

A Twofold Response.

Acts 2:5-13.

Sunday morning, July 19,2009.

I. The occasion. Vs. 5-11.

- A. The crowd was initially drawn together at the close of the morning temple service, at 9.00am, by the sound of a mighty rushing wind. Vs. 2,6.
- B. At the home of John Mark, where the 120 presumably were gathered, they were greeted by the 120 who no doubt had come out of the house into the street.
- C. The tongues of fire may or may not have stayed on their heads; the crowds make no reference to them, leading us to speculate that this sign occurred inside the house, and was for the 120 alone and not for the multitude.
- D. Although all Galileans, they all spoke the wonderful works of God in the languages of the nations. The list of nations and languages stretches out to the east of Israel as well as to the west, and that both to the north and to the south of the Mediterranean Sea.
- E. No doubt they did not all speak together at the same time, addressing the vast multitude. It is more likely that the 120 mingled with the crowd. People of the same nationality tend to stay together. As such some of the 120 could have linked up with these various people groups and addressed them in their own language.
- F. It is remarkable that the disciples addressed the multitude in their own native languages all the more because Greek was the official language of the Roman empire, uniting all the peoples together. Addressing the people in Greek would have been adequate; all could have understood it. Instead the Holy spirit chooses to address the multitude in their native languages. Why?

II. The response of honest inquiry.

The “why” question was on the minds of the multitude as well.

“Whatever could this mean?” they say. Vs. 12..

This question represented on the part of some at least a question of honest inquiry. With the benefit of hindsight and completed Scriptures we can give a full answer to this question today.

- A. To the new temple, the New Covenant community, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was a sign that the gospel was for all the nations; that the middle wall of separation between Jew and Gentile was broken down.
- B. Also to the New Covenant community it was a sign of the inauguration of the new temple. As the Lord had filled the tabernacle with his presence and glory in Exodus 40:34,35, and Solomon’s temple similarly in 1 Kings 8:10,11, so here He filled the New Covenant temple with His presence and glory.
- C. The inauguration of the new temple also meant the passing away of the old covenant temple and its ministry. As such these tongues announced the coming of judgment on unbelieving Israel. Paul makes this point to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 14:21 as he quotes from Isaiah 28:11,12: “With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all of that, they will not hear Me.”
- D. Finally we should note that the gift of tongues has a bearing on the judgment of

God that occurred at Babel. There the Lord gave the “gift of tongues” to the peoples for the purpose of scattering them because of their rebellion against Him. That judgment is being undone here.

Instead of dividing the peoples by different languages they are being united in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit..

The peoples of all nations and languages are being united as living stones into the new temple; A dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:22.

Applications:

1. Are you an honest inquirer before the things of God? What is the meaning of the Bible? What is the meaning of the Christian church? Who is God, and who am I?

Psalm 25:14 holds out a wonderful promise to honest inquirers. “The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.”

The Holy Spirit has come alongside us to help us in our ignorance and blindness and unbelief. The question is whether you will look to Him; call on Him, and entrust yourself to Him. He has come alongside us in our need to bring us to Christ.

2. Pentecost; the coming of the Holy spirit, and the gift of tongues forever guide the Church toward translating the Scriptures into the language of the nations, and preaching and teaching the gospel in those native languages.

III. The response of scorn and ridicule.

“Others said, “they are full of new wine.”

New wine is not a good translation. Sweet wine is more likely to be in view, and the translation of choice for most other translators. New wine came out in September.

It was June when Pentecost occurred. Any new wine was now 9 months old.

Sweet wine was made from dried grapes who were soaked in old wine for a time and then pressed. The wine pressed from these grapes was particularly sweet and potent.

Hence the reference to intoxication and to sweet wine.

Application:

Short of the response of an honest inquiry there is no other response to be had than a dismissive one.

Dismissive responses come in many varieties:

1. Turning a deaf ear to it; ignoring it. “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”

2. Calling it ignorant and stupid. Something enlightened people can do without.

3. Ridiculing it as alcohol (or drug) induced as was done here.

4. Consigning it to the demonic as they did with the Lord Jesus.

5. Making it a subjective matter. “Whatever works for you”

6. Suppressing it; persecuting it, as was done with Christ and the early church.

What is your response to the Helper; the Holy Spirit’s coming into the world, and coming alongside you with His witness? Is it one of honest inquiry, or is it a dismissive one.

“Grieve not the Spirit” and “do not quench the Spirit.” Without Him you have no hope,

And there is no middle ground between an honest inquiry and a dismissive response.