

The Book Of Acts: Verse-By-Verse

Acts 2:14-21

- **Summarizing the Context:**

On the Day of Pentecost. The sound of a blast of wind has been heard where the 120 are gathered. This is immediately followed by two manifestations of tongues: One is symbolized by “tongues of fire” that have appeared above each of the 120. The other is a sudden and miraculous ability of the 120 Galilean believers to praise God in a variety of languages that were not innate to their cultures.

Did the crowd hear the sound of the wind and see the tongues of fire? We are not told - but it was the languages that captured their attention. Some have mocked this manifestation as resulting from the 120 all being drunk on new wine.

- **Peter’s Defense: Verse 14:**

“Men of Judaea, and all you who are resident in Jerusalem, let this be known to you; pay attention to my words.”

The Geography Of The Location: We generally assume that the 120 were gathered in the Upper Room, but there is a difficulty with that: How did a crowd numbering thousands of people hear Peter preach that day?

F.F. Bruce: “Whatever account may be given of the geography of verses 1–4, it is difficult to think of a more appropriate or probable setting for Peter’s address than the outer court of the temple.” – F.F. Bruce

Baptists For Israel article: “In Acts 2, after the Holy Spirit descends, there are 3,000 souls added to the assembly. Three thousand people would

not fit into the upper room to hear Peter's sermon. Maybe they moved out into the streets. But do you believe that everyone that heard Peter's sermon accepted Jesus? I believe there were more than 10,000 people who heard this message when 3,000 were saved. There is no street in ancient Jerusalem big enough for even 3,000."

Clues as to where the 120 may have gathered on the Day of Pentecost. Luke 24:51-53: " And it came to pass, while He blessed them, Jesus was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: ***And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.***"

The Temple Mount would have been crowded with pilgrims on the Day of Pentecost. It's just as likely that the 120 were praying in the area called "Solomon's Porch", located on the south end of the Temple Mount.

Solomon's Porch was a huge open building, measuring some 300 yards long and 100 yards wide. It had giant columns holding up the roof which gave shelter from the heat and the sun. It's estimated that as many as 30,000 people could fit in Solomon's Porch.

- **The Effects Of What Happened That Day:** The supernatural glossolalia manifested by the 120 had a dramatic effect on the crowd. Visitors from all over the known world were hearing these Galileans speaking in languages that were not innate to their cultures.

"Then Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them. "Men of Judaea," he said, "and all you who are resident in Jerusalem, let this be known to you; pay attention to my words.

Peter no doubt addressed the crowd with one of the common languages of the day. What is different, is an obvious anointing of the Spirit.

What had Jesus said to them before his ascension? "You will receive power ... and be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the furthest regions of the earth."

First - Peter explains the strange phenomena that had drawn the crowd to the 120. He begins by dealing with the charge that the 120 are drunk on new wine. Verse 15: "These men are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only the third hour of the day."

Peter turns to the Scriptures to explain the reasons for these strange events. Listen to what he says:

"No; this is what was said through the prophet Joel: 'It shall be in the last days, says God, I will pour out some of my spirit on all the human race: Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Yes; on my servants, male and female, in those days I will pour out some of my spirit, and they will prophesy. I will give wonders in heaven above, and signs on earth below, blood and fire and smoky mist; the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord comes; and everyone who invokes the Lord's name will be saved."

The statement: "This is what was said through the prophet Joel."

Was this really what Joel predicted? Old Testament prophetic words can, at times, have multiple realizations in the New Testament and future events. Joel's predictions fall under this category.

The book of Joel is a prophecy divided into three chapters. The prophet begins by describing an event so extreme that it has never happened before and will never occur again.

It is a warning to Judah about the dangers of turning away from God and it finds its center in the idea of what Joel calls "The Day of the Lord". It's a day of judgement upon both Judah and her enemies.

The judgment comes in the form of a swarm of locusts that is so great, it can only be compared to the plagues of Egypt. These locust act as a great army, devouring everything in its path: See: Joel 1:4, 9.

Here's the point: The Army belongs to God. He is the one who is directing it. He will send this army to punish Judah for their sins ... and there are more signs for them to consider, including Blood Red Moons and Deep Darkness,

When it seems as if all hope is lost, Joel's third chapter begins by saying, "In those days and at that time, [I will] restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem."

Knowing the historical context, how does Peter say, "This is that which Joel predicted?" Peter seizes the idea of the "last days" which Joel and many other Old Testament prophets predicted: 1. The Day of the Lord. 2. The Last Days.

In quoting Joel's predictions, Peter is signaling that the "last days" in God's calendar have arrived. This is an overall umbrella that includes many elements of Joel's prophecy, without demanding that all the elements have been fulfilled.

The "last days" began with Christ's appearance on earth and will ultimately be fulfilled by his Second Coming. These events have overlapping significance for the age to come and the present age.

The elements of Joel's prophecy that have dual fulfillment are readily seen in verses 17-18: "It shall be in the last days, says God, I will pour out some of my spirit on all the human race: Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Yes; on my servants, male and female, in those days I will pour out some of my spirit, and they will prophesy."

Peter takes these quotations from Joel 2:28-32, where the prophet announces the coming of the day of the Lord, the day when he will act in righteousness and mercy.

Luke uses the more precise phrase “in the last days.” The primary sign is the presence of the Holy Spirit. Just as Joel’s prophecy includes a call to repentance and forgiveness – Peter’s sermon in Acts 2 will echo the same thing.

One of Joel’s predictions that stands out in connection to the Day of Pentecost is God’s promise to pour out the Spirit on the entire human race. The outpouring of the Spirit on 120 Galilean Jews marks the beginning of it. (See Acts 2/ Numbers 11:29)

“Speaking in foreign languages” or “glossolalia” by the 120 was only one sign of Joel’s prediction coming to pass. Joel also predicts the gift of prophecy as well as prophetic visions and dreams. See: Acts 2:19-21.

The wonders and signs Joel predicted would take place in nature may have had more relevance in Acts 2 than we realize. B. J. Hubbard: “It is remarkable, how Peter’s quotation from Joel alludes to so many of the phenomena (including dreams and visions) which characterize the Lukan version of Christian origins.”

Some seven weeks before Pentecost Jerusalem had seen the darkening of the sun during the early afternoon of Good Friday. Later that afternoon the full moon at Passover may well have risen blood-red in the sky because of the supernatural darkness that covered Jerusalem during Christ’s crucifixion.

Peter saw these supernatural phenomena as indications of the beginning of the “Day of the Lord” – and applied it to his call for repentance and the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

We will see more of this next time.