

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 11

I. Exposition of Chapter Two - (Continued).

A. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Verses 14-40).

1. Verse 40 – “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’”

- a. “...with many other words...” – This shows us that the record of Peter's sermon here is a summary of his message, not his message in entirety.
- b. “...he testified and exhorted them...” – The word “testified” means; “To bear witness, testify earnestly or repeatedly”¹ Other scholars include the idea of “warning”². Peter was giving them an urgent, solemn warning. The word “exhorted” means; “to call to one's side”; “to summon”; “to admonish.”³ This carries the idea of it being an ongoing appeal.
- c. “Be saved from this perverse generation.” – The word “saved” is the usual word for salvation which means; “keep safe and sound”, “to rescue from danger or destruction.” Horton suggests that it means, “let yourself be saved.”⁴ The word “perverse” means; “pertaining to being unscrupulous and dishonest—‘crooked, unscrupulous’”⁵ (cf. **Philippians 2:14-15** – “crooked”)

“And [Peter] solemnly and earnestly witnessed (testified) and admonished (exhorted) with much more continuous speaking and warned (reproved, advised, encouraged) them, saying, Be saved from this crooked (perverse, wicked, unjust) generation.” – Acts 2:40 – Amplified Bible

B. The People's Response and Growth of the Church – (Verses 41-47).

1. Verse 41 – “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”

- a. “...those who gladly received his word...” – The word “received” means, “to take fully”, “to welcome”, “to accept”.⁶ The word “gladly” means, “cheerfully” and “joyfully”. The Gospel Peter preached to them brought them great concern and regret first (**verse 37**), but when Peter shared the solution (**verses 38-40**), the people received the message with joy!!
- b. “...baptized...” – This is referring to water baptism. Remember what we saw in **verse 38**. Peter told them they needed to repent and then be baptized “because of” the remission of sins. They were following the message. Peter also told them that if they repented and were baptized (which was a demonstration of their faith), that they would also receive the “gift of the Holy Spirit” that they were in wonderment about. Note the following:

“Again, Luke does not always specify details that are clear elsewhere; he does not have the space to do it in this one book. Therefore, though Luke does not mention it, we can be sure that all three thousand new believers who were added to the Church received the promise of the Father as Peter said they would and were filled with the Spirit, speaking in other tongues as in Acts 2:4.”⁷

- c. “About three thousand souls were added to them.” – This is stated as an estimate but, nevertheless, it was a large number.

“Although the number may seem large and is often regarded as a figment of Luke's imagination, there is in fact nothing incredible about it. It would have been perfectly possible for a crowd of that size and greater to hear Peter in the open air (if John Wesley and George Whitefield could be heard, so could Peter), and if the other disciples shared in the actual baptizing, there would have been plenty of time to accomplish the task.”⁸

2. Verse 42 – “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

²Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 82.

³Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977)

⁴Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 81.

⁵Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 770.

⁶Strong's Greek Dictionary.

⁷Horton, 82.

⁸I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 82.

a. **“...continued steadfastly...” – “Steadfastly” means; “to adhere to one, be his adherent, to be devoted or constant to one.”⁹; “Used metaphorically of steadfastness and faithfulness in the outgoings of the Christian life, especially in prayer.”¹⁰**

b. Four things they **“continued steadfastly”** in:

1) The apostles’ doctrine – The word **“doctrine”** simply means, **“that which is taught”** and **“instruction.”** According to Longenecker this would have consisted of: **“...a body of material considered authoritative because it was the message about Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed by accredited apostles. It undoubtedly included a compilation of the words of Jesus (cf. 20:35), some account of his earthly ministry, passion, and resurrection (cf. 2:22-24), and a declaration of what all this meant for man’s redemption...”¹¹ (cf. Hebrews 6:1-2).**

a) The early church had a strong hunger for the Word of God. They were a Word-centered church.

“This also shows that the apostles had a body of teaching...and they were obeying Jesus and making disciples as He had commanded (Matt. 28:19). It also shows that discipleship includes this kind of eager desire to learn more of Jesus and of God’s Word. We can be sure the baptism in the Holy Spirit made the Spirit their great Teacher as they listened intently to their human teachers, the apostles.”¹²

2) Fellowship – This word means; **“close association”; “community”; “joint participation”; “intimacy”; “partnership”; “joint contribution”; or “sharing”.**

“Not only were Christ’s followers in the early church devoted to their primary relationship with God, but they also were committed to building open, honest and spiritually encouraging relationships with God’s people. They spent much time together and depended on one another. They were unified in love and purpose. They were a relationship-building church.”¹³

3) Breaking of Bread – This could be referring to the believers simply sharing meals together and/or it could be a reference to them partaking of the Lord’s Supper together.

4) Prayer – Prayer was a vital part of the life of the early church. If a church wants to have power like the church had as is recorded in the Book of Acts, it must be a praying church. A praying church is a powerful church. It seems prayer sets the stage for the Holy Spirit to move.

3. Verse 43 – “Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”

a. The word **“fear”** means; **“terror, reverence, respect, honor.”¹⁴** Scholars state that this refers to the unbelievers who witnessed what was going on among the believers and how it caused the unbelievers to have fear and awe.

“One effect of the growth of the infant church was a sense of fear or awe on the part of the people. Luke means that the non-Christian population felt a certain apprehension over against a group in whose midst supernatural events were taking place.”¹⁵

1) Dr. Robert Utley adds: **“God’s presence and power caused a holy atmosphere, even unsaved sinners were aware of the sacredness of the time and place!”¹⁶**

b. **“...many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”**

“The miracles were not for display but rather to confirm the Word, the teaching (see Mark 16:20). They also helped the faith of the new Pentecostal church members to be established in the Word and in the power of God (see 1 Cor. 2:4-5). In all missionary advances in the Book of Acts, the Word was accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders...Signs and wonders should still be normative wherever the gospel is being spread.”¹⁷

⁹Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

¹⁰Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*

¹¹Longenecker, 85.

¹²Horton, 83.

¹³*Fire Bible: Student Edition*, Donald C. Stamps, Gen. Ed. (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers Int’l, 2007), 1518.

¹⁴Zodhiates.

¹⁵I. Howard Marshall, 84.

¹⁶Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 45.

¹⁷Horton, 84-85.