

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 6

### I. Exposition of Chapter Two - (Continued).

#### A. Verses 5-13 - The Crowd Responded.

1. Verse 5 – “And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.”

- a. This multitude from many nations were gathered in Jerusalem because of the Feast of Pentecost. It’s possible that some, if not many of these were the same people who gathered in Jerusalem at the last feast which was Passover, which means they may have been witnesses of the things going on pertaining to Jesus’ trial and crucifixion.
- b. The word “**devout**” means, “**taking hold of something well**”...**In the case of first century Judaism, it implies a reverence toward God and the traditions of the Elders (i.e. Oral Traditions, which became the Talmud). These were pious, religious men (cf. 8:2; 22:12; Luke 2:25).**<sup>1</sup>

“In any case, because it was the Feast of Pentecost – one of the three feast for which the Law required attendance in Jerusalem (Deut. 16:16) – we can be sure that perhaps as many as one million Jews from all over the known world were in Jerusalem. These were devout, ‘God-fearing’ people, sincere in their worship of the Lord. Probably more of them would be in Jerusalem at this time than at Passover, since travel on the Mediterranean Sea was safer at this season.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Verse 6 – “And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.”

- a. This “**sound**” drew a multitude of people together very quickly. There are different views as to what sound it was that received so much attention. Some say it was the sound of the “**...rushing mighty wind**” (verse 2) and others believe it was the sound of speaking in other tongues. It could be a combination of both.

“The ‘**sound**’ (Greek, *phone*) that drew the crowd together is not specified, but most likely it is the aftermath noise generated by more than a hundred people spreading out among the crowd and praising God enthusiastically in languages they had not learned. The wind-sound (a different Greek word, *echos*, verse 2) may have alerted the populace, but it was the miracle languages that focused and drew the crowd’s attention and attendance.”<sup>3</sup>

- b. The word “**confused**” means, “**to cause such astonishment as to bewilder and dismay—‘to cause consternation, to confound.**”<sup>4</sup>

1) Why were they “**confused**”? “**...because everyone heard them speak in his own language.**” The word for “**language**” here is the Greek word, *dialektos*. This is where we get our word “**dialect**” from. Marvin Vincent states:

“**...since the foreigners present spoke, not only different languages, but different *dialects* of the same language. The Phrygians and Pamphylians, for instance, both spoke Greek, but in different idioms; the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites all spoke Persian, but in different provincial forms.**”<sup>5</sup>

2) Ernest Gentile adds the following:

“**The crowd of pilgrims stood stunned as ‘each one’ heard the unlearned Galileans speak like expert linguists in the diverse languages and dialects of the Diaspora. Verses 6 and 8 us the Greek word for *dialects* – *dialektos* – which means known and understood ethnic languages. Verse 8 indicates these were the languages of the listener’s home countries.**”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 24.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 60-61.

<sup>3</sup>Ernest B. Gentile, *The Glorious Disturbance: Understanding and Receiving the Baptism with the Spirit*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2004), 91.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 312.

<sup>5</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament: Vol. III, The Epistles of Paul* (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Co.), 450.

<sup>6</sup>Gentile, 92.

3. Verses 7-8 – “Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we here, each in our own language in which we were born?’”
- For the words “amazed and marveled” Vincent writes: “The former word denotes the first overwhelming surprise. The verb is literally *to put out of place*; hence, *out of one’s senses*. Compare Mark iii. 21: ‘*He is beside himself.*’ The latter word, *marveled*, denotes the continuing wonder; meaning *to regard with amazement*, and with a suggestion of *beginning to speculate on the matter*.”<sup>7</sup>
  - “...Galileans” – A reference to their nationality. Probably recognized because of their clothing. They were known as uneducated and, according to Vincent, “They were blamed for neglecting the study of their language, and charged with errors in grammar and ridiculous mispronunciations.”<sup>8</sup> (cf. Mark 14:70).

“Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by the people of Jerusalem as being provincial (cf. Mark 14:70). Therefore, since the disciples who were speaking were Galileans, it bewildered those who heard because the disciples could not by themselves have learned so many different languages.”<sup>9</sup>

4. Verses 9-11 – A List of Nations. “It is an odd list, and nobody has been able to explain satisfactorily why it includes the particular selection of countries that it does, and why they come in this strange order.”<sup>10</sup>

- Verse 11 - “...we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” – This seems to be stating that the people heard the disciples praising God in their (the people’s) own languages.

“All these kept hearing in their own languages ‘the wonders [the mighty, magnificent, sublime deeds] of God.’ These may have been in the form of exclamations of praise to God for these wonders.”<sup>11</sup>

- Praise and worship could be said to be the highest form of prayer and the spiritual language of tongues helps to enhance the believer’s praise and worship of God. (cf. I Corinthians 14:14-17).

5. Verses 12-13 – “So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’”

- “...amazed and perplexed...” – The word “amazed” is the same word as in verse 7. The word “perplexed” means, “to be in doubt” and “entirely at a loss.” (cf. I Corinthians 2:4-16).
- “Whatever could this mean?” – This question is still asked by people today. This opens the door for Peter to preach his message in explanation of what they’re witnessing.
- Verse 13 – The word “mocking” means, “scoffing” and “deriding”.
- “They are full of new wine.” – To some of the hearers, a language they didn’t recognize could have sounded like unintelligible sounds which could lead them to accuse the disciples of being intoxicated.

“It is interesting that the mockers should accuse the believers of being drunk, for wine is associated with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Paul relates the two *in contrast*, for when a man is filled with strong drink, he loses control of himself and ends up being ashamed; but when a person is filled with the Spirit, he has self-control and glorifies God. Strong drink can bring a temporary exhilaration, but the Spirit gives a deep satisfaction and a lasting joy.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Vincent, 450.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, “Acts,” in *John-Acts*, vol. 9 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 272.

<sup>10</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 71.

<sup>11</sup>Horton, 63.

<sup>12</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 409.