

Acts 2:14-18

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/acts/acts-2/acts-214-18/>

Peter begins a sermon to explain to the Jewish pilgrims why they are speaking in foreign languages. The Spirit of God has been poured out on His people, as predicted by the prophet Joel.

The Holy Spirit has arrived. He has gifted the disciples to preach God's mighty works in a variety of different languages so that the Jewish pilgrims and immigrants in Jerusalem could understand what they were saying. There were Jews from all corners of the Roman and Parthian empires gathered there for the Feast of Weeks. They are amazed that the disciples speak in their different native tongues, but some dismiss the disciples as babbling drunks.

But Peter reacts to this accusation. He takes his stand with the eleven apostles, which shows how far these men have come. Just fifty days ago they were scattered, in hiding, lying about who they were to conceal any association with Jesus. Now, despite knowing the danger they could incur from the Jewish leaders, they boldly stand before the massive crowds gathered there. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they publicly stand together to deliver the good news of Jesus Christ.

Peter raised his voice and declared to the crowds: Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. Apparently Peter was able to speak with sufficient volume to get the attention of those gathered. Once he gained their attention, Peter offers an explanation. He will answer the skeptics, who said these were men who were drunk, as well as showing the way to Jesus. There were many in the group truly seeking an answer (Acts 2:12).

Peter defends the disciples against accusations of drunkenness, *these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day.* The *third hour of the day* by Jewish reckoning was 9:00 AM. Peter reasons that it was too early for anyone to have drunk so much that they were intoxicated.

Peter then provides an explanation for why the disciples are speaking in so many different languages. He quotes *the prophet Joel* from the Old Testament, that this event *was spoken of* by him hundreds of years ago:

*'And it shall be in the last days,' God says,
'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And
your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams;
(Joel 2:28-29)*

Since Peter is addressing a crowd of devout men, they would have known the scriptures, and recognized this passage.

The crowd can see the followers of Jesus speaking in many different languages. Peter attributes this to Joel's prophecy, that these are *the last days* in which God *will pour forth of His Spirit on all mankind*. The result of God's *Spirit* joining with *mankind* is that *sons and daughters shall prophesy*—people who have received the *Spirit* will preach messages given them by God; *young men shall see visions* and *old men shall dream dreams*—people who have received the *Spirit* will see supernatural sights (usually in *dreams*) that give insight into God's will or His plans.

The term *last days* indicates that the church age, the age of the indwelling Holy Spirit, is the last age of the present earth. This corresponds with the historical sequence in Daniel 2, which predicts four kingdoms of men prior to the advent of the kingdom of God on earth. The fourth kingdom of man is the Roman kingdom, which is the era in which we still live. Jesus offered to inaugurate His kingdom on earth, but that offer was rejected by Israel. In the next chapter we will see that God continues to make that offer available for a time. As Paul states in Romans 11, the eventual rejection by the Jews provides a blessing to the rest of the world.

God promised in Joel 2 that He would *pour forth of His Spirit* even on the lowest rungs of society; *Even on God's bondslaves, both men and women*. This is to say that God will send His Spirit to people of all ages, genders, and status, and *they shall prophesy*. They will speak the Word of the Lord, as given them by the *Spirit*. There was a believer named Agabus who was given foreknowledge by the Spirit of a famine, and of Paul's impending arrest (Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10-11). Most of the epistles in the New Testament could be viewed as works of prophecy. "Prophecy" means "truth telling" and is not limited to predictions of the future. The entire Bible is called the word of God, and Jesus is the Living Word. The Bible is God's word put on paper by the apostles, inspired by the Spirit.

Several of these *visions* and *dreams* which *young men* and *old men* will see are described in varying detail throughout the New Testament. Peter experienced a vision where God showed him that the gospel was meant for the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Acts 10:9-15)

Ananias receives a vision commanding him to heal Saul of his blindness. (Acts 9:10) The Apostle Paul sees a vision of a Macedonian man calling for help (Acts 16:9), and of God telling him to be courageous in preaching the Gospel in Corinth (Acts 18:9-10), though these possibly could be considered dreams too, since both visions came to Paul "at night." Most interestingly, Paul has a vision of heaven, of which he is not allowed to tell anyone what he saw in detail (2 Corinthians 12:1-6).

The book of Revelation is the record of a lengthy, detailed, symbolic vision of the end times, which Jesus gives to John, the last living disciple.

Biblical Text

14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my

words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

**17 ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says,
‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,**

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men shall dream dreams;

**18 Even on My bondslaves, both men and women,
I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit
And they shall prophesy.**