

Peter's sermon at Pentecost: Observation

Acts 2:14-41

Reading together counters our individualistic tendencies and fosters humility and gratitude. By reading and discussing Scripture in community, we acknowledge our inability to fully grasp God's truth on our own, and we learn to appreciate the insights of others. Gifts are shared, weaknesses offset, and personal interpretations exposed to inquiry. When we receive God's revelation together and interact with one another, our personal biases are exposed, and other opinions are conveyed and considered. This teaches us to listen attentively, think carefully, question kindly, and respond humbly. Our souls are formed when we read together.

Read the Bible with Someone Else: Four Benefits of Studying in Community
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/read-the-bible-with-someone-else>

In the preface to the second edition of his *Römerbrief*, Karl Barth complains of the tendency of many biblical commentators to confine themselves to a form of textual interpretation which in his eyes was “no commentary at all, but merely the first step towards a commentary.” As an example of a real commentary he cited Calvin on Romans: “how energetically Calvin, having first established what stands in the text, sets himself to rethink the whole material and to wrestle with it, till the walls which separate the sixteenth century from the first become transparent! Paul speaks, and the child of the sixteenth century hears.”

F. F. Bruce, Preface to *The Book of Acts*,
NICNT, Revised Edition

“...it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.”

Luke 1:3-4

Acts chapter 2 overview

1. The description of what happened on that day in Acts 2:1-13
2. Peter's sermon and explanation of what happened in 2:14-41
3. The immediate effects of the event on the life of the brand new Jerusalem church in 2:42-47

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:1-4

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?

Acts 2:5-8

Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Acts 2:9-13

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:14-16

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;

even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit,
and they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:17-18

And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes,
the great and magnificent day.

And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls
upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Acts 2:19-21

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Acts 2:22-24

For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.

For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.

You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

Acts 2:25-28

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

Acts 2:29-31

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

Acts 2:32-33

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Acts 2:34-36

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Acts 2:37

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

Acts 2:38-40

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:41

Observation - What is the text saying?

Four elements of early apostolic preaching as identified by F. F. Bruce

1. the announcement that the age of fulfilment has arrived
2. an account of the ministry, death, and triumph of Jesus
3. citation of Old Testament scriptures whose fulfilment in these events proves Jesus to be the one to whom they pointed forward
4. a call to repentance

Overview of the basic structure of the passage

1. “This is that” **(14-21)**
2. Jesus, and his life, death, and resurrection **(22-28)**
3. Jesus is Lord and Messiah **(29-36)**
4. The response of the crowd **(37)**
5. The call to repentance **(38-40)**
6. Some do repent and believe **(41)**

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

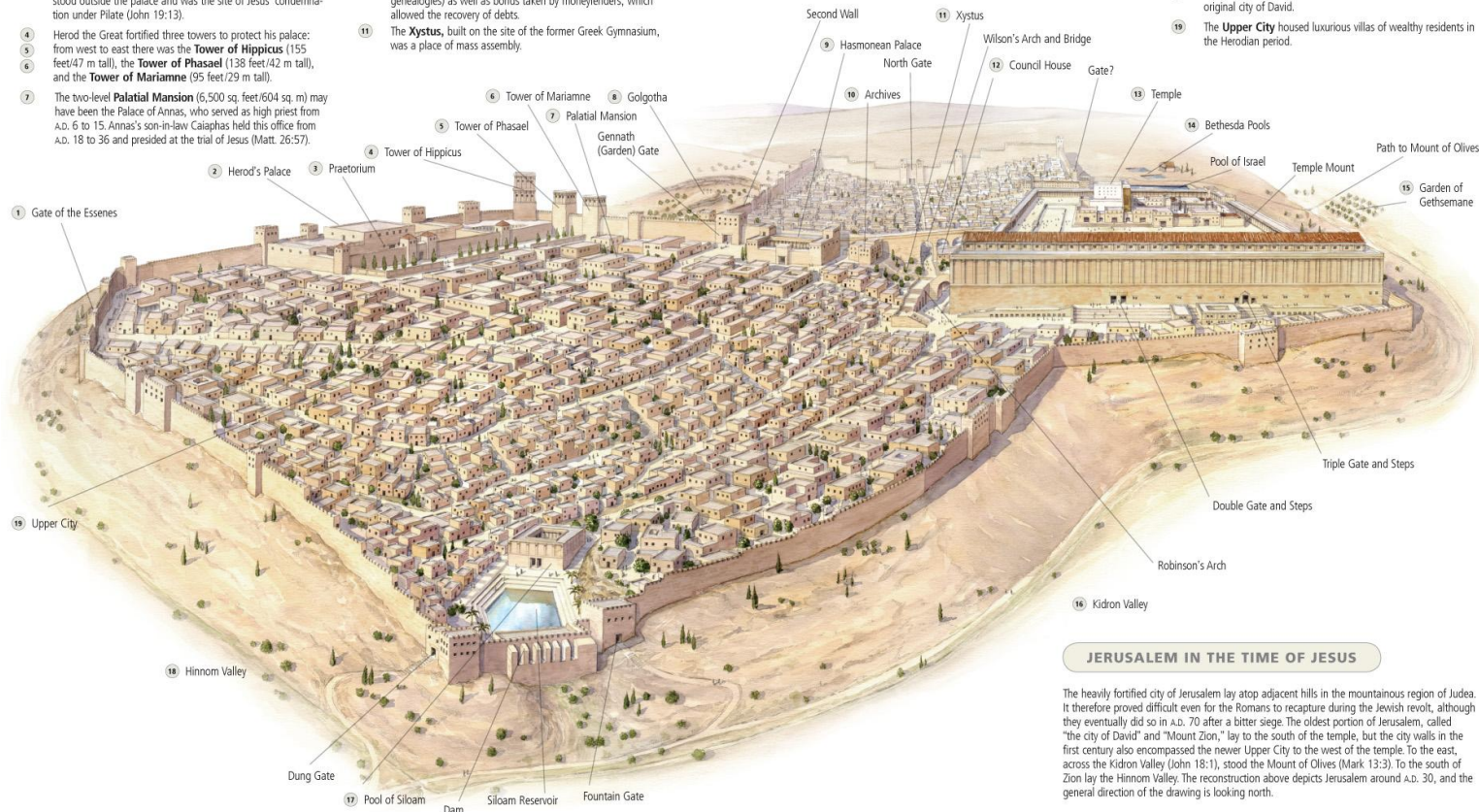
Acts 2:14-16

- 1 The **Gate of the Essenes** allowed the Essenes to access latrines outside the city walls in accordance with their strict laws of hygiene.
- 2 **Herod's Palace** was the Jerusalem home of Herod the Great from 23 to 4 b.c. Pilate, who normally resided in Caesarea Maritima, resided in this palace during his visits to Jerusalem, including his visit for the Passover preceding Christ's crucifixion.
- 3 The **Praetorium** was in Herod's Palace (Matt. 27:27; Mark 15:16), which served as Pilate's official headquarters and as a fortress. A raised stone pavement, used for official judgments, stood outside the palace and was the site of Jesus' condemnation under Pilate (John 19:13).
- 4 Herod the Great fortified three towers to protect his palace: from west to east there was the **Tower of Hippicus** (155 feet/47 m tall), the **Tower of Phasael** (138 feet/42 m tall), and the **Tower of Mariamne** (95 feet/29 m tall).
- 7 The two-level **Palatial Mansion** (6,500 sq. feet/604 sq. m) may have been the Palace of Annas, who served as high priest from A.D. 6 to 15. Annas's son-in-law Caiaphas held this office from A.D. 18 to 36 and presided at the trial of Jesus (Matt. 26:57).

- 8 This is often considered the most likely location of **Golgotha**, the place of Jesus' death. It was on a hill overlooking a quarry, outside the Second Wall of the city and near the Gennath (Garden) Gate.
- 9 Herod the Great lived in the luxurious **Hasmonean Palace** from the mid-30s to 23 a.c. while awaiting the building of his own new palace. Herod Antipas ("Herod the Tetrarch") lived in this palace during his reign, 4 a.c.–A.D. 39. Jesus appeared before him here in either A.D. 30 or 33.
- 10 The **Archives** building contained the public registers (including genealogies) as well as bonds taken by moneylenders, which allowed the recovery of debts.
- 11 The **Xystus**, built on the site of the former Greek Gymnasium, was a place of mass assembly.

- 12 The **Council House** was a public building, perhaps functioning as a municipal office.
- 13 **The Temple** was reconstructed by Herod the Great, beginning in 20/19 b.c.
- 14 The **Bethesda Pools** (see John 5:2) were twin pools, each measuring c. 312 by 164–196 feet (95 by 50–60 m), and c. 50 feet (15 m) deep. A small Roman temple dedicated to Aesculapius stood to the east of the pools.

- 15 The **Garden of Gethsemane** was located approximately 300 yards (274 m) from Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. The Mount of Olives was "a Sabbath day's journey away" from Jerusalem (Acts 1:12), approximately 1,100 yards, or 3/5 of a mile.
- 16 The ravine of the **Kidron Valley** has always served as Jerusalem's eastern boundary.
- 17 The **Pool of Siloam** (cf. John 9:7), a focal point of Jerusalem, adjoined a large dam and reservoir, and received water from the Gihon Spring.
- 18 The **Hinnom Valley** was to the south of the hill that was the original city of David.
- 19 The **Upper City** housed luxurious villas of wealthy residents in the Herodian period.



JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF JESUS

The heavily fortified city of Jerusalem lay atop adjacent hills in the mountainous region of Judea. It therefore proved difficult even for the Romans to recapture during the Jewish revolt, although they eventually did so in A.D. 70 after a bitter siege. The oldest portion of Jerusalem, called "the city of David" and "Mount Zion," lay to the south of the temple, but the city walls in the first century also encompassed the newer Upper City to the west of the temple. To the east, across the Kidron Valley (John 18:1), stood the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3). To the south of Zion lay the Hinnom Valley. The reconstruction above depicts Jerusalem around A.D. 30, and the general direction of the drawing is looking north.

THE TEMPLE MOUNT IN THE TIME OF JESUS

Herod's Temple Mount was the focal point of Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. Sitting atop Jerusalem's north-eastern ridge, it occupied one-sixth of the city's area. Under Herod the Great, the Temple Mount's foundation was expanded to encompass approximately 1.5 million square feet (140,000 square meters). Its foundational walls were constructed using gigantic stones, the largest found being 45 feet long, 11.5 feet high, and 12 feet thick (13.7 m by 3.5 m by 3.7 m).

Wilson's Arch formed a bridge over the Tyropoeon Valley below, leading from the Temple Mount to the Hasmonean Palace. A section of the western wall south of Wilson's Arch (187 feet/57 m long, sometimes called the Wailing Wall) has been a place of prayer for Jews for the last 700 years. The lowest seven stone courses, which can be seen at ground level, are Herodian.

The early square Temple Mount preserved its identity as a separate area with its own walls and gates.

Robinson's Arch and its massive stairway led from the Tyropoeon Street below up to the Royal Stoa.

The Double Gate and its monumental stairway

A ritual bath-house for pilgrims to cleanse before entering the temple precincts

A Council House for legal proceedings

The Triple Gate and its stairway

Small shops, which had a narrow street built above them, were built along the southern wall of the Temple Mount.

The Antonia Fortress was where Herod (and later the Romans) commanded the garrison in order to protect the temple and to suppress religiously motivated rebellion.

Herod's Temple (for a detailed cutaway drawing, see p. 1943)

The Court of the Women was the farthest point of the inner temple complex that women could enter.

The Pool of Israel was probably used to wash sacrificial animals before they were led to the Temple Mount.

The Golden Gate, then known as the Shushan Gate

Stairs descended from the Muster Gate into the Kidron Valley and eventually went up to the Mount of Olives.

The eastern city wall of Jerusalem

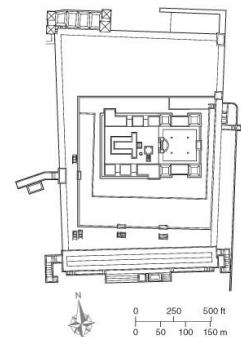
Solomon's Porch, the portico built along the eastern wall, was a place of congregation (cf. John 10:23; Acts 3:11).

The soieg (a low, latticed screen or railing) prohibited Gentiles or non-purified Jews from entering the temple courts.

The Court of the Gentiles was the area between the soieg and the outer walls of the early square Temple Mount.

The Royal Stoa was a 912-foot-long (278 m) portico, containing four rows of 40 columns. The Sanhedrin met in the central apse after c. A.D. 30. This may have been where Jesus cleansed the temple. The southeast corner overlooking the Kidron Valley created a drop of 140 feet (43 m) to the street below, and 300 feet (91 m) to the valley below. This may be the "pinnacle of the temple" mentioned in Matt. 4:5 and Luke 4:9.

Temple Mount Architectural Plan



HEROD'S TEMPLE COMPLEX IN THE TIME OF JESUS

When the Gospels and the book of Acts refer to entering the temple or teaching in the temple, it is often not a reference to Herod's temple itself, but rather to this temple complex, including a number of courts and chambers that surrounded the temple. These latter structures were the great and wonderful buildings referred to by the disciples in Matt. 24:1; Mark 13:1–2.

The Sanhedrin came out to teach the people from the Scriptures on this terrace (Hb. *hel*) during the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles. It may have been here that the 12-year-old Jesus was found by his parents, "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46).

The altar of burnt sacrifices stood in the Temple Court. To the west of it stood the brass laver (for priestly washings) and to the north the place of ritual animal slaughter.

Herod's Temple

The Chamber of the Hearth was the building which housed priests who served when their division was on duty (cf. Zechariah in Luke 1:8).

The Nicanor Gate divided the western Court of the Israelites (where Jewish men could observe temple proceedings) from the eastern Court of the Women. Women were allowed to stand in the southern side of the Nicanor Gate and watch as sacrifices for their purification were made (Luke 2:22–24).

The Chamber of the Lepers was where procedures for lepers who had been healed were handled (cf. Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14).

Each of the four massive lampstands (86 feet/26 m high) in the Court of the Women had a ladder by which to reach the four golden bowls to provide lighting at night.

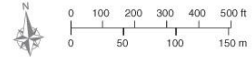
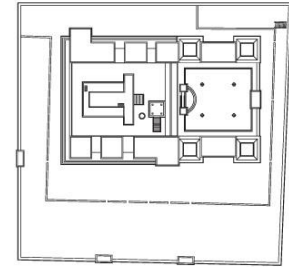
The Chamber of Hewn Stone housed the Sanhedrin council until c. A.D. 30.

The *soreg* (a low, latticed screen or railing) separated the temple courts from the Court of the Gentiles, prohibiting Gentiles or non-purified Jews from entry. Even Herod himself was unable to pass this point. Some interpreters believe that Paul alluded to this railing when he spoke of "the dividing wall of hostility" abolished by Christ (Eph. 2:14).

The Chamber of the Nazirites was where a Nazirite would bring his sacrifices upon completion of his vow.

The Court of the Women was a 233 feet/71 m square courtyard, capable of holding up to 6,000 worshippers at a time. Its name does not indicate that it was restricted to women, but that they were not permitted to enter further into the temple courts. Their presence was normally restricted to the balconies above the colonnades. In this court, the infant Jesus was met by Simeon and Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:25–38).

Temple Complex Architectural Plan



Eastern Gate

HEROD'S TEMPLE IN THE TIME OF JESUS

Herod began construction of this magnificent temple in 20/19 B.C., during the 18th year of his reign. The main construction phase was completed within about a decade. Detailed descriptions of the temple exist in Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 15:380–425; *Jewish War* 5:184–247) and in early rabbinic writings (esp. *Mishnah*, *Middot*). The Roman army under Titus destroyed the temple during the capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The temple was 172 feet (52 m) long, wide, and high (about 16 to 20 stories tall).

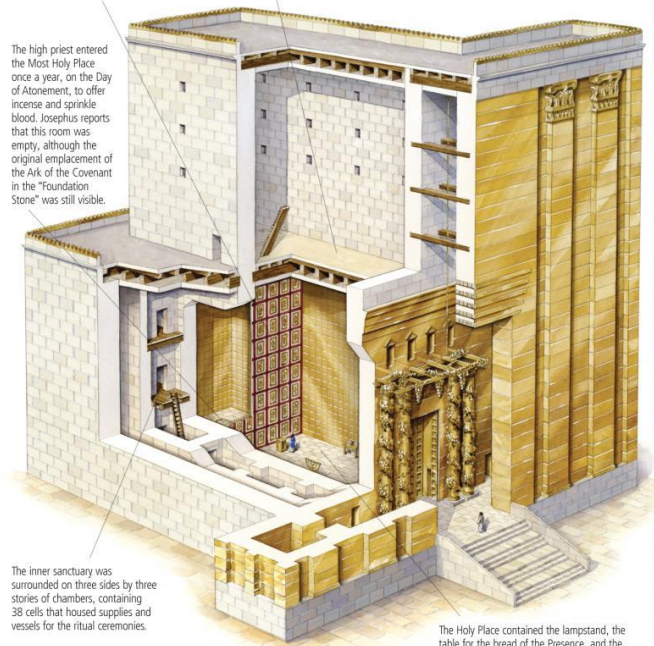
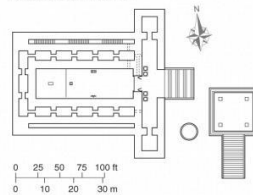
A massive curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. When Jesus died, this curtain was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

There was an upper chamber above the sanctuary, which allowed access through holes in the floor for cleaning of the gold-covered walls below. A ladder (shown partly cut away in this section) gave access to the upper roof level.

The high priest entered the Most Holy Place once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to offer incense and sprinkle blood. Josephus reports that this room was empty, although the original emplacement of the Ark of the Covenant in the "Foundation Stone" was still visible.

The inner sanctuary was surrounded on three sides by three stories of chambers, containing 38 cells that housed supplies and vessels for the ritual ceremonies.

Temple Architectural Plan



The Holy Place contained the lampstand, the table for the bread of the Presence, and the altar of incense. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah on the right side of the incense altar (Luke 1:11).

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