of God should be continuous. What can you do to be filled with the Ruach?**

The events of **Messiah's** life, death and resurrection, according to Rabbi Sha'ul, **were not done in a quiet corner (Acts 26:26)**, but out in the open before all people. The same could be said of the birth of the Church. It did not begin in some out of the way place. Rather, it was born with a startling, dramatic event in the very heart of Yerushalayim.[31]

Approximately ten days after **Messiah's** ascension the **day of Shavu'ot had come** (Hebrew: **The Feast of Weeks,** or Greek: **Pentecost**). When **Luke** says **"day," he** uses the definite article, translated **"the day" of Shavu'ot,** or the

fulfillment of **Shavu'ot**, which was fulfilled by the birth of the Church. The first **three thousand** believers were **Jewish**, and **the Gentile** believers did not come into the picture until later (**to see link click Bg – Peter Goes to the House of Cornelius**). Here for the English phrase **"had come," Luke** uses the very long Greek word *sumplerousthai*, which means, *being fulfilled completely*. **The day** didn't merely **come**, that **day of Shavu'ot** was about to be *fulfilled completely*.

Because **Shavu'ot** recalls **God's** revelation of **Himself**, **His** power and **His** Torah (the Hebrew word means "teaching" not "law") to **the Jewish people**, the synagogue readings for this holiday include **Exodus 19-20** (Moshe's ascent of Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments), and two passages celebrating other theophanies (appearances of **God**), **Ezeki'el 1-2** and **Habakkuk 3**. **In Judaism, the feast of Shavu'ot is commemorated as the time of the giving of the Torah. In Jewish tradition, that's when the Torah was born.** Now it will be celebrated as the birth of the Church. It's called **the Feast of Weeks** in Hebrew because it comes seven **weeks** after Pesach (Passover), and it's called **Pentecost** in Greek because it comes on the fiftieth day after the presentation of the **firstfruits** of the barley harvest.

During the Second Temple period **Shavu'ot** consisted of being a harvest festival for farmers. Various first fruits were brought as an offering: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and honey. The farmers would parade to the Temple with these firstfruits and then offer them up in a special ceremony. People would follow them blowing flutes and other musical instruments. It was quite an elaborate observance as the farmers brought their firstfruits to the Temple.

Parallels between Sinai and **Shavu'ot** continue: (1) At Sinai **the Torah** and the Ten Commandments were delivered to **God's** people by **the finger of God (Exodus 31:18)**, while at **Shavu'ot the Torah** was written on **tablets of the heart (Second Corinthians 3:3).** (2) Both took place on **Shavu'ot**. (3) Both were accompanied by appearances of **YHVH**. (4) Both were accompanied by many **languages** (voices, tongues). (5) At Sinai the Torah was given externally to the people as a whole, while at Yerushalayim the Torah was put within each believer. (6) At Sinai a mixed multitude **(Exodus 12:38)** accompanied the Israelites, just as people from many countries were present at Shavu'ot. (7) **Torah** means teaching, and **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** is **the Teacher (John 14:16, 16:26 and 16:13)**. (8) It is customary in the **Jewish** celebration of **Shavu'ot** to eat milk products, and **the Holy Spirit** provides the milk of the Word **(First Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-13)**.[32]

**Shavu'ot** was also one of the three *regalim*, or **Jewish** "pilgrim" festivals, along with Pesach/Unleavened Bread and Sukkot (Booths), where every able-bodied man was supposed to travel to **Jerusalem** to celebrate annually **(Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16)**.

Ties between the large **Jewish** population in the Diaspora and Eretz (the Land of) **Isra'el** were very close in the Second Temple period, marked not only by the Diaspora's reverence of **the Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**), but also in the sending of the half-shekel contribution to the Temple and pilgrimage to **Yerushalayim**. **Pilgrims** came from such places as Asia, Africa, Egypt, and Italy and various oral laws make it clear that, particularly at Pesach and Sukkot, **people** not only stayed for the duration of the festival, but **they** also came at least seven days earlier to purify **themselves** in order to enter the Temple.[33]

Two other names for **Shavu'ot** are found in the TaNaKh; *Yom-HaBikkurim* **(Day of the First fruits** in **Numbers 28:26)** and *Chag-HaKatzir* **(Feast of the Harvest** in **Exodus 23:16)**. Because it was always **ADONAI's** intention to bring the **Jewish** New Covenant (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Eo – The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**) to **the Jewish people** in a **Jewish** way, **He** made the maximum use of **the Jewish** festivals to convey new truths in ways that emphasize their connection with old truths.[34] So, **Yerushalayim** would be especially crowded, considerably more than the residents of **the City**. This was **God**-ordained because it would help tremendously with the growth of the Messianic Community. On **that day, they were all together in one place, in the upper room (2:1).**

**Ezeki'el 1:1-28** is the traditional reading from the prophets for **Shavu'ot**. This passage dramatically describes **Ezeki'el's** vision of the Sh'khinah glory of **God**. **Ezeki'el** describes the tremendous manifestation in these terms: **I looked, and behold, a storm wind came from the north, a great cloud with flashing fire and brightness all around it, and something like a glowing alloy of the fire (Ezeki'el 1:4).** Imagine thousands of **Jewish worshipers** leaving the Temple after the morning service (at the third hour) having just heard the passage from **Ezeki'el 1**. Suddenly some of the same manifestations of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** started to appear before **their** eyes! No wonder they were amazed and perplexed by the windstorm and **fire**. It certainly got **their** attention![35]

**Then suddenly there would be a sound to hear, a sight to see, and a**

**miracle to experience.** Then **there came from heaven a sound** (Greek: echos, or *noise*) **like a mighty rushing wind.** This **sound** wasn't **a wind**, it was the **sound *like* a mighty wind**. **They** never felt a blast because there was never any real **wind**. In the Bible, **wind** is one of the symbols of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**. **And it filled the whole house where they were sitting (2:2). ADONAI** emphasized the connection between the Torah and **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** by giving both similar miraculous signs. The roar and **the fire** in **Jerusalem** recalled **the fire**, smoke and sounds at Mt Sinai **(Exodus 19:18-19; Deuteronomy 5:19-21).** However, instead of **God's people** being kept away **(Exodus 19:21-23; Deuteronomy 5:22-24), God's** glory, represented by **the tongues of fire**, came to each individual.[36]

They must have wondered if **YHVH** was revealing **His** Sh'khinah glory for the first time in nearly 600 years! The Sh'khinah glory was present at the giving of the Torah; the same glory was seen at the giving of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**. **The prophet** later wrote: **I will put My Ruach within you . . . and cause you to walk in My decrees, so you will keep My rulings (Ezeki'el 36:27).**

**And** then **they saw tongues like fire spreading** (Greek: *diamerizomenai*, meaning *to divide and distribute*) **out appearing to them.** Once again, this wasn't **fire**, but it was ***like* fire spreading**, it *looked **like*** **fire**. It was flame-like in appearance and brightness, however there was no burning. What **they** were seeing was the Sh'khinah glory, the visible expression of **God**. And the result was that each **tongue** that *looked **like*** **fire settled on each one of them (2:3).**

The miracle **they experienced** was that **they were all filled with the Ruach Ha'Kodesh and began to speak in other tongues as the Ruach enabled them to speak out (2:4). The tongues** *looked **like*** **fire**, but then **they** were

**speaking in tongues (**known **languages).** Those **Jewish** pilgrims, who had come from all over the dispersion, were hearing the impossible. Those Galilean disciples were **speaking** various known **languages**.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that the gift of **tongues** is anything other than human **languages** (Greek: *dialekto*, meaning *dialects*). Nor is there any suggestion that the true **tongues** described in **First Corinthians 12-14** were essentially any different from the miraculous **languages** described in **Acts 2** at **Shavu'ot**. The Greek word in both places is *glossa*. In **Acts** it is clear that **the disciples** were speaking in known **languages**. **Luke** even goes on to name some fifteen different countries and areas whose **languages** were being spoken **(2:8-11).** Unbelieving **Jews** at **Shavu'ot** heard **God's** message proclaimed in **their** own local *dialects*. Such a description could not apply to ecstatic speech.

This description is the charismatic touchstone, containing what many Pentecostals and charismatics view as the core truth of the New Covenant. They believe this verse teaches that at conversion believers receive **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** only in a limited sense. The notion that one gets salvation at one point and baptism of **the Spirit** later is often referred to as *the doctrine of subsequence*. Therefore, charismatics wrongly argue that believers need to seek **Spirit** baptism in order to move to a higher level of spiritual life, being supernaturally immersed in the power of **God's Spirit**. They say this is accompanied by speaking in **tongues** and results in new spiritual motivation and power. The epistles, however, say nothing that can be construed to support this idea. And even the book of **Acts** fails to support charismatic claims. Only four passages mention tongues or receiving **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh: Chapters 2, 8, 10** and **19**. Only in **Acts 2** and **8** do believers receive **the Spirit** after salvation. In **Acts 10** and **19**, believers were baptized in **the Spirit** at the moment of **faith**. The point is clear. To say that the book of **Acts** presents the normal pattern for receiving **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** presents a problem: no consistent pattern is evident in the book of **Acts**![37]

What caused them to **speak in other languages** was **the filling of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh.** This fulfilled the promised **Yeshua** made: **I will send you . . . the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father (John 15:26** and **16:7-15). The Spirit** enabled the twelve **apostles in the upper room** to **speak other languages**, but it was **the apostles** who were doing **the speaking**. If **the Ruach** was doing **the speaking**, then **tongues** could never be misused; however, it is obvious from the book of **First Corinthians** that **speaking in tongues** was a problem that needed to be addressed by Rabbi Sha'ul (see **An – Peter Speaks to**

**the Shavu'ot Crowd** for the purpose of speaking in known **languages**).

Being **filled** with **the Ruach** must be distinguished from being immersed with (Greek: *ev*, meaning *in*, *by*, or *with*) **the Ruach**. Paul carefully defines the immersion in/by/with **the Ruach** as that act of **YHVH** by which **He** places believers into **His** Body. In contrast to much errant teaching today, the New Covenant nowhere commands believers to seek the immersion of **the Spirit**. It is a sovereign, single, unrepeatable act of the part of **ADONAI**, and is no more of an "experience" than are its companion doctrines of justification and adoption (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw – What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith**). Although some wrongly view the immersion in/by/with **the Spirit** as the initiation into the ranks of the spiritual elite, nothing could be further from the truth. The purpose of the immersion in/by/with **the Ruach** is not to divide the body of **Messiah**, but to unify it! As Paul wrote to the **Corinthians**, through one immersion in/by/with **the Ruach we were all immersed into one body (First Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:4-6).**

Unlike **the immersion** in/by/with **the Ruach**, being **filled** with **the Spirit** *is* an experience should be continuous. Although **filled** initially on **Shavu'ot**, **Peter** was **filled** again in **4:8**. Many of the same people **filled** with **the Spirit** in **Chapter 2** were **filled** again in **4:31**. **Acts 6:5** describes Stephen as a man **full of faith and the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**; however, **Acts 7:55** records **him** being **filled** again. Paul was **filled** with **the Spirit** in **9:17** and again in **13:9**.[38]

**The filling** of **the Spirit** referred to in **Ephesians 5:18**. We should be so completely yielded to **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** that **He** can possess us fully and, in that sense, **fill** us. **Romans 8:9** and **Ephesians 1:13-14** states that **He** dwells within every believer, nevertheless, **He** can be grieved **(Ephesians 4:30)**, and **His** activity within us can be quenched **(First Thessalonians 5:19)**. When we allow this to happen, we do not experience the fullness of **the Spirit's** working and **His** power in and through us. To be filled with **the Ruach** implies freedom for **Him** to occupy every part of our lives, guiding and controlling us. Then **His** power can be exerted through us so that what we do is fruitful to **God**. The filling of **the Spirit** does not apply to outward acts alone; it also applies to the innermost thoughts and motives of our actions. **Psalm 19:14** says, **May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, ADONAI, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Sin is what hinders the filling of **the Holy Spirit**, and obedience to **God** is how **the**

**filling** of **the Spirit** is maintained. **Ephesians 5:18** commands that we be filled with **the Ruach**; however, it is not praying for the filling of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** that accomplishes the **filling**. Only our obedience to **God's** commands allows **the Spirit** freedom to work within us. Because we are still infected with sin, it is impossible to be filled with **the Ruach** all of the time. When we sin, we should immediately confess it to **God** and renew our commitment to being **Spirit-filled** and **Spirit-led**.[39] In the final analysis, we are leaky vessels and need to be **filled** continually.

This was the birthday, or the beginning of the Messianic Community, and it opened the door to salvation to both **Jews** and proselytes (who were **Gentile converts to Judaism**) called **God-fearers (Acts 13:16. 26, 17:17)**. In **Acts 2:10** it tells us that there were **converts to Judaism** present in **Tziyon** on **Shavu'ot**. By the end of **Acts** the gospel will be accepted by **the Gentiles** and **the Church** will be made up of both **Jewish** and **Gentile** believers **(Ephesians 2:14-15)**. However, there is a widespread malicious Christian teaching today that the Church is the "New" or "Spiritual" Isra'el, having replaced **the Jews** as **God's people**. In this view – known variously as Replacement theology, Covenant theology, Kingdom Now theology, Dominionism, Reconstructionism, or the Hebrew Roots movement (see **Ag – Replacement Theology and Acts**) – **God** promises to **Isra'el** were nullified when **"the Jews"** refused to accept **Jesus** (never mind that all the first believers were **Jews**). This false theology, impugning the character of **ADONAI** by suggesting that **He** will not honor **His** Word, has provided apparent justification for many anti-Semitic acts in the Church. It also lies behind most Christian protestations that the present-day regathering of **the Jewish people** to the Land of **Isra'el** is without theological or biblical significance.[40]

**Now Jewish people** and proselytes **were staying in Jerusalem, the righteous of the TaNaKh from every nation under heaven.** Now **Shavu'ot** was fifty days after the Festival of Pesach/Unleavened Bread, (and it took a long time to travel in those days), so if you lived a long distance from **Jerusalem** instead of going home and coming back again for **Shavu'ot** you would just stay in **Tziyon**. So, these **Jews** had stayed in **Yerushalayim** since the Passover in which **Jesus** was crucified. **And when the crowd** heard **this sound** (Greek: *phones,* meaning *languages* ) of **their** native **languages,** and as a result **they gathered** in the Temple compound**. They were bewildered, because each was hearing them speaking in his own language** (Greek: dialekto, meaning *dialect*)**.** The sight of the supposedly ignorant **Galileans** speaking so many **languages** cause the **astonished** crowd to exclaim:

**All these who are speaking – aren't they Galileans.** The accent of **the Galileans** was very pronounced and you could easily detect a **Galilean** by his or her accent **(Matthew 26:73; Mark 14:70; Luke 22:58)? How is it, then, that we each hear our own birth language (2:5-8)?** That this supernatural communication was known human **languages**, not ecstatic speech, becomes clear as the list of specific **tongues** is listed.

The first four are all east of **Judea**: **The Parthians and Medes and Elamites and those living in Mesopotamia.** These were people from the ten tribes and their major language was Aramaic. **He** next mentions **Judea,** but because these are **Judeans** who are foreigners it probably involves the province that **Judea** was in, which would include Syria. The next five **he** mentions: **Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia** are all in **Asia** Minor in present day Turkey and they spoke Greek. The next two, Egypt **and parts of Libya toward Cyrene** are from North Africa and they spoke Greek. **And visitors from Rome** who spoke Latin**.** Then **Luke** mentions Greek-speaking **Cretans and Arabs** who spoke Nabatean **– we (both Jewish people and proselytes) hear them declaring in our own tongues [languages] the mighty deeds of God! And they were all amazed and perplexed,** and questioned **each other,** saying: **What does this mean (2:9-12)?** What had been prophesied by **Isaiah** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Fm – With Foreign Lips of Strange Tones God Will Speak to This People**) was fulfilled when **the Spirit of God** came at **Shavu'ot**. The early fruits had come in and the implicit promise was that the latter harvest would also come in.[41]

The event recorded here in **Acts 2** was unique. You only have one birth and this was it for the Church. **God** wanted everyone to know something unusual was happening, and that is why there was **a sound like a mighty wind**. That is why there were **tongues like fire** sitting on each of **the apostles**.

And that is why **they spoke** in other (known) **languages**. That particular **Shavu'ot** was as unique as the creation of the world or man; as once-for-all-time as the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of **Messiah**. Yet charismatics would make this once-for-all-time event normative for believers for all-time. They claim that what happened in this chapter of **Acts** should happen to everyone. If that were so, then everyone should also experience **a mighty rushing wind** and **tongues of fire on their heads**! But of course, those phenomena are rarely mentioned (if ever) today.[42]

**Others, however, poking fun, were saying, "They are full of sweet new wine" (2:13)!** Like members of the Sanhedrin who heard **Yeshua's** claims and saw **His** confirming miracles, but concluded that **He** was demon possessed (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ek – It is only by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons, That This Fellow Drives Out Demons**), these scoffers rejected the evidence that this was a work of **God**. Instead, **they** proposed the ridiculous hypothesis that **the apostles** were drunk. Tragically, **their** skepticism was to harden into full-fledged opposition toward the gospel and **the apostles**. However, no amount of opposition could stop the work of **ADONAI** that began at **Shavu'ot**.[43]

The body of **Christ** has, for the most part, not taken **Jesus'** command to communicate the gospel **first to the Jew and then to the Gentile** very seriously **(Romans 1:16).** In the sense the gospel has already reached the ends of the earth – the Bible, or at least parts of it, has been translated into some 2,000 **languages**. Yet this does not excuse what has been, by and large, **the Church's** failure to

reach **the Jewish people** with the gospel. Instead of developing a mistaken theology to excuse their neglect **(John 14:6)**, or becoming exasperated when **Jews** reject their message, **the Church** should communicate God's love and truth while seeking **His** wisdom on how to address issues **Jewish people** raise in connection with **Yeshua**, the B'rit Chadashah, and religion in general.

The book of **Ruth** reminds us of a lesson not to be ignored. **Ruth** the Moabites was added to **the Jewish people** with **her** noble confession: **Your people will be my people and your God my God (Ruth 1:16).** This woman, who became an ancestor of **Yeshua (Matthew 1:5)**, expressed **her** loyalty to **the Jewish people** even before **she** spoke of **God**. But over the centuries, many calling themselves Christians have done just the opposite – hating the **Jews**, accusing them of killing **Jesus**, ignoring the New Covenant's warning: **Do not consider yourself to be superior to those other [Jewish] branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the [Jewish] root, but the root supports you (Romans 11:16-26). Acts 2:1-4** shows that **the Gentiles** could not have become part of **God's people** without becoming proselytes. And today **Gentiles** can become Christians if **they** cannot say to **the Jews**: **Your people will be my people,** and at the same time saying: **Your God will be my God.**[44]