

The True Meaning of Acts 2:1

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by
Fred R. Coulter

Understanding the true meaning of Acts 2:1 is absolutely crucial in order to observe the Feast of Pentecost on the fiftieth day as commanded by God in the Scriptures.

However, based on an incorrect interpretation of Acts 2:1, there is confusion in the minds of some ministers and teachers who believe that the Feast of Pentecost is to be observed on the fifty-first day, after a fifty-day count has been completed.

In this presentation, Fred R. Coulter shows the true scriptural method of counting the fifty days to the Feast of Pentecost. He leads the reader step-by-step through an in-depth analysis of the New Testament Greek text of Acts 2:1, and shows that all the events recorded in the second chapter of Acts were in fact accomplished on the fiftieth day and not on the fifty-first day.

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Understanding the Complete Meaning of Acts 2:1

forms of *sumpleeroo*, is expressing completed or past action! On the contrary, both verses show *ongoing action* that was in the process of being completed. Thus, both verses support the true interpretation of Acts 2:1—that the day of Pentecost “was being fulfilled.” That day is specifically named in Acts 2:1 as “the **fiftieth** day”—not the fifty-first day. There can be no doubt whatsoever concerning the true meaning of these New Testament Scriptures. May those who observe a Monday Pentecost have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to accept this undeniable truth that God has so clearly preserved in His Word.

Although Berry's interlinear English translation is somewhat awkward, it does convey the true meaning of the Greek text. Notice that Berry translates **εν τω συμπληρουσθαι** [*en too sumpleerousthai*] as "when were being fulfilled." This translation correctly reflects the present tense articular infinitive which is found in the Greek text. An exact literal translation would read as follows:

Εγενετο δε εν τω συμπληρουσθαι τας ημερας
Then it came to pass when the were being fulfilled the days

της αναληψεως αυτου...
of the receiving up His...

Both of these translations convey the actual meaning of the present tense articular infinitive *en too sumpleerousthai* as "when were being fulfilled." A less awkward English translation of this phrase in its context would read: "Then it came to pass when the days were being fulfilled for His receiving up, that He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem."

As in Acts 2:1, this introductory phrase sets the stage for the events being fulfilled during those days. In the following verses, Luke continues his narrative by relating some of the events that took place while those days were being fulfilled. Luke's record of these events clearly shows that the time had not yet been fulfilled for His "receiving up"—His ascension to the Father. In fact, the next fifteen chapters in Luke's Gospel relate numerous events that took place in Jesus' ministry before He was "received up." The events described after Luke 9:51—as well as the use of the present tense articular infinitive in Luke 9:51—clearly show that the time had not yet been fulfilled. Those days were not fulfilled until *after* Jesus was crucified and resurrected. To claim that Luke 9:51 means that the days were *already fulfilled* is contrary not only to the rules of Greek grammar but contradict the record of events in the remaining chapters of the Gospel of Luke.

When we understand the Greek text, it is undeniably clear that advocates of a Monday Pentecost have seriously erred in their interpretation of Luke 9:51, just as they have erred in their interpretation of Luke 8:23. Neither of these verses, which use

Chapter One

Beginning the Count to Pentecost

In the second chapter of the book of Acts we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the disciples of Jesus] were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). This New Testament record of the keeping of the Feast of Pentecost reveals that there was no confusion or division among early Christians concerning the correct day for its observance. Yet among Christians today there are a number of conflicting opinions as to *when* the day of Pentecost should be observed. This division has resulted from a faulty understanding of the scriptural instructions for counting to the time that God has appointed.

The instructions for observing the Feast of Pentecost are recorded in the book of Leviticus. In Leviticus 23, we are commanded to count fifty days and to observe the fiftieth day as an annual feast day (verses 16, 21). It is for this reason that this feast is called "Pentecost." The English word *Pentecost* is translated from the Greek word **πεντηκοστη**—*pentekostee*—which means "the fiftieth," or "fiftieth." "The day of Pentecost" literally means "the fiftieth day." Other scriptural names for this annual feast day are the "feast of weeks" and the "feast of the firstfruits" (Ex. 34:22; 23:16, Deut. 16:10). In order to observe this annual holy day at its appointed time, it is vital to understand God's instructions for counting to the fiftieth day.

The Count Begins on the "Morrow After the Sabbath"

God's command in Leviticus 23 shows that the count toward Pentecost must begin with "the morrow after the Sabbath" (verses 11, 15). The Hebrew term *mi mōhorat*, translated into the English as "the morrow after," means "beginning with and including" the day **after** the Sabbath. The phrase "the morrow after the Sabbath" **specifically excludes this Sabbath day in the counting or numbering of the fifty days**. The count to Pentecost does not begin with and does not include this weekly Sabbath. The first day of the count is "the morrow **after** the Sabbath," which

can only be the first day of the week. Other Scriptures reveal that it is always the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (See *Understanding God's Command for the Wave Sheaf* by Dwight Blevins.)

The command of God, as recorded and preserved in the Hebrew text, specifically instructs us to begin the count on **the first day of the week**. The meaning of the Hebrew expression *mohorat ha shabbat*—translated “the morrow after the Sabbath”—is clear and unmistakable. The use of this expression in the Hebrew text makes it plain that the weekly Sabbath does not begin the count. The count begins with “the morrow **after** the Sabbath”—the first day of the week.

Because the count begins with the first day of the week, all the weeks in the count are whole and complete weeks. In other words, each week in the count begins on the first day of the week and ends on the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath day. None of the weeks include *part* of one weekly cycle and *part* of another. For example, the period of time from a Wednesday through the next Tuesday is seven days, but this period of seven days is composed of *parts* of two different weekly cycles. God's command in Leviticus 23 excludes this type of “week” from the count to Pentecost. Furthermore, the Hebrew text plainly shows that no partial or incomplete days are included in the count. Each week in the count is composed of seven complete days. Each day in the count is a full twenty-four hour day, from sunset to sunset. The count to Pentecost begins when the Sabbath ends at sunset and the first day of the week begins.

The first day in the count, “the morrow after the Sabbath,” is the day that the wave sheaf was offered to God (Lev. 23:10-11). The wave sheaf, the first of the firstfruits, was offered each year at the beginning of the spring barley harvest. Here are the commands that God gave to Moses concerning the wave sheaf:

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, ‘When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest.

“And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it....And you shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears [of the new barley harvest], until the selfsame day that

never used to show action that has already been completed. When advocates of a Monday Pentecost choose to interpret Luke 8:23 in this erroneous manner, they are violating the meaning of the text and revealing their complete ignorance of the rules of New Testament Greek. When this violation of Scripture is presented as authoritative proof, it becomes evident that such advocates of a Monday Pentecost are not rightly dividing the Word of God. Rather, they are misrepresenting this Scripture and blinding the eyes of their followers to the true meaning of Luke 8:23, which is so plainly revealed in the Greek text.

Luke 9:51

These same supporters of a Monday Pentecost have also misinterpreted the meaning of the form of *sumpleeroo* that is used in Luke 9:51. In the *KJV* this verse reads as follows: “And it came to pass, **when** the time **was come** that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” The form of *sumpleeroo* that is used in this verse has been translated “when... was come.” While this *KJV* translation is basically correct, it does not reflect the full meaning of the specific verbal form that is found in the text. An examination of the Greek reveals that the form of *sumpleeroo* used in Luke 9:51 is the same form that is found in Acts 2:1. It is the present tense articular infinitive **εν τω συμπληρουσθαι** [*en too sumpleerousthai*], which we have thoroughly analyzed in Chapter Five. While in Acts 2:1 the *KJV* translates this phrase “was fully come,” in Luke 9:51 it is translated “when ... was come.” As we have learned, this present tense articular infinitive phrase shows action that *is taking place* during a contemporaneous time and is not yet complete.

Let's examine this articular infinitive phrase in Luke 9:51 as it is translated in the Greek-English interlinear by Berry:

Εγενετο δε εν τω συμπληρουσθαι τας ημερας
And it came to pass when were being fulfilled the days

της αναληψεως αυτου
of the receiving Him up

The words “**they were filled**” in the *KJV* are translated from a single Greek word that is a *form* of the base verb *sunpleeroo*. This word is the Greek verb **συνεπιληροοντο** [*sunpleerounto*]. This form of *sunpleeroo* is not an articular infinitive, as is the form used in Acts 2:1. Although it is a different form, the meaning of this verb is determined by the same factors that govern every Greek verb form. When we analyze the verb *sunpleerounto*, we find that it is the verb form for the third person plural—**they**; it is in the present imperfect tense, expressing incomplete and ongoing action—**being filled**; it is in the passive voice, showing that the action was happening to them—**they were being**; it is in the indicative mood, stating an actual fact—**they were being filled**.

The fact that the verb *sunpleerounto* is in the present imperfect tense shows that the “filling” was taking place at that very time. The present imperfect tense is never used to express action that has already been completed! If Luke had intended to express action that was already completed, he would have used the past tense form of the verb. Instead of *sunpleerounto*, which expresses ongoing action, we would find the verb form **συνεπληθησαν** [*sunpleetheosan*], which would be translated “they had been filled.” But Luke did not use this past tense verb because the boat **had not been completely filled**. Obviously, if the boat had been *completely filled* with water, it would have sunk before the disciples awakened Jesus. Luke’s use of the present imperfect tense makes it clear that the boat **was being filled** with water when the disciples awoke Jesus. He got up and rebuked the wind, which stopped the waves from filling the boat completely, so that it did not sink (verse 24).

The following translation of Luke 8:23 expresses the true meaning of the *verb sunpleerounto*, the form of *sunpleeroo* that is used in this text: “And while they were sailing away, He fell asleep; and a storm of wind came down on the lake, and **they were being filled with water**, and they were in danger.” This translation accurately conveys the meaning of the present imperfect tense of the verb, which always expresses action that is *not yet complete*. To claim that the present imperfect tense of the verb *sunpleerounto* expresses fully completed action is contrary to the rules of Greek grammar. The present imperfect tense is

you have brought an offering unto your God [the first day of the week—the Wave Sheaf day].’” (Lev. 23:10-11, 14).

During the days when the Temple of God in Jerusalem was still in operation, a chief priest performed the ritual ceremony of cutting the sheaf that would be offered as the first of the first fruits. As the weekly Sabbath was ending at sunset and the first day of the week was beginning, the priest would cut a special, single sheaf of green-eared barley from the field where the barley for the ritual wave sheaf was grown. This field was located across the Kidron Valley east of the Temple. The heads of this sheaf were to have enough grain in their ears to amount to an *omer*, or 5.1 pints. After cutting the sheaf, the priest would carry it back to the Temple and lay it alongside the altar of burnt offerings until the next morning.

In the morning on the first day of the week, this special sheaf, the first of the first fruits, was waved by the high priest to be accepted by God immediately after the morning burnt offering. This ceremony was normally completed at approximately the third hour of the day, or 9 o’clock in the morning. After the initial wave sheaf was offered by the high priest, or one of the chief priests, many more sheaves were brought to other officiating priests to be waved. All Israelites whose barley crops had ripened in time would bring a sheaf of their first fruits to be offered on the Wave Sheaf Day (Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple—Its Ministry and Services*, pp. 256-259).

As historical records show, the wave sheaf ceremonies began to be performed as the weekly Sabbath was ending at sunset and the first day of the week was beginning. The ceremonies were not completed, however, until much later on the daylight portion of the first day of the week. The extensive ceremonies that took place on the Wave Sheaf Day help us understand why God allotted the entire day for the offering of the first of the first fruits—not only the ritual wave sheaf, but all the other first fruit sheaves the Israelites brought to the priests. The whole day is “the morrow after the Sabbath” and must be included as the first day in the count to Pentecost.

The Wave Sheaf Fulfilled on the First Day of the Week

The acceptance of the ritual wave sheaf, foreshadowed the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the first of the first fruits—the very first resurrected from the dead to eternal life. The apostle Paul

wrote of Jesus' acceptance: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits [that is, the first, or the first of the firstfruits] of them that slept [are dead in the graves]. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Jesus is also called the "firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18) and "the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

As the sheaf of barley for the first of the firstfruits was cut by a chief priest and was lifted from the earth, Christ was also raised from the dead by the power of God the Father. After He died on the tree of crucifixion, Jesus was put into the grave just before sunset, which ended the Passover day—a Wednesday, in the middle of the week. He was raised from the dead exactly three days and three nights later, as the weekly Sabbath was ending at sunset, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (See *A Harmony of the Gospels—The Life of Jesus Christ*, pp. 231-241, by Fred R. Coulter). Jesus Christ fulfilled the ritual of the cutting of the wave sheaf offering when He was raised from the dead as the weekly Sabbath was ending and the first day of the week was beginning.

Christ also fulfilled the *acceptance* of the wave sheaf offering. As the ritual wave sheaf was offered in the morning on the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so He ascended into heaven and was accepted by God the Father in the morning on the Wave Sheaf Day. He was accepted as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind and the first to be raised from the dead to eternal life—the first of the firstfruits.

The apostle John verifies that Jesus fulfilled the wave sheaf offering on the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the Gospel of John we find this testimony: "The first day of the week, Mary Magdalene comes...to the sepulcher....But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping.... Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned herself, and said to Him 'Rabboni,' which is to say 'Master.' Jesus said to her, 'Touch Me not! For I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God'" (John. 20:1, 11, 16-17). These events occurred early in the morning on the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After Mary left,

wanted us to know that the events following his opening statement were all part of the fulfillment of that day. Luke is emphatically telling us that these events were **all fulfilled on the fiftieth day—"that same day."** There is absolutely no indication in Luke's narrative that any of these events were fulfilled on the fifty-first day. On the contrary, the Greek text exposes the utter falseness of the claim that this observance of the Feast of Pentecost took place on the fifty-first day.

Two Additional Verses That Use Forms of the Verb *Sumpleeroo*

We have analyzed the form of *sumpleeroo* that is used in Acts 2:1 and we have learned that it is a present tense articular infinitive which always and only expresses action that is in progress at the time—contemporaneous and ongoing action that has not yet been completed. Besides Acts 2:1, there are two other verses in the New Testament where Luke used verbs derived from the base verb *sumpleeroo*. These are the only other occurrences in the New Testament of this base verb with its various endings. The two additional verses are cited by some advocates of a Monday Pentecost in an attempt to support their misinterpretation of Acts 2:1. They claim that all three uses of the base verb *sumpleeroo* are expressing action that had *already been fulfilled*. However, their contention that Acts 2:1 shows that the fiftieth day was already completed and past is totally erroneous, as our examination of the Greek text has proven.

Now we will examine the other two verses in the New Testament which use forms of *sumpleeroo*, and we will see that both of these usages express action that was *taking place* at the time. These verses are found in the Gospel of Luke. The first verse is Luke 8:23, and the second verse is Luke 9:51. Let us examine them in the order in which they are found in the Greek text.

Luke 8:23

The *KJV* translates this verse as follows: "But as they sailed, He fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and **they were filled** with water, and were in jeopardy" (Luke 8:23).

inspired message of repentance] were baptized; and **that day** about three thousand souls were added” (Acts 2:1, 41).

The Events in Acts 2 Which Were All Fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost

The fulfilling of the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 was most profound because it celebrated the beginning of the New Testament Church with the giving of the Holy Spirit. As the disciples of Jesus were assembled together, there were *ten major events* which took place “while the day, namely the day of Pentecost, was being fulfilled.” These ten events are listed below.

- 1) The sound of a mighty rushing wind filled the house where they were gathered (verse 2).
- 2) There appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, which sat upon each of them (verse 3).
- 3) They were all filled with the Holy Spirit (verse 4).
- 4) They all began to speak in other tongues, meaning other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance (verse 4).
- 5) When the multitude of devout Jews that had gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost heard of this, they rushed to see what was going on. They were amazed and confounded because each of them heard the apostles speaking in their own native language (verses 5-11).
- 6) The multitude asked, “What could this be?” Yet others mocked (verses 12-13).
- 7) In the third hour of the day, or 9 in the morning, Peter stood up and preached his powerful sermon (verses 14-36).
- 8) After hearing Peter’s sermon, many asked what they should do (verse 37).
- 9) Peter commanded them, “Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (verse 38).
- 10) Those who gladly received the message were baptized, and “**that same day** [the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day] were added three thousand souls” (verse 41).

When Luke began his account by stating, “And while the day, namely the fiftieth day [Pentecost], was being fulfilled,” he

Jesus ascended to the Father and was accepted as the first of the firstfruits, thus fulfilling the ritual of the wave sheaf offering.

Luke records that later the same day, the first day of the week, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples as they were walking to the village of Emmaus. When they came to an inn, Jesus went in with the disciples and ate with them. Then Jesus supernaturally disappeared out of their sight. After that, still the first day of the week, He reappeared to eleven of the disciples (Luke 24:13-36). The Gospel of John confirms that it was the same day, the first day of the week, that Christ returned and supernaturally walked through the walls of the room where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews. When He appeared to the disciples, He showed them His hands and His side (John 20:19-21).

As the first of the firstfruits, Jesus completely fulfilled the ritual wave sheaf offering in every detail. This fulfillment began as the Sabbath was ending and the first day of the week was beginning at sunset, and was completed on the morning of the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The complete fulfillment of the wave sheaf offering required the greater part of a day. God Himself had set the timing of these events. Looking forward to this fulfillment, He had appointed the entire first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread—“the morrow after the Sabbath”—for the cutting and offering of the wave sheaf.

The Wave Sheaf Day marked the beginning of the firstfruits harvest. It was the day specifically chosen by God to begin the count to Pentecost—the Feast of the Firstfruits. As God has commanded, the Wave Sheaf Day must always be included in counting the fifty days. While the reaping of the firstfruits began on the Wave Sheaf Day, the entire barley harvest lasted forty-nine additional days. That is why the count to the Feast of Pentecost requires seven complete weeks plus one day, making a total of fifty days. Let us examine God’s commands for counting the full fifty days to Pentecost.

Chapter Two

Counting the Fifty Days to Pentecost

Following His commands for the wave sheaf offering, God gave detailed instructions for counting the fifty days to Pentecost—beginning with and including the Wave Sheaf Day. Here are God’s instructions for counting to the Feast of Pentecost: “And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath [the Sabbath ends at sunset and the first day of the week begins at this point; the entire first day is included in the count], from the day [beginning with the day] that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete [meaning seven complete weeks, each week ending in a Sabbath]. **Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you number fifty days...** And you shall proclaim on the selfsame day [the fiftieth day], that it [the fiftieth day] may be a holy convocation unto you...” (Lev. 23: 15-16, 21).

In counting the seven Sabbaths to Pentecost, there must be seven complete weeks. Each of these seven weeks must end with a weekly Sabbath. The seventh Sabbath is the forty-ninth day in the count, and the fiftieth day is “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath.” The Scriptures clearly say that the fifty-day count must *end* with and *include* “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath.” Since the forty-ninth day in the count is a weekly Sabbath, the fiftieth day can only be the first day of the week. **“The morrow after” any Sabbath is always the first day of the week.** Accordingly, “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath” will always be the first day of the week. That selfsame fiftieth day is to be declared a holy convocation.

As we have seen, the first “morrow after the Sabbath” begins after sundown, ending that Sabbath, and is the first day in the count. Likewise, “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath” begins as sunset ends the seventh Sabbath and is the fiftieth day in the count. The whole fiftieth day is the holy day. There is no command from God anywhere in the Scriptures to count beyond

on the fifty-first day. There is not one word in the text to support the observance of the fifty-first day as a holy day. The only day of Pentecost that is truly holy is the fiftieth day, which God ordained in the Old Testament and the disciples of Jesus faithfully observed.

Understanding the full significance of the Greek articular infinitive and the double definite articles in Luke’s inspired account removes all doubt concerning the true meaning of Acts 2:1. In light of the facts concerning the Greek text, we can conclude with absolute certainty that the true and correct literal translation of Acts 2:1 is as follows:

The Articular Infinitive and the Double Article Together in the Greek Text

Και εν τω συμπληρουσθαι την ημεραν της πεντηκοστης...
 And while was⁷ being⁸ fulfilled⁹ the¹ day² namely³ the⁴ fiftieth⁵ day⁶

The literal translation in the English word order is as follows:

“And while the day, namely the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled...” or,

“And while the day, namely the day of Pentecost, was being fulfilled...”

The present tense articular infinitive phrase not only reveals that the fiftieth day was in the process of being fulfilled, it also introduces the events described in the following verses. As the *lead-in* or *overview* statement for the entire narration, the phrase shows that “while the day, namely the fiftieth day was being fulfilled,” all the events from verse 1 through verse 41 were unfolding, with each event coming to pass as part of the fulfilling of that particular day of Pentecost. When the *first* and *forty-first* verses of the chapter are put together, it becomes absolutely clear that verse 1 shows the *beginning* of the fulfilling of the day while verse 41 shows the *conclusion* of the fulfilling of the day—the fiftieth day, the day of Pentecost. “And while the day, namely the fiftieth day [the day of Pentecost], was being fulfilled....” Therefore, those who had gladly received his word [Peter’s

complete understanding of Acts 2:1. What is that vital missing element? To answer this question, we must examine the complete, literal translation of this phrase, which includes the definite article **της** translated into the English:

The Greek Text with the Literal English Translation

την ημεραν της πεντηκοστης
teen eemeran tes penteekostees
 the day, the fiftieth [day]

This literal translation accurately reflects the *two* definite articles found in the text. The first definite article is used with *day* and the second definite article is used with *fiftieth*.

But why are *two* definite articles used in the text? In New Testament Greek, the use of two definite articles performs a very important function—it *adds emphasis* to a noun. The noun that is being emphasized in this case is “day.” The fact that “**the** day” is referring to *one specific day* is emphasized through the use of a second definite article— “**the** fiftieth [day]”—showing that they are the *same* day.

When the double definite article is used in Greek, the meaning is most emphatic. The words “**the** day, **the** fiftieth [day]” are not referring to “day” in a general sense, but in a most emphatic and specific sense. The two definite articles show that the noun “day” applies only to a *particular* day—“the day, namely the fiftieth [day].” It cannot mean the fifty-first day or any other day! The text is specifically designating “the day, namely the fiftieth day,” to the *exclusion* of any other day. The fiftieth day, and *only* the fiftieth day, can fit the emphatic phrasing that is used in the Greek text.

A complete analysis of Acts 2:1 in the Greek text proves that the fiftieth day **had NOT been completed** when the disciples of Jesus gathered to observe the Feast of Pentecost. The text tells us most emphatically that the events in Acts 2 were taking place *during* the fiftieth day. The precise phrasing and construction Luke used in relating these momentous events show that he was referring exclusively to the “fulfilling of the fiftieth day” as the *true day of Pentecost*. Luke’s exact words as preserved in the Greek text make it perfectly clear that these events did not happen

the fiftieth day to the fifty-first day and to observe the fifty-first day as a holy day. God’s instructions in Leviticus 23 clearly proclaim the fiftieth day as the holy day.

In spite of God’s clear commands in the book of Leviticus, there are some who believe that Pentecost should be observed on the fifty-first day, after the fifty-day count has been completed. Let us examine the claims of those who believe in observing Pentecost on the fifty-first day.

Pentecost on the Fifty-First Day—A Monday?

One attempt to justify a fifty-first day observance, or a Monday Pentecost, is made by drawing a comparison between the commands for counting to Pentecost and the commands for counting the days of uncleanness for a bodily issue. The commands in Leviticus 15 for a person who had a running issue of any kind show that the person was declared ceremonially unclean as long as the issue was running or draining. When a running issue stopped, the person was required to count seven days (verses 13, 28). At the end of the seventh day at sunset, he or she was commanded to bathe and would then be ceremonially clean. On the morning of the eighth day, the cleansed person was commanded to offer an offering (verses 14, 29). The reason for offering this offering on the morning of the eighth day was that after sunset no individual offerings could be offered until the morning. The only offering that was allowed after sunset was the daily evening burnt offering, which was offered “between the two evenings”—between sunset and dark—and burned throughout the night. No other routine functions were performed at the Temple after sunset.

Leviticus 15 shows that the offering for cleansing from a bodily issue did not take place until the morning *after* the seven-day count had been completed. However, when counting to Pentecost, we are not commanded by God to follow the instructions for the offering for ceremonial cleansing. Nowhere do the Scriptures instruct us to complete the count of fifty days to the end of the fiftieth day at sunset, and then wait until the next day, the fifty-first day, to proclaim a holy convocation. Leviticus 23:21 clearly commands us to count **to the fiftieth day** and “**proclaim the selfsame day, that it may be an holy**

convocation.” This command can only be referring to the fiftieth day. An intervening day simply cannot be found between God’s command in verse 16, which clearly defines the fiftieth day as **“the morrow after the seventh Sabbath,”** and His command in verse 21, which proclaims **“the selfsame day” as the day of the holy convocation.** There is absolutely no command in Leviticus 23 that supports the observance of the holy day of Pentecost on the fifty-first day.

To use the commands for uncleanness in Leviticus 15 in an attempt to alter or nullify God’s clear commands in Leviticus 23 is totally dishonest. The offering which was commanded to be offered on the eighth day, after counting seven days for one’s cleansing, in no way supports a Pentecost observance on the fifty-first day. Counting for uncleanness and making an offering on the eighth day is not even remotely related to counting to Pentecost. They are two separate commands pertaining to entirely different things. The only similarity in the two commands is this: As the eighth day is the morrow after the seven days in the count for ceremonial cleansing, so the fiftieth day is the morrow after the seven weeks in the count to Pentecost. This is the only true comparison that can be made. But this comparison, in fact, proves nothing. The proof that the fiftieth day is the correct day to observe Pentecost is contained in God’s specific commands in Leviticus 23, which clearly disprove the allegation that the fifty-first day is the holy day. Leviticus 23 clearly instructs us to **“proclaim on the selfsame day [the fiftieth day, which is always the morrow after the seventh Sabbath], that it may be a holy convocation.”** Nowhere in the entirety of the Bible does God instruct us to hold the Feast of Pentecost on the fifty-first day. If we were commanded to observe Pentecost on the fifty-first day, then the Scriptures would have to instruct us to proclaim the holy day on the morrow *after the morrow* after the seventh Sabbath. One may search Leviticus 23:10-21, and all of Scripture, but no such language can be found.

Let us not allow ourselves to be deceived by a false comparison of unrelated Scriptures. The Word of God is the Truth. If we are honest in comparing the Scriptures, we will find that they always agree.

Chapter Six

Understanding the Complete Meaning of Acts 2:1

Our examination of the Greek text has showed that Acts 2:1 begins with the present tense articular infinitive phrase **εν τω συμπληρουσθαι** [*en too sumpleerousthai*]. We have compared the words in this present tense phrase with the words that would be required for the same articular infinitive to be used in a past tense phrase, and we have seen the distinct differences in both the structure and the purpose of the two phrases. We have learned that the present tense articular infinitive is used only to express action that is taking place at a contemporaneous time—action which has not yet been completed or fulfilled. Since the articular infinitive used in this particular text is in the present tense and the passive voice, the most accurate translation of this phrase is “was being fulfilled.”

Now that we understand the true meaning of this articular infinitive phrase, we are ready to examine the next phrase in Acts 2:1. Here is that phrase as translated in the *King James Version* and as it appears in the Greek text:

KJV Translation
“the day of Pentecost”

Greek Text with Translation from Berry’s Greek English Interlinear

την ημεραν της πεντηκοστης
teen eameran tes pentekosteas
the day — of Pentecost

Notice that both Berry and the *KJV* translators left the second definite article **της** untranslated. In doing so, however, these translators have overlooked a key element necessary for a

The differences in these two articular infinitive phrases are impossible to overlook. Even those who have no knowledge of Greek can see that the two phrases are not identical. To further emphasize these differences, the words that do not match in lines 1 and 2 are listed in opposite columns below. In the left column are the *present* tense words *actually used* in the text of Acts 2:1. In the right column are *past* tense words *not* found in the passage.

A Comparative Analysis:

Present Tense		Past Tense
εν	vs.	μετα
en	vs.	meta
τω	vs.	το
too	vs.	to
συμπληρουσθαι	vs.	συμπληρουσθηναι
sumpleerous <thai< th=""> <td>vs.</td> <td>sumpleerouthenai</td> </thai<>	vs.	sumpleerouthenai

The above comparison enables the reader to clearly see the major differences in the two articular infinitive phrases. One is designed to express *ongoing action* at a contemporaneous time, and the other is designed to express *action completed* in the past. These differences reflect the preciseness of the Greek articular infinitive in relationship to time and circumstances.

The fact that Luke used both present and past tense articular infinitives in the book of Acts demonstrates that he fully understood the difference in the structure and the purpose of both types of phrases. Luke’s use of the present tense articular infinitive phrase in Acts 2:1 shows that his purpose was to *express ongoing action at a contemporaneous time*. The words Luke chose to use in this verse do not express—and therefore should not be construed or interpreted to mean—completed action that had already taken place in the past. To claim that this present tense articular infinitive phrase means action completed at a past time is clearly an erroneous interpretation which violates the Greek text.

Chapter Three

Misinterpreting Acts 2:1 to Justify Observance of the Fifty-first Day

Despite God’s plain commands in Leviticus 23, some have attempted to use Acts 2:1 to support their observance of the fifty-first day as the Feast of Pentecost. In the *King James Version* this verse reads: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come....” Some observers of the fifty-first day claim that the words “fully come” show that the fiftieth day had come to a close or had ended, and that the disciples observed the Feast of Pentecost on the fifty-first day. Realizing that the *King James Version* does not really support their interpretation of Acts 2:1, they use a completely erroneous translation of this verse as their definitive authority for observing the fifty-first day. In their effort to prove that Acts 2:1 means that the fiftieth day had ended before the observance of Pentecost, they use an incorrect translation of this verse by an archbishop of the sixteenth century. Here is their “authority” for observing the fifty-first day as a Monday Pentecost:

“Pentecost should not be observed until the fifty day count has been completed. Archbishop Cranmer, **no doubt** [emphasis added], was aware of this; in his English translation of 1539 he translated Acts 2:1 as follows: ‘When the fifty days had come to an end, they were all with one accord together in one place’ (Raymond Cole and Bryce Clark, *Passover and Pentecost—What are the Facts?* p. 35, Church of God, the Eternal).

Advocates of a Monday Pentecost place great confidence in this obscure translation by Cranmer. But the fact that Cranmer was an archbishop does not necessarily mean that his translation is authoritative. Neither is it possible for advocates of a fifty-first Pentecost to have “no doubts” at all about what thoughts Archbishop Cranmer had 300 years ago when he made this translation.

Only by examining the Greek text for ourselves can we determine the true meaning of Acts 2:1. The exact words in the Greek text, as inspired by God and preserved for us, will clearly prove the fallacy of Cranmer's translation. While Cranmer may have used the same Greek text that was used for the translation of the *King James Version*, we will see that the archbishop's translation is completely erroneous. We will find that the *King James Version* and other translations provide a correct or nearly correct translation of Acts 2:1. In the final analysis, it will be undeniably clear that this verse does not support a Pentecost observance on the fifty-first day, a Monday.

The true meaning of Acts 2:1 is clearly revealed in the Greek text. It may take some diligent study to understand this Scripture, but the truth is there because God has preserved it. If we carefully examine this verse in the Greek text, seeking the truth with an open mind and "proving all things," we can come to understand the true meaning of Acts 2:1. Remember, truth agrees with truth. Error does not agree with truth. God inspired Paul to charge Timothy, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of Truth**" (II Tim. 2:15).

Ministers and teachers who try to interpret the text of the New Testament without understanding the fundamental elements of Greek grammar are bound to make serious mistakes. Without a basic knowledge of the factors that govern the various forms of Greek words—most particularly the verbs, participles and infinitives—it is impossible to accurately interpret the Greek text. This essential grammatical knowledge is not available in Greek lexicons, such as *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, which list and define basic root words. While such lexicons may provide general definitions, they are not designed to give the specific meaning of the various grammatical forms that are derived from these root words. As we will see, this is precisely the reason why some ministers have misinterpreted Acts 2:1.

Because they do not understand how to apply the rules of New Testament Greek grammar, some ministers have relied solely on the broad definition of a root word that is given in Greek lexicons. They have then attached their own interpretation to this general definition. Rather than understanding and teaching the truth of God's Word, these ministers are promoting an

understand and apply these rules has resulted in great error in their interpretation of Acts 2:1, and has misled many to accept a grievous doctrinal fallacy. When we examine Acts 2:1 in the original text, we find that the structure of the Greek is so precise that it is impossible to mistake the meaning of the present tense articular infinitive used in this verse.

Let's take another look at the present tense articular infinitive phrase that Luke used in Acts 2:1. The *exact phrase* as it appears in the Greek text can be seen in the *first line* below. We know that the words *εν τω* [*en too*] in this phrase are expressing action that is taking place and has not yet been completed. The *second line* of Greek contains the past tense articular infinitive, which is *not used in Acts 2:1*. The words *μετα το* [*meta to*], which express action completed in the past, are *not* found in this verse.

A Word-For-Word Comparison of the Present Tense And the Past Tense Articular Infinitive Phrases

The actual *present* tense articular infinitive phrase used in Acts 2:1

1) **Και εν² τω³ συμπληρουσθαι⁴ ημερων της πενηκοστης**

The *past* tense articular infinitive phrase NOT USED in Acts 2:1

2) **Και μετα² το³ συμπληρουσθηναι⁴ της ημερων της πενηκοστης**

As the reader compares the above phrases, it is obvious that the second and third words in line 1 do not match the second and third words in line 2. Notice also that the fourth word in line 1 does not have the same ending as the fourth word in line 2. The rules of New Testament Greek demand the different spellings that are found in the endings of these two words. The difference in the spelling of the present tense articular infinitive **συμπληρουσθαι** and the past tense articular infinitive **συμπληρουσθηναι** is a strict grammatical requirement. It is an absolute rule of Greek grammar that the ending **σθαι** be used only to designate the *present* tense of this articular infinitive, and that the ending **θηναι** be used only to designate this same articular infinitive in the *past* tense. The rules of New Testament Greek absolutely do not allow any other construction of the phrases and spelling of these articular infinitives!

subsequent time. Each translation reflects the correct meaning of this *past* tense phrase. However, since this past tense articular infinitive phrase is *not used* in the Greek text, *none of the above translations is a correct rendering of Acts 2:1*. No interpretation of Acts 2:1 can be correct unless the translation itself accurately conveys the words used in the Greek text.

The words that actually appear in the Greek text of Acts 2:1 are the *exact words* we see in the *present tense* articular infinitive phrase below. Note the words εν τω [en too], which are used to express ongoing action at a contemporaneous time.

The Past Tense Articular Infinitive Phrase— Which Is Used in Acts 2:1

Και εν τω συμπληρουσθαι της ημεραν της πενηκοστης
 And in (during) the accomplishment of the day, the fiftieth [day]
 And in (during) the fulfilling of the day, the fiftieth [day]
 And while _____ was⁶ fulfilled⁷ the¹ day, the³ fiftieth [day]⁴

All three renderings above are correct. Each of these translations expresses action that was *taking place* at a contemporaneous time—as it was actually happening and was being fulfilled. All three translations show that **this action was ongoing and had not yet been completed**. While all three translations express the true meaning of the Greek text, the *third* version is the most accurate because the phrase “was being fulfilled” reflects the precise meaning of the present tense and the passive voice of the articular infinitive. The entire phrase could best be rendered: “**And while the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled...**”

This present tense articular infinitive phrase gives us a more accurate understanding of Acts 2:1 than can possibly be derived from using only the definition of the base verb *sumpleeroo*. While the base verb can supply a general definition, it cannot give the specific meaning of Acts 2:1. Only the articular infinitive can convey the exact meaning of the Greek text, and it is this meaning that must be correctly reflected in any translation. Those who attempt to interpret Acts 2:1 by using only a concordance definition of the verb *sumpleeroo* are revealing their lack of knowledge of the rules of New Testament Greek. Their failure to

erroneous interpretation—they are “striving over words” without knowledge. Such teachings actually end up “subverting the hearers” because errors are presented as authoritative truth. **But ERROR IS STILL ERROR, no matter how authoritatively it is presented, or how convincing it may sound**. Sadly, the misinterpretation of Acts 2:1 is a serious and far-reaching error that affects hundreds of brethren who have been led to believe that Pentecost should be observed on the fifty-first day, a Monday. Let us look into the inspired Greek text, and we will find that there is no basis whatsoever for this interpretation.

Chapter Four

Understanding Acts 2:1 in the Greek Text

By the will of God, the New Testament was written and preserved in Greek. The writers of the New Testament wrote their books and epistles in *Koiné* Greek, which was the common language of their time. The New Testament in any other language is a translation of the Greek text. Most translations are fairly reliable in their interpretation of the Greek text, but some translations contain serious errors. These errors can do much damage when they are accepted as truth and are used to establish doctrine. When there are doctrinal differences and controversies involving any passage in the New Testament, a thorough examination and careful analysis of the Greek text is required in order to determine the true meaning of the words that God originally inspired.

Among the various Greek texts of the New Testament in existence today, the best and most accurate is the text that was first published by Erasmus in 1516. This text, the first printed Byzantine text, was republished by Erasmus in 1519 and 1522. Before its final editing by Stephens in 1550, it was used by William Tyndale for his translation of the New Testament. Later this text became known as the *textus receptus*, or the received text. The *received text* was the official Greek text that the translators of the *King James Version* of 1611 used for their translation of the New Testament. In his book *The King James Version Defended*, Edward F. Hills, ThD., verifies that this Greek text was used by the translators of the *King James Version* and is the most accurate Greek text of the New Testament. This same Greek text was used by George Ricker Berry in his book *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. The author has also used this Greek text for his analysis in this presentation.

The analysis of the Greek text presented in this study paper will enable the reader to come to a correct understanding of

beginning of the book of Acts to relate the *past event* of Jesus' passion, which was completed before Jesus presented Himself alive to the apostles.

This verse in the first chapter of Acts clearly demonstrates Luke's ability to use the past tense articular infinitive. Yet in the following chapter, Acts 2, Luke did *not* use the past tense articular infinitive to describe the day of Pentecost—the fiftieth day. If Luke had intended to convey that the fiftieth day had already come to an *end*, he would certainly have expressed this completed action by using a *past* tense articular infinitive with **μετα το** [*meta to*], as he did in Acts 1:3. Instead, in Acts 2:1, Luke chose to use a *present* tense articular infinitive with **εν τω** [*en tow*] because he specifically intended to express action that was *taking place at that very time*. There is no question that Luke's purpose was to convey to the reader that the fiftieth day, the day of Pentecost, was in the *process* of being fulfilled.

As we have learned, the construction of the present tense articular infinitive phrase is very different from the construction of the past tense articular infinitive phrase. If we compare the present tense articular infinitive phrase Luke used in Acts 2:1 with the past tense articular infinitive phrase the difference between the two phrases can easily be seen.

Below are the two phrases as they are written in Greek with their accompanying translations. The first phrase shows how Acts 2:1 *would have been* written if Luke had intended to express *past* action and subsequent time. This past tense articular infinitive phrase *does not exist* in the Greek text of Acts 2:1.

The Past Tense Articular Infinitive Phrase— Not Used in Acts 2:1

Και μετα το συμπληρουσθηναι της ημεραν της πενητηκοστης
 And after having completed the day, the fiftieth [day]
 And after the fulfillment of the day, the fiftieth [day]
 And after had³ been⁶ fulfilled⁷ the¹ day,² the³ fiftieth [day]⁴
 And after had³ been⁶ completed⁷ the¹ day,² the³ fiftieth [day]⁴

The four possible translations of this past tense articular infinitive phrase, which are underlined above, show how Acts 2:1 *would have been* translated in the *KJV* if Luke had used a past tense articular infinitive to express completed action and

Luke's Use of the Past Tense Infinitive in Acts 1:3

We have examined Luke's use of a present tense articular infinitive in Acts 2:1 to express ongoing action at a contemporaneous time. Now let us examine Luke's use of a *past* tense articular infinitive. In the first chapter of the book of Acts, Luke used a past tense articular infinitive to describe a past event and subsequent time. This past tense articular infinitive is found in Acts 1:3. The *KJV* translation reads: "To whom [the apostles] also He showed himself alive **after His passion** by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days...."

The phrase "*after His passion*" 1:3 is translated from a Greek articular infinitive phrase that expresses action *completed at a previous time in the past*. Here are the actual words in the Greek text (the literal translation is awkward in English):

μετα το παθειν αυτον
meta to pathain auton
 after the passion His

Below is a detailed analysis of this past tense articular infinitive phrase:

μετα [*meta*]—the preposition "after," used with a past tense articular infinitive to show completed action and subsequent time.

το [*to*]—the definite article "the," used immediately after the preposition μετα [*meta*]. In this verse, the definite article *to* was *not translated* in both Berry's work and the *KJV* because a literal translation is awkward in English. Leaving the definite article untranslated does not affect the meaning expressed by this past tense articular infinitive.

παθειν [*pathain*]—a past tense infinitive derived from the base verb πασχω [*paschoo*], translated "passion" in the *KJV* and "had suffered" by Berry.

αυτον [*auton*]—meaning "His," as in the *KJV*; translated "He" by Berry.

Notice that Luke used the past tense articular infinitive phrase *meta to pathain* to describe an event that *had already occurred* and that was *completed* before a subsequent action. Luke used this past tense articular infinitive phrase at the

Acts 2:1. In order to thoroughly examine each phrase in this verse, both the English and the Greek texts are presented in interlinear form. Even the reader who has no knowledge of Greek will be able to see the similarities and differences in the letters, or spelling, of the Greek words. The author realizes that most of those who will read this study paper have little or no knowledge of New Testament Greek. Although this study is technical, the author has attempted to make it easy to understand. Every Greek word has been defined as clearly as possible. When the reader has completed this study, he or she will be able to see clearly that the Greek text absolutely does not support the observance of a fifty-first day Monday Pentecost. As we will see, the Greek text is most specific concerning the time of the observance of Pentecost.

Let us begin our study by comparing the beginning words in the King James translation of Acts 2:1 with the original words of Luke as preserved in the Greek text.

King James Version

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come..." (Acts 2:1).

The Greek Text with the English Directly Below

Και εν τω συμπληρουσθαι την ημεραν της πεντηκοστης
 And during the accomplishing of the day — of Pentecost

The English translation directly below the Greek text is the translation given in Berry's Greek-English interlinear. While it is a correct translation, it is not a complete translation because Berry did not translate the definite article της [*tees*], meaning "the," which immediately precedes the last word of the phrase, πεντηκοστης [*pentekosteēs*], meaning "of Pentecost." A complete translation would include the definite article:

"And during the accomplishing of the day, the fiftieth [day]..."

Although Berry's translation is incomplete, it correctly reflects the actual meaning of the Greek words, which show that what Luke was relating was *in the process of taking place* at that time. The Greek phrase that is used at the beginning of

Acts 2:1 cannot be defined as showing action that was completed at a past time. This Greek phrase literally expresses an *ongoing* “accomplishing” of the day of Pentecost. Thus Berry has accurately translated it “during the accomplishing of the day of Pentecost.”

The word that Berry has translated “accomplishing” is the Greek infinitive **συντελεσθαι** [*sumpleerousthai*]. This infinitive is derived from the root word **συντελεω** [*sumpleeroo*], a verb that has the following meaning: “to fill completely, to fill quite full, and of time to fulfill [or to accomplish]” (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*). This definition of the root verb *sumpleeroo* can give us a general understanding, but it cannot give us the specific meaning of the infinitive *sumpleerousthai*, which is the term used in Acts 2:1. It is a fact of Greek grammar that no root or base) verb, such as *sumpleeroo*, can by itself define the specific meaning of its various forms in Greek. The structure of New Testament Greek demands that the exact meaning of the Greek verbs and verbal forms be determined by their specific voice, person, gender, case, tense and mood. Consequently, the specific meaning of any Greek verb or verbal form cannot be determined simply by reading the definition of its root or base verb in a concordance or lexicon.

The complexity of New Testament Greek makes it impossible to determine the specific meaning of the Greek text without a basic knowledge of the rules of the language. In order to determine the specific meaning of any text, a complex process of analysis is required to determine the specific meaning of the verb forms used. The knowledge that is available in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, or any other Greek lexicon, is not sufficient to fully understand the specific meanings of the Greek verbal forms. The different verb forms used in the New Testament number over 1,200. The exact meaning of each of these verb forms is determined by its gender, person, voice, case, tense and mood, as revealed by the structure and spelling of each verbal form.

Those who have no knowledge of the six factors that govern the specific meaning of every Greek verb form should not attempt to interpret the verbal infinitive that is used in Acts 2:1. A

construction of the *past* tense articular infinitive phrase:

“The infinitive with **μετα** [*meta*, a preposition meaning “after”] **το** [*to*, the definite article “the”] is used to express *subsequent* time [time that follows a completed action]” (*Ibid.*, p. 216).

The preposition *meta* and the definite article *to* are always used with the past tense articular infinitive to express action that was completed in the past. These two Greek words are never used with a *present* tense articular infinitive, which requires the strict use of *en* and *too*. In addition to a different preposition and a different definite article, a different *case* is used with a past tense articular infinitive phrase as compared to a present tense articular infinitive. The structure of New Testament Greek requires that the past tense articular infinitive be written in the *genitive* case, while the present tense articular infinitive is written in the *dative*, or *locative* case. Because each Greek case has its own spelling, the past tense articular infinitive will contain letters that are not found in the present tense articular infinitive. These differences in spelling and construction make it possible for a reader of the Greek text to easily distinguish a past tense articular infinitive from a present tense articular infinitive.

As Luke used the present tense articular infinitive to show *action in progress* during contemporaneous time, he also used the past tense articular infinitive with **μετα το** [*meta to*] to express completed action and subsequent time. In his Gospel, he used the past tense articular infinitive 24 times. In the book of Acts, he also used it 24 times: **but he did not use μετα το** [*meta to*] with a *past* tense articular infinitive to describe the events of Acts 2:1. If Luke had intended to convey completed action and subsequent time in Acts 2:1, he would have used **μετα το** [*meta to*] with a *past* tense infinitive. The fact that he used **εν το** [*en too*] with a present tense articular infinitive clearly shows that the action was *being fulfilled* at a contemporaneous time. By using a present tense articular infinitive, Luke was revealing that the events of Acts 2 were happening *on* the fiftieth day, or the actual day of Pentecost—“while the fiftieth day [Pentecost] was being fulfilled.”

definite article “the”]. As to the New Testament, an apparent exception to the above statement is **the infinitive with a preposition, which is always articular** [that is, when an infinitive is preceded by a preposition it always requires a definite article, which, with the preposition, designates the specific time of the action] (*Ibid.*, p. 211).

In Acts 2:1, as we have seen, the Greek infinitive is **συμπληρουσθαι** [*sumpleerousthai*]. It is in the present tense and the passive voice, which means that the action “**was being accomplished**” or “**was being fulfilled**.” Since the present tense infinitive *sumpleerousthai* is preceded by the preposition *εν* [*en*] and the definite article *τω* [*too*], it has a specific and exact meaning in relationship to time. Dana and Mantey leave no room to misinterpret the meaning of this present tense articular infinitive: “In the locative construction [in the dative case] with *εν τω* [*en too*] [as in Acts 2:1] the infinitive denotes *contemporaneous time*” (*Ibid.*, p. 216).

“Contemporaneous,” as defined in *Webster’s Dictionary*, means “happening or belonging within the same time period.” The present tense articular infinitive used in Acts 2:1 is clearly expressing action that was *in progress* at the same, or contemporaneous, time. The writers of the New Testament commonly used the present tense articular infinitive to describe action that was taking place at a contemporaneous time. When Luke wrote his Gospel, he used this locative construction of *εν τω* [*en too*] with the present tense infinitive a total of 32 times. In the book of Acts, he used it 7 times. In every use of the present tense articular infinitive, Luke was describing events or actions that were in the process of happening at a contemporaneous time.

When Greek uses the preposition *εν* [*en*] and the definite article *τω* [*too*] with a present tense infinitive, there can be no doubt that the express purpose is to show contemporaneous time and *ongoing action*. The words *εν τω* [*en too*] are never used to describe past or completed action. The articular infinitive that expresses *past* or *completed* action requires a *different preposition* and a *different definite article* and is written in a different case. A past tense articular infinitive phrase is easily identifiable because it differs in construction and spelling from a present tense articular infinitive. Dana and Mantey explain the

lack of such knowledge can lead to faulty and inaccurate interpretations of the Greek text. These mistaken interpretations can do great damage when they are presented as scriptural fact, as in the papers “The Plain Truth about Pentecost and Passover” and “Pentecost: What are the Facts?” These papers may appear to be authoritative, but because the writers did not understand the complexities of New Testament Greek, their interpretation of Acts 2:1 is completely erroneous.

In seeking to understand the true meaning of Acts 2:1, we must be careful to observe the rules of Greek grammar (which these writers have overlooked). We must apply the definition of the base verb *sumpleeroo*, meaning “to fulfill,” as it is determined by the specific verbal form found in the text. When we follow the rules of Greek grammar and analyze this verbal form, we find that it is in the *present tense* and the *passive voice*.

Here is a **literal translation** of the Greek text:

Και εν τω συμπληρουσθαι την ημεραν της πενητηκοστης
And in the fulfilling of the day the fiftieth [day]...

Let us examine the verbal phrase **εν τω συμπληρουσθαι** [*en too sumpleerousthai*], which means “*during the accomplishing of or in (during) the fulfilling of*.” This phrase is a very specific type of verbal form known as an *articular infinitive* because the infinitive form of the verb is used with the definite article (the). Here, the infinitive with its definite article **τω** [*too*] is preceded by the preposition *εν* [*en*], as shown below:

Preposition	Definite Article	Verbal Infinitive
εν	τω	συμπληρουσθαι
<i>en</i>	<i>too</i>	<i>sumpleerousthai</i>
during, or in	the	accomplishing of
during, or in	the	fulfilling of

The use of *en* and *too* with the infinitive *sumpleerousthai* clarifies the basic meaning “to fulfill” and shows that the fulfilling was *in the process of being accomplished*. When Greek uses *en too* with a verbal infinitive in the *present tense*, as it is in Acts 2:1, it always **and only** reflects **action that is taking place**

at that time. The phrase actually means, “While the fiftieth day was being fulfilled....” This phrase clearly shows that the events described in Acts 2:1 were *actually taking place while the fiftieth day was in the process of being fulfilled*. The events could not have been taking place after the fiftieth day had ended, or was already fulfilled, because the Greek articular infinitive is in the present tense. A present tense infinitive is never used to express action that has already been completed. It is contrary to the rules of New Testament Greek to interpret this present tense infinitive as expressing past or completed action. Past action is never expressed by an infinitive that uses the preposition *en* and the definite article *too*. Completed action is expressed by the use of a different verbal form and a different construction of the Greek text, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

About the Greek Infinitive

In order to understand the difference between the *past* and *present* tense infinitives used in Greek, it is necessary to learn some basic facts about Greek infinitives. This information can be found in comprehensive Greek grammars available in many libraries. For this study, the author has chosen to use *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by Dana and Mantey. The study will focus on the use of the Greek infinitive with a preposition and a definite article to express the relationship of action to time, just as we find in Acts 2:1.

In beginning this study, it is important to understand the basic function of an infinitive. In the Greek language, just as in English, the infinitive is a *verb form* that functions like a noun, hence, they are called verbal nouns. As Dana and Mantey explain, “The infinitive is strictly a verbal noun, and not a mood. Its significance in Greek can never be appreciated until this fact is recognized. No idiom is more decidedly peculiar to the language than this substantive character of the infinitive” (*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 208-209).

In English, the word “to” is always used with the infinitive form of the verb, as in “to be,” “to come,” and “to speak.” The Greek infinitive is similar to the English infinitive unless it is preceded by the definite article “the.” When the definite article is used, the infinitive is known as an **articular infinitive**. In New Testament Greek, when the articular infinitive is combined with a preposition, it limits the infinitive to a specific time period. Dana and Mantey state the following:

“Nothing distinguishes the noun force of the infinitive more than its use with the [definite] article.... This item is one of the proofs of the general good quality of New Testament Greek.... The presence of the article with the infinitive has no fixed effect upon its varieties in use. That is, a particular use of the writer, in accordance with his desire to make the expression specific [with the use of the definite article “the”] or general [not using the