



Discussion Notes

Other Tongues • Acts 2:5–13
October 26, 2025 • Luke Knight

As we've been learning, Acts is a record of the movement Jesus began in the gospels, the spread of his good news of great joy for all people. After his death and resurrection, Jesus gathered his disciples and told them to wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit, who would give them the power to share about him.

They couldn't move until God moved, and so recently we've seen the disciples waiting. Then, as they waited, dramatically the sound of a violent wind filled the space they were gathered and something like flames of fire settled on each of their heads. Luke tells us that everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus had promised, and they began to speak in languages they couldn't speak previously.

Last week, we heard about two of the signs which accompanied the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the first believers: wind and fire. We traced the origins of those signs deep into the Old Testament.

2:2–6

- Pentecost was a Jewish feast, a harvest festival, also commemorating the giving of the Law (or the Ten Commandments) by Moses on Mount Sinai after the Exodus from Egypt. Just as with Passover fifty days prior, Jerusalem was bursting at the seams with people from all over. Some of these folks, from "every nation" according to Luke, heard the sounds of something strange happening in the city that day so a large crowd forms. And upon arrival they are bewildered to hear all those filled with the Holy Spirit speaking in their various languages.
- The language of the Law in Exodus may have been important, given to one people at one time, but now a new thing was being announced to the Israelite tribes being re-gathered to hear the new message. God's people themselves had become temples of his presence, and God's people could be unified under Jesus the Messiah.

2:7–11

- The evidence of that promise just a few days earlier was already playing out rapidly. You have to wonder if Jesus' disciples assumed their sharing about Jesus "to the ends

of the earth", was something they would have to travel to accomplish. Though some of them did end up traveling, going, it began with God *drawing*.

- See this map which represents the regions listed: www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/map-44-02
- If we're familiar, we might recall the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, where the people were divided and scattered into many languages. In this moment in Acts, we see something of a renewal. Now, as God's presence poured on people speaking many languages, there's a unity of message that comes throughout those languages. There could be a re-unification because of and under Jesus.
- The gospel has yet to spread directly to Gentile peoples as it would shortly in Acts, the languages represented point us to a vast spread of the gospel everywhere. God was calling and gathering God's far-flung people together under Jesus, and so many more people were the horizon. Their hearing of the message was merely a geographical and chronological technicality, the gospel spreading rapidly from this moment on.

2:12–13

- We often approach Scripture as though it didn't happen in the real world — and here is where approaches like that are dismantled. After being drawn by the sound, and hearing the many languages pouring out, probably from equally perplexed speakers, some in the crowd chalk up this strange behaviour to what they usually chalked strange behaviour up to: far too much merlot (it was festival time after all). We don't know what's going on, so let's just say they're drunk (even though it doesn't explain much of anything). Others, however, have a genuine question: "*What does this mean?*"

"What Does It Mean?"

- We'll hear very clearly what it means in the next couple of weeks, when we turn our attention to Peter's address of the gathered crowd. It means, that at the very start of the Jesus movement, even as what we now call *the church* was forming, everyone, everywhere, could get in on the ground level.
- What does it mean for us? It also means that Jesus speaks Quechua. It means that Jesus speaks Mandarin. It means Jesus speaks Thai. It means Jesus speaks Arabic and Russian and Hindi and Swahili. It means Jesus speak hən'qəminəm' (Hun'qumi'num), the dialect of our local Kwantlen neighbours. And if the gospel can be heard in these languages, if God cares to ensure all peoples can hear, God must care about all people.

- As we'll soon see in Acts, all peoples will be gathered in and under Jesus' name. And it won't be on the basis of their Jewish or Gentile roots, or their sex, or their social status — it'll be on the basis of Jesus himself, no matter our background or language. So what looks like a vast and divided and scattered humanity to us, is not so to God. All peoples can be one people, gathered, and renewed in Jesus' name.
- It means that all the people we live amongst today, next door, at work or school, wondering if they matter, and if anyone will ever care enough to visit with or speak to them, *Jesus is for them too*. So unlike our friend Jon Imbeau, you might not find yourself in Peru this next week. But you will likely find yourself surrounded by all kinds of people. Remember that God speaks their language, and that he cares, wanting together all people to himself.

Discussion Questions:

- What makes Acts 2 such a pivotal moment in the New Testament?
- What is the purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2?
- What has been your understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer?
- What questions do you continue to carry about a life in the Spirit?
- Are there any steps you are taking to further explore a life in the Spirit?