

Q. You say that women are to be silent in the assembly. But weren't women among the 120 who spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2?

A. I received this question just recently. It is a good one because it is based on a common assumption. The assumption is that the 120 spoke on Pentecost. Certainly, women were among the 120 (Acts 1:14-15), but women did not speak in tongues on Pentecost because only the twelve apostles spoke in tongues on Pentecost. Here's why I say this.

Notice the beginning of Acts: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:" (Acts 1:1-2). Luke is here introducing commandments that Jesus gave to His apostles, not the 120. Those commandments were "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (verses 4-8). This, of course, is speaking about what was to occur in Acts 2 and then continuing for the rest of their lives as they brought the Gospel throughout the world. These commandments were given to the apostles.

We then read that the apostles returned to Jerusalem and went to the upper room where the apostles dwelt (verses 12-13). In that room, they apparently met with the other disciples, including the women, and prayed (verse 14). Nothing says that the women prayed aloud.

Copyright © 2011 wordofhisgrace.org

Permission is granted to reproduce this article only if reproduced in full with no alterations and keeping the copyright statement and this permission statement intact.

womenpentecostqa.pdf

Verse 15 tells us that the number of the disciples was 120. It also begins to tell us that in one of those meetings, Peter stood up and spoke concerning the need to replace Judas Iscariot with a disciple who had the qualifications to be one of the twelve. An interesting point is that in verse 16, Peter addresses his speech to "Men and brethren." The Greek says *andres adelphoi*. *Andres* is not the generic word for man or mankind, which is *anthrōpos*. It is the word for "males." Also, the "and" in the King James Version is inserted. Thus, this is literally saying, "Men-brothers" or "Males-brothers." Although the women may have been present, Peter is addressing this business of replacing an apostle to the men. We then read how "the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (verse 26). So, chapter one ends speaking of the now twelve apostles. Acts 2 begins by saying, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Many have assumed the "they" here to mean the 120. But, as we have just seen, the context is the twelve. And we must not forget that Jesus' command in chapter one concerning this very event was to the apostles, not to the 120. But that's not all.

In Acts 2:7, those hearing the speaking in tongues say, "Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?" We know that the eleven apostles were from Galilee, and we may assume this for Matthias. But can we assume that all 120 were Galilaeans? Not at all. Simon the leper was from Bethany (Matthew 26:6), a village at the Mount of Olives. The woman who anointed Jesus was also probably from Bethany (verse 7). And Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were also from Bethany (John 11:1). Bartimaeus was from Jericho (Mark 10:46). I found these people in just a couple of minutes, and with more careful study perhaps more could be found who were definitely not from Galilee. I think we can assume that these people, or at least some of them, were among the 120. But, according to those who heard the speaking of tongues on Pentecost, these people could not have been among those speaking because they were not Galilaeans.

When they were thought to be drunk, we read of "Peter, standing up with the eleven" (verse 14). In other words, those who spoke in tongues were accused of being drunk and those who were accused stood up to respond to the charge. The number was twelve, not 120. Then, after Peter's speech, we read of the reaction of those who were pricked in the heart: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (verse 37). Notice that they speak to

"Peter and to the rest of the apostles" and they address them as *andres adelphoi*, "Males-brothers."

All of this is weighty, and, to me, conclusive evidence that the only people who spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost were the twelve apostles. The 120 did not speak; no women spoke.

This question and my answer illustrate the fact that we all at times have assumed something about the Bible—often because we have heard it from someone else—and then we may even make another assumption on top of that, and before you know it we have built a structure of wood, hay, and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). But if, instead, when we are tempted to make an assumption, we dig into the Bible to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11), we will find that the Bible yields much more wealth than a cursory reading will reveal. And what I did to answer this question is not very difficult. It can be done by anyone with some basic Bible tools or Bible software such as e-Sword. So, happy treasure hunting!

Peter Ditzel