

John Chrysostom

Extract from ***De Sancta Pentecoste I***

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Introduction

John Chrysostom (*ca.* AD 347 – 407) was a very important church father and renowned preacher who served many years in the churches of Antioch and Constantinople. His treatises and sermons were and are still widely influential. In two sermons for the feast of Pentecost Chrysostom addresses the question of the special gifts of the Spirit and the “problem” of the fact that they were no longer evident among the Christians of his day.

In addition to grammatical notes some vocabulary help has been given. Vocabulary that needs to be looked up in a dictionary ought to be memorised.

[459] 1¹ ... Τίνος οὖν ἕνεκεν, φησὶ, σημεῖα οὐ γίνεται νῦν; Ἐνταῦθά μοι μετὰ ἀκριβείας προσέχετε· παρὰ πολλῶν γὰρ ἀκούω τοῦτο, καὶ συνεχῶς καὶ ἀεὶ ζητούμενον· διὰ τί τότε γλώσσαις ἐλάλουν πάντες οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι, νῦν δὲ οὐκέτι;

Μάθωμεν πρότερον τί τὸ λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, καὶ τότε ἐροῦμεν καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν.

2 Τί οὖν ἐστὶ γλώσσαις λαλεῖν; Ὁ βαπτιζόμενος εὐθέως ἐφθέγγετο τῇ τῶν Ἰνδῶν φωνῇ, τῇ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, τῇ τῶν Περσῶν, τῇ τῶν Σκυθῶν, τῇ τῶν Θρακῶν, καὶ εἷς ἄνθρωπος πολλὰς ἐλάμβανε γλώσσας, καὶ οὗτοι οἱ νῦν εἰ ἦσαν τότε βαπτισθέντες, εὐθέως ἂν ἤκουσας αὐτῶν διαφόροις φθεγγομένων φωναῖς. 3 Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Παῦλος, φησὶν, εὗρέ τινας βαπτισθέντας ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι Ἰωάννου, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Εἰ Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; 4 Λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· ἄλλ' οὐδὲ εἰ ἔστι Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ἠκούσαμεν· καὶ εὐθέως ἐκέλευσεν αὐτοὺς βαπτισθῆναι· Καὶ ἐπιθέντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ Παύλου τὰς χεῖρας, ἦλθεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ ἐλάλουν ἅπαντες γλώσσαις. (Acts 19:1-6)

5 Τίνος οὖν χάριν συνεστάλη, καὶ ἀνηρέθη ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἡ χάρις αὕτη νῦν; 6 Οὐχὶ ἀτιμάζοντος ἡμᾶς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα τιμῶντος. Πῶς; ἐγὼ λέγω. Ἀνοητότερον οἱ ἄνθρωποι διέκειντο τότε, τῶν εἰδώλων προσφάτως ἀπηλλαγμένοι, καὶ παχύτερα καὶ ἀναισθητοτέρα αὐτῶν ἡ διάνοια ἔτι ἦν, καὶ πρὸς τὰ σωματικὰ πάντα ἐπτόνητο καὶ ἐκεχῆνεσαν, καὶ οὐδεμία αὐτοῖς οὐδέπω ἔννοια δωρεῶν ἀσωμάτων ἦν, οὐδὲ εἶδον τί ποτέ ἐστὶ νοητὴ χάρις, καὶ πίστευε μόνη θεωρουμένη· διὰ τοῦτο σημεῖα ἐγίνετο. 7 Τῶν γὰρ χαρισμάτων τῶν πνευματικῶν τὰ μὲν ἀοράτα ἐστὶ, καὶ πίστευε καταλαμβάνεται μόνη· τὰ δὲ καὶ αἰσθητὸν ἐνδείκνυται σημεῖον πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀπίστων πληροφάνειαν. 8 Οἷόν τι λέγω· ἁμαρτιῶν ἄφεσις νοητὸν ἐστὶ πρᾶγμα, ἀοράτον ἐστὶ χάρισμα· πῶς γὰρ καθαίρονται ἡμῶν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, οὐχ ὁρῶμεν τοῖς τῆς σαρκὸς ὀφθαλμοῖς. 9 Τί δήποτε; Ὅτι ψυχὴ ἐστὶν ἡ καθαιρομένη· ψυχὴ δὲ ὀφθαλμοῖς σώματος οὐχ ὁρᾶται. 10 Ἡ μὲν οὖν κάθαρσις τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων νοητὴ δωρεὰ τίς ἐστὶν ὀφθαλμοῖς οὐ δυναμένη σώματος γενέσθαι φανερά· τὸ δὲ γλώσσαις διαφόροις λαλεῖν ἐστὶ μὲν καὶ αὐτὸ νοητῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ Πνεύματος· αἰσθητὸν μὲντοι παρέχεται τὸ σημεῖον, καὶ τοῖς ἀπίστοις εὐσύννοπον. 11 Τῆς γὰρ ἔνδον ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γινομένης ἐνεργείας, τῆς ἀοράτου λέγω, ἡ ἕξις γλῶττα ἀκουομένη φανέρωσις τίς ἐστὶ καὶ ἔλεγχος. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Παῦλος λέγει· Ἐκάστῳ δὲ ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ Πνεύματος δίδεται πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον (1 Cor. 12:7).

12 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν νῦν χρεῖαν οὐκ ἔχω σημείων. Τίνος ἕνεκεν; Ὅτι καὶ χωρὶς σημείου δόσεως πιστεύειν μεμάθηκα τῷ Δεσπότη. 13 Ὁ γὰρ ἀπιστῶν ἐνεχύρου δεῖται· ἐγὼ δὲ πιστεύων οὐ δέομαι ἐνεχύρου οὐδὲ σημείου· ἀλλὰ κἂν μὴ λαλήσω γλώσση, οἶδα ὅτι ἐκαθάρθην ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν. 14 Ἐκεῖνοι δὲ τότε οὐκ ἐπίστευον, εἰ μὴ ἔλαβον σημεῖον· διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῖς ἐδίδοτο σημεῖα, ὥσπερ ἐνέχυρον τῆς πίστεως ἦς ἐπίστευον. 15 Ὡστε οὐχ ὡς πιστοῖς, ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπίστοις ἐδίδοτο τὰ σημεῖα, ἵνα γένωνται πιστοί· οὕτω καὶ Παῦλος φησὶ· Τὰ σημεῖα οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις. 16 Ὁρᾶτε, ὅτι οὐχὶ ἀτιμάζοντος ἡμᾶς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τιμῶντός ἐστι τὸ συστεῖλαι τὴν τῶν σημείων ἐπίδειξιν; 17 Βουλόμενος γὰρ δεῖξαι τὴν πίστιν ἡμῶν, ὅτι χωρὶς ἐνεχύρων καὶ σημείων αὐτῷ πιστεύομεν, τοῦτο πεποίηκεν· ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ εἰ μὴ ἔλαβον πρῶτον σημεῖον καὶ ἐνέχυρον, οὐκ ἂν αὐτῷ ἐπίστευον περὶ τῶν ἀφανῶν· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ χωρὶς τούτου πᾶσαν ἐπιδείκνυμι πίστιν· τοῦτο οὖν αἴτιον τοῦ μὴ γίνεσθαι σημεῖα νῦν.

18 Ἐβουλόμην καὶ περὶ τῆς ὑποθέσεως τῆς ἑορτῆς εἰπεῖν, καὶ δεῖξαι τί ποτέ ἐστὶ πεντηκοστὴ, καὶ διὰ τί ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ ταύτῃ τὸ χάρισμα δίδεται, καὶ διὰ τί ἐν γλώσσαις πυρίναις, καὶ διὰ τί μετὰ δέκα ἡμέρας· ἀλλ' ὁρῶ πρὸς μῆκος τὴν διδασκαλίαν ἐκτεινομένην· διὸ ὀλίγα προσθεὶς καταπαύσω τὸν λόγον·

19 “Ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ὄφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός·” (Acts 2:1, 3) οὐχὶ πυρός, ἀλλ' ὡσεὶ πυρός, ἵνα μηδὲν αἰσθητὸν ὑποπτεύσης περὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος. 20 Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν Ἰορδανείων ρεῖθρων οὐχὶ περιστερὰ κατέβη, ἀλλ' ἐν εἶδει περιστερᾶς· οὕτω καὶ ἐνταῦθα οὐχὶ πῦρ, ἀλλ' ἐν εἶδει πυρός.

1 The numbering is my own for the convenience of the notes.

1

ἔνεκεν

This is one of the few prepositions (often spelled ἔνεκα) which comes *after* the word it governs in prose (Jews, however, tend to place it *before* the governed substantive).

Ἐνταῦθά

A number of very similar common words can be confusing:

ἐνθα, I. (demonstrative) *of place*, there, thither; *of time*, then, thereupon

II. (relative) *of place*, where; *of time*, when

ἐνθάδε, *of place*, there, thither; *of time*, now

ἐνταῦθα, *of place*, here / there, hither / thither; *of time*, then, at the very time

The suffix -θεν expresses ‘from ...’, e.g. ἐνθεν, thence, whence etc. (add ‘from’ to the meanings of ἐνθα).

ἐροῦμεν

ἐρέω functions as the future of λέγω.

γλώσσαις ἐλάλουν

The word ‘tongue’ was used in Greek, as in several modern languages, both for the organ of speech as well as for the language which is spoken. When the word ‘tongue’ is used in Greek of a language, it implies a foreign language. The phrase ‘speaking in tongues’ is therefore Greek idiom for ‘speaking in foreign languages’. See further the ‘Excursus: Spiritual Gifts’ in my *1 Corinthians: Creating order in a new urban church* (Western Australia: Pro Ecclesia, 2016) 152-64.

2

φθέγγομαι, to make utterance

3

Εἰ Πνεῦμα ἄγιον κτλ.

This use of εἰ which is normally left untranslated is a Hebraism. Hebrew often has an ׀ lacking it’s apodosis, in this case something like ‘Tell me if ...’

6πτοέω, to terrify; *metaph.* to exciteχάσκω, to yawn, gape, *pluperfect* = ἐκεχήνη

νοητὴ χάρις

νοητός is a verbal adjective. Verbal adjectives either have the meaning of a perfect passive participle, or – as here – of a possibility (see Smyth § 472). νοητός expresses what is perceivable by the mind (only). At v.7 ἄόρατος refers to what is not able to be seen (by the eyes). Several other verbal adjectives in this vein follow.

7

τὴν πληροφορίαν

Coinage found in Paul’s letters and Hebrews based on the predominately Jewish Greek πληροφορέω (LXX and later), which etymologically one would expect to mean ‘to bear along fully’ and in the passive ‘to be fully borne’, and which in Paul receives the nuance ‘to be fully assured’, hence πληροφορία, ‘fully borne’, that is, ‘fully assured’.

8οἷος, οἷα, οἷον, (ὅς) such as, of what sort (*freq. neut. acc.* ‘for example’)

Οἷόν τι λέγω

‘I give an example’. Literally ‘I say some such thing’.

10

εὐσύνοπτος -ον, easily able to be seen (cf. συνοράω to be able to see)

ὀφθαλμοῖς οὐ δυναμένη σώματος γενέσθαι φανερά

Two interlaced hyperbata. This is uncommon, but not unknown.

13

ἐνέχυρον, τό, pledge, security

δέομαι 1. be in need of + *gen.*

2. beg from a person + *gen. of person and gen. of thing*

κἄν = καὶ ἐάν

17πᾶσαν ἐπιδείκνυμι πίστιν

Type 1 hyperbaton.

18

Ἐβουλόμην

See Smyth 1782 – the imperfect of an unobtainable wish.

19

Ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ὄφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός

This should mean ‘when the day of Pentecost was being completed’, but this contradicts Acts 2:15. Is Luke trying to represent 50 days? (ΠΨ⁵¹ Π¹) It seems we must translate: ‘when the 50 days were completed’, i.e. when Pentecost came.

20

ῥεῖθρον, τό, that which flows, river, stream (cf. ῥέω)