

Acts Chapter 2:12-17

¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

And all were amazed and perplexed- In the Greek, the word "perplexed" has the sense of going through all the possible solutions and yet still coming up empty. Literally, there was "no way out" of the confusion that they were in.

saying to one another, "What does this mean?"- A good Lutheran question. Despite those around the disciples being able to hear and understand the words that they were using, that does not mean that they comprehended the meaning. In addition to the words, they may have been wondering what the miraculous sign itself meant. Did this mean judgment, salvation, anger, or approval? Just like today, the things of God require teaching and explanation. Even then, we must receive many things by faith without the aid of reason.

¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

But others mocking said- Even from the very birth of the Church, after such incredibly miraculous acts, there were already mockers and scoffers and detractors. There will always be those who mock the Church and we will never be able to get everybody on the same page with us. The world and society as a whole are irredeemable, but one day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. They will no longer be able to deny what they see with their own two eyes.

"They are filled with new wine"- New wine was known for being sweet and therefore, a wine that was easier to become drunk on. In the process of making wine, they would lay out the grapes in the sun to increase the sugars. They would crush the grapes and they would begin fermenting spontaneously, so they did not have "grape juice" for very long, if at all. Yeast on the grape skins turns the natural grape sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. This is why they would not put new wine in old wine skins. The carbon dioxide had already expanded the goat skin, removing elasticity, and causing it to burst. Jesus used this to illustrate that He was doing something new from the old ways of John the Baptist and therefore His disciples did not need to fast while He was with them.

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

But Peter, standing with the eleven- Peter was the spokesman for the apostles and he is almost always listed first among them. From his time with Jesus, we know that Peter was not afraid to speak, even when others would not. Sometimes, his boldness got him into trouble.

Although Peter had leadership characteristics, he was still simply one of the twelve. God gives different gifts. Even though Moses was God's chosen servant, God used Aaron to speak for him.

lifted up his voice and addressed them- Peter's address is regarded as the first Christian sermon ever. Prior to this, Jesus had given His "Sermon on the Mount," but this was the first sermon given to the newly-formed Church. Ever since, the sermon has been a fixture of Christian worship services. From the time of the early Church, worship services have also included prayer, Scripture readings, liturgy, Holy Communion, and other parts.

Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem- In any sermon, it is important to consider one's audience. As mentioned earlier, there would have been many visitors to Jerusalem who were devout in keeping the Law of Moses. However, there were also people who lived there who needed to hear the message. This included men and women, young and old, Jews and non-Jews.

Let this be known to you, and give ear to my words- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter is beginning to explain and give answer to their question of "what does this mean?" After all the confusion, amazement, and disbelief, Peter wanted to anchor their speculation in the truth. To do so, they would need to calm down and listen carefully.

¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose- Peter points out that the mockers' jeering taunts were actually unreasonable and unlikely. Most people, if they got drunk, got drunk at night. The disciples would have needed to be drinking through the night in order to be drunk at this early hour. That would have also meant that they hadn't slept at all. Even back then, there would have been a certain societal taboo against drinking in the morning. Only the most extreme alcoholics could be found doing that. Today, it is somewhat socially unacceptable to drink before 5 p.m., since that is the end of a normal 8-5 work day.

Since it is only the third hour of the day- The third hour of the day (8 a.m.) would have been an hour of prayer and reflection at the Temple. Sacrifices were offered at the Temple during services just after dawn and before sunset. Any observant Jew would be in the temple during this time. The day of Pentecost was also a high feast which Jews would have prepared for the night before by fasting.

¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

But this is what was uttered- Although we only have the written accounts of the prophets today, the words that God gave would have originally been spoken. Prophets were the "mouthpieces of God," so they said whatever God gave them and were not

supposed to go beyond that. In the Old Testament, God told His prophets to go and prophesy against various cities or peoples in their own time period. However, prophets also were given prophecies that were not fulfilled during their own time, but would be in the future. Many of these prophecies had to do with the Messiah and the time period surrounding His coming.

through the prophet Joel- Joel was a prophet in Judah during the 9th century B.C, approximately 850 years before Jesus was born. A major theme of the book is preparing for the "day of the Lord," which would bring judgment and punishment to the nations. At the same time, there would be grace and mercy shown to the repentant, with God sending His Spirit to help them. This may have had a double fulfillment, talking about God's people back then during a time of famine and plague of locusts, as well as in the future. That future has now arrived. After Pentecost, we Christians can speak of us existing in the "Last Days" as well, since we know Christ has come and we are waiting for Christ to return at any moment.

17 ""And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

And in the last days it shall be, God declares- What God declares is always going to happen. There is no uncertainty about it. Here, God is telling us what it will be like after He sends His Holy Spirit during the events of Pentecost.

That I will pour out my Spirit- The expression "to pour out" or "to pour yourself into something" indicates that the task takes all of you. So, you are not just giving a part of something or something outside of yourself, but you are giving yourself. In Philippians 2:7-8, it says that Christ emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, and became obedient to the point of death, even death upon a cross. In the same way, the Spirit was not poured out in part, because the Church has been given the entirety of the Spirit.

On all flesh- Even though animals have and even plants have "flesh," this is specifically referencing people. Although not everyone will receive the Holy Spirit, there are people from all walks of life who will.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams- The work of a prophet was sometimes closely linked with dreams and visions from God. For example, Ezekiel was shown visions from the Lord, because that was the best way for him to receive and deliver God's message. Even outside the prophets, God uses dreams to communicate, as with Joseph, Jacob's son, and Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. Here, God is giving the Church special insight into His plan of salvation by sending His Holy Spirit