

The Book Of Acts: Verse-By-Verse

Acts 2:14-21

- **Summary of 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.
- **The Reaction Of The Crowd: Acts 2:14**

“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.

Two preliminary considerations:

1. Geography:

We generally assume that the 120 were gathered in the Upper Room, but 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

A likely scenario: 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”, which is 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.

2. The Supernatural Effects of Glossolalia:

Visitors from all over the known world were hearing these Galileans speaking in languages that were not innate to their cultures. This alone created an atmosphere that attracted thousands of visitors.

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.”

That is what is happening at the moment Peter begins proclaiming the apostolic message of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The promise of empowerment and evangelism is finding its very first venue.

First, Peter must explain the strange phenomena that had drawn the crowd to the 120. Peter begins by dealing with the charge that the 120 are drunk on new wine. In verse 15 he tells the mockers, “These men are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only the third hour of the day (nine a.m.).”

- **The Biblical Evidence:**

“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."

Question: Was this really what Joel predicted? Yes and No. The Old Testament prophetic words can, at times, have multiple realizations in the New Testament and future events.

Joel's predictions fall under this category of multiple realizations. 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 locusts act as a great army, devouring everything in its path.

Joel warns God's people that, "What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten" - Joel 1:4.

When the locusts have finished, there will be no new wine, no figs, no wheat, no barley, no pomegranates, no dates, no apples—not even anything that could be used to make an offering to God. – Joel 1:9

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.

It seems as if all hope is lost, but in Joel's third chapter he begins by saying, "In those days and at that time, [I will] restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem." Although God warns Judah and Jerusalem about these horrible punishments which will cripple their crops, he also promises forgiveness and restoration if they will turn back to him.

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. So there are two "days" as it were, that we need to pay attention to: 1. The Day of the Lord. 2. The Last Days.

Peter is signaling that the "last days" in God's calendar have arrived. He uses the idea of the "last days" as an overall umbrella that includes many elements of Joel's prophecy, without demanding that all the elements have been fulfilled.

These events have overlapping significance for the age to come and the present age. Seeing it this way, Peter can say with authenticity that, "This is what was said through the prophet Joel."

- **A Dual Fulfilment: vv. 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 sees the primary sign of the "last days" as 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. Where any past outpouring was severely limited, a day was coming when it would be universal.

The outpouring of the Spirit on 120 Galilean Jews certainly could not fulfil Joel’s prediction – but it could serve as the beginning of it. That is what Peter will suggest in his Acts 2 sermon. See also, Numbers 11:29.

The manifestation of “speaking in foreign languages” or “glossolalia” among 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.

- **“Everyone Who Calls On The Lord’s Name”: vv. 19-21**

“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 every one who invokes the Lord’s name will be saved.”

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 notes, “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.