

Focus on Acts 2:1–21

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Michael H. Floyd

Peter explains what has happened as the fulfillment of an oracle prophesied long ago. According to the prophet Joel, God would one day empower all classes of the community to become prophets by pouring out the Spirit in a theophany of wind and fire, so that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:28–32a). The disciples have all become prophetic. God’s deeds of power (Acts 2:11) include the sending and raising of Jesus (Acts 2:22–24), and God’s purpose is the salvation of all (Acts 2:21, 40).

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Donald K. McKim

There is now a new community of women and men where the one Spirit bestows many gifts—on all people, regardless of who they are. The church is the place where this new fellowship begins to take shape as it recognizes the gifts of the Spirit in and for all people. To realize that “all flesh,” all people, receive the Spirit, enables us to watch and participate in God’s work in this world with a wide-open vision. We live in eager anticipation of the Spirit’s work in our midst as we join with all others to accomplish the Spirit’s purposes.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,”

Kristin Emery Saldine

Pentecost emphasizes the centrality of Christ to the church’s identity, authority, and proclamation. This christological focus at Pentecost is essentially ecclesiological, and it affords an opportunity for us to see the church in its many dimensions. The first, and most important, dimension of the church is its universality. We confess this each time we recite the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the holy catholic church.” The Holy Spirit gifts the church to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth. Pentecost reminds us that, even though all our faith practices are rooted in local contexts, the church’s identity extends beyond every congregation, denomination, and cultural tradition. Pentecost celebrates the face of Christ throughout the world.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”

G. Lee Ramsey Jr.

The text states clearly that Jews from all parts of the Middle East are each able to hear in their own native languages. Like a gathered conference of the United Nations, each delegate hears the proceedings in his or her own tongue. The Word of God not only transcends cultural barriers, but it arrives in the particular language of each listener. Pentecost verifies Christmas. All wrapped up in human form, God comes to us in our very own bodies; God speaks to us our very own language(s). Through ordinary human speech, the Holy Spirit establishes unity amid diversity, a fulfilled promise that even the most divided congregations and communities can take to heart.