

## Acts 2a verses 1-21

As we get into Acts we just need to set the scene. You will need a finger in Acts 1

**What part of the country did Jesus and the Apostles all come from?**

They all originated from the Galilee area, and they spoke with 'northern' accents.

They had followed Jesus as he travelled, but they always returned back home to 'the North'.

At the beginning of his third year of ministry Jesus had set his sights on going to Jerusalem, culminating in his triumphal entry the week before Passover (or 'Unleavened Bread')

Without Jesus to follow, some of the Apostles had returned briefly to Galilee but Jesus had then told them to wait in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:4)

**How did they feel?**

Probably like fish out of water.

John 20:19 – Locked doors; fear of the Jews

**What did they do while they waited?**

Prayed (Acts 1:14)

**Where were they living?**

They would not have had houses in Jerusalem to live in (Although someone had made a room available to them and they all probably slept there: Acts 1:13)

**How hard is it to wait for Jesus to act? Or perhaps tell us what to do?**

(In this case seven weeks)

*1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were **all** together in one place.*

Besides the Apostles, who else may there have been? (Acts 1:15)

**Were they just men?**

Acts 1:16 – Brothers and Sisters

In the same way that thousands of Jews would descend on Jerusalem for The Passover celebrations, fifty days after Passover, as many if not actually more Jews would return to Jerusalem for Pentecost. (It was also called 'weeks' or 'reaping', and also commemorated the giving of the Law to Moses). This was a Harvest festival celebrating the first fruits – how appropriate for the start of the Christian Church.

**What specific Temple ceremonies would there have been?**

None – other than receiving any firstfruits people brought.

It was more a time of feasting and celebration and unlike Passover, this festival only lasted one day and was held on a Sunday – the first day of the week.

I picture it as being like the crowds going to Glastonbury – but centred on the town itself!

Possibly the believers had all decided to meet at the house where the Apostles were staying to celebrate the feast together. In the mainly hot dry climate, (May-June: 25°C to 29°C) the doors and windows of the houses would have been left uncovered to allow air to circulate in the heat. In many hot countries the afternoon is a time for resting away from the heat, so their day starts early. It seems that everyone there had gathered by breakfast time (v15)

What happened next was totally unexpected.

*2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

'Suddenly' there was the sound of a violent gale, but it seemed that it was only the sound – there was no actual violent movement of air! And it filled the whole house!

*3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.*

Can anyone picture what that looked like?

(Mainly to get people to imagine it for themselves!)

*4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Many people these days have experienced being 'filled with the Holy Spirit' and 'speaking in tongues' but Pentecost was when it first happened.

The text suggests that it was actual foreign languages that they were speaking – (although some suggest that the Holy Spirit translated their words into those languages for the hearers). Well we don't know. What we do know (v12) is that the onlookers were utterly amazed and perplexed.

But what of the Disciples?

As they experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus, what feelings would they have had?

(Surprise, joy, worship (see second part of v11!), confidence, power – even reckless abandon?)

Are all Christians today 'filled with the Holy Spirit'?

Look down at v 38

When and how should we exercise the Gifts of the Spirit?

When moved by the Spirit!

Do we all have the gifts? Yes – but not all the same! 1 Cor 12:1-11

Now read verses 5-12

*5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'*

It would appear that the disciples couldn't stay indoors but went outside, not able to contain themselves. Those who had come to Jerusalem for the feast soon heard the uproar.

They were **devout** Jews, but, had never experienced the power of God present in people in this way.

**Were they surprised?**

v7: 'utterly amazed' and v12: 'amazed and perplexed'.

What they did agree was that it must have meant something important (v12).

*13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'*

Their only possible way to explain a crowd of noisy men!

Someone read 14-15

*14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!*

Before moving on, it's as well to remember that Matthew recorded that only two months before in the Garden of Gethsemane '*all the disciples deserted him and fled*' (Matthew 26:56). Then Jesus had been crucified and it seems that from then on the disciples had kept a low profile, meeting behind locked doors '*for fear of the Jewish leaders*' (John 20:19, 26).

The Jews were still a threat – in chapter four we will read of the arrest of Peter and John. But now it seemed they were all happy to go outside in reckless abandonment.

The Spirit, now living in Peter was able to bring to his mind words from the prophet Joel (2:28-32):

Someone read 16-21

16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 *“In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.*

18 *Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.*

19 *I will show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.*

20 *The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*

21 *And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

What an encouragement that must have been to Peter too!