

The Day of the Lord

An Expository “Journey” Through the Prophecy of Joel

7- A “Magnificent Perplexity”; the End of the First Covenant and the Birth of the Church- Part 2

October 25, 2020

Joel 2:28-32

28 “It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

29 “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke.

31 “The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

32 “And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.

To the Glory of God

Now, last time, we saw that Joel’s Prophecy has to do with a radical new Way in which God the Holy Spirit will relate to human beings. About 800 years before Jesus was born, God the Holy Spirit “moved” upon the Prophet for him to utter verse 28:

It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind ...

Now the phrase, “**after this**” is as close to a timeline that we will ever get with Joel. So, at some point AFTER all that Joel has said in Chapter 1 and the first 27 verses of Chapter 2- what he says in verses 28-32 will happen. So, Joel begins to see that the “Day of the Lord” is coming. And in that “Day” two things will happen:

1. God will judge the Wicked
2. God will rescue and save and bless and heal and restore the Righteous

But wait! The Bible teaches that we are *all* Wicked. In fact, Moses wrote that we are “All wicked- all the time”- and that there is NO “Good” in us- *at all!*

Genesis 6:5

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

So, NOBODY is Righteous- unless they are *made to be* Righteous. And, under the operation of the Law (that Joel lived under every day of his life), NOBODY can *earn* Righteousness- UNLESS they obey the Law- *perfectly* and *continuously*; in thought, word, and deed- 24 hours every day; and 7 days every week- with Joy! One slip up; one mistake; one covetous thought; one outburst of anger; one selfish prayer; one act of vengeance; one moment of jealousy or hatred- and we transgress the Law- and we are nothing but sinners- underneath God’s Wrath.

And the vicious brutality of the Law gives us NO Hope. All that the Law does- is to beat us; and beat us; and beat us; and beat us- until we realize that we need a gracious and merciful Savior. The weight of an unyielding and unmerciful Law- that expects perfect Obedience- kills us- every day. It *breaks* our spirit; and *forces* us to our knees.

And Joel and His people had been living underneath that weight for hundreds and hundreds of years. And they groaned by reason of the *impossibility* of the Law’s Demands. But now- God begins to move on Joel- to let him see something amazing- way off- in the distance. Way down the road- Joel sees something new; something strange; and odd and amazing. A “Magnificent Perplexity”. Joel sees something that has never happened before. And Joel begins to utter these words:

It will come about after this...

After this- what? *After* the locusts. *After* the carnage. *After* the death; and the disease; and the destruction of billions of insects eating everything in their path and bringing Israel to her knees.

It will come about... *after* the cry of Repentance. *After* the fasting. *After* the Solemn Assembly. And *after* the Priests have wept between the porch and the altar.

It will come about... *after* God removes the Army of locusts. And *after* He sends them grain and new wine and oil. And *after* God’s people become satisfied

with them. *After* God removes the northern Army and drives them into a parched and desolate land.

It will come about... *after* the pastures turn green again. *After* the trees bear their fruit again. And *after* the fig tree and the vine have yielded their fruit.

It will come about... *after* the sons of Zion rejoice. *After* they are glad IN the Lord. *After* they have received their Vindication- the early and latter rains. And *after* the threshing floors are full of grain; and after the vats overflow with new wine and oil.

So, *after* God makes up for the years that the swarming locusts have eaten; and the creeping locusts; and the stripping locusts; and the gnawing locusts- God's great Army.

And *after* God's people have plenty to eat; and are satisfied. *After* they praise the Name of the Lord. And *after* they are never put to shame again. Joel says-

It will come about after this...

Joel says here that something huge; something momentous; something earthshaking WILL come about- AFTER THIS. So, just what WILL happen after this?

... I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Now *why* is this significant? *Why* does Joel *concentrate* here on what God's Spirit will do? And *why* is God's Spirit "poured out" on *everyone*? What "Good" could possibly come from God pouring out His Spirit on the unclean Gentiles; and even the dirty, uneducated slaves?

Now because this is so momentous and important- we need to take this in small steps. And the *first* step in understanding the significance of what Joel meant by saying,

It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind ...

... is to understand how Joel understood how God the Holy Spirit operated in his day.

Now, as of this morning- we are about 20 years into the 21st Century, AD¹. And Joel spoke this about eight Centuries BEFORE Jesus was born. So, we are looking

¹ A.D. is a Latin abbreviation (Anno Domini) used to help measure time and is understood as, "In the year of the Lord" or "In the year of OUR Lord". It is distinguished from B.C. (Before Christ). So, we are 2,020 years into the "Church Age" or 2,020 years since the Resurrection.

at what Joel says here to be fulfilled at some point AFTER the locust plague of Chapter 1- and the Second Coming. So, this Prophecy concerns “Last Things” or is a part of Christianity called, “Eschatology”.²

Now, as you know- I am very reluctant to get specific about Eschatology. I am certainly interested in it; it is part of the Bible; and we *ought* to have at least a working knowledge about what the Bible teaches will happen. So, I have developed a very simple and workable Theology about “Last Things”

- The Return of Jesus to this earth will occur at some point in the future
- His Return is certain- nothing will stop it- however we don’t know *when* it will be
- Since it is the Will of God- we should fast and pray for it; and *eagerly* anticipate it
- **His Reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him (Isaiah 62:11)**
- **Blessed are those slaves whom the Master will find on the alert when He comes... whether He comes in the second watch or even in the third and finds them so, blessed are those slaves... You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect. (Luke 12:37a; 38; &40)**
- Get ready and stay ready

... and there are dozens and dozens of Bible Studies and Sermons and Radio Broadcasts and “White Papers” that I have developed over the years that will help the worthy seeker to prepare their hearts and minds to receive Jesus when He comes back. But I have *none* on the Mark of the Beast. I don’t have a single piece of paper about the Rapture; or the identity of the Anti-Christ; or any of the other “juicier topics” that everybody seems to be so interested in.

Now, like many of you, I was “force-fed” a lot about “Last Things” as a new convert- things that both frightened and puzzled me. I heard what they taught; and, for the most part- I simply nodded my head and didn’t argue with them. I mean, after all, they were the Authorities and I was but a 16- year old child. But I did ask Questions. Lots and lots of Questions. And when I began to realize that my Teachers were simply *regurgitating* whatever they had been taught about these things- I

began to be more *forceful* in my Questions. And, over the years, I have found that most people have done very little personal examination about what the Bible actually teaches about these things. They basically have read a couple of books; and have simply added whatever those books say- to their own individual theology. But even among those who have personally studied these Issues- for the most part-

² Eschatology is the “Science of; or the Study of; or the Knowledge of- Last Things.

I find their logic and their reasoning to be very shallow; very thin; and extremely contradictory.

Now, unlike many other Old Testament Prophecies, Joel's Burden has to do, almost *exclusively*, with God the Holy Spirit and the way that God's Spirit interacts with people. Joel doesn't get into other Issues that other Old Testament Prophets spoke about. But this allows us to understand that Joel's Prophecy has to do with several other, very important Issues- among them:

- ✓ The New Birth
- ✓ Salvation
- ✓ The Birth of the Church
- ✓ The End of the First Covenant

As we discovered last time- the Way that God the Spirit related to people under the *First* or the *Old* Covenant; and the Way He interacts with us now- is *radically* different. One of the hallmarks of the New Covenant (that makes the New Covenant to be infinitely *superior* to the Old)- is in what the Apostle Paul wrote in **2Corinthians 6:14-16a**:

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?...

Now this is what is called, "Christian Separation"- the Concept that genuine believers are to be *distinct* or *separate* from the lost, pagan world. This is where the word, "Holy" comes in. So, "Holy" doesn't mean: *sinless*- it means *different*; or *unique*; or *separated*; or *called out*; or made to be *distinct*.

The Bible teaches that we have been "*called out*" from the Darkness and Sin of this fallen world; and that we have been "*called into*" the marvelous Light of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. And the Bible teaches that people who have been "called out" from the world and "called into" Salvation- should live differently from people who have not.

Now Christian Separation does NOT mean that we are *better* than other people- we're NOT. But what it DOES mean is that, since God has "set His Love upon us"- we simply CANNOT act; or talk; or walk; or live; or think; or believe the way that people do- who don't know the Lord; and who have NOT been called into Salvation.

So, very specifically, Paul teaches here that genuine believers CANNOT be “bound together” with unbelievers. And then he gives us several comparisons:

- **What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness?**
- **What fellowship has light with darkness?**
- **What harmony has Christ with Belial?**
- **What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?**
- **What agreement has the temple of God with idols?**

So, the understanding of Christian Separation is illustrated in five words:

1. Partnership
2. Fellowship
3. Harmony
4. Commonality
5. Agreement

... and the Answer is: NONE. There is NO Partnership; NO Fellowship; NO Harmony; NO Commonality; and NO Agreement between Believers and Unbelievers. We live in a *different* Kingdom; that is governed by *different* Rules from the unbelieving world.

But now look at the single most important aspect of this Christian Separation:

2Corinthians 6:16b

For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

Here, the word, “**For**” means: “*Because*”. So, *because* saved people are now the Temple of the living God; and *because* the Spirit of God now dwells *inside* us; and walks *among* us- *that* is what separates us from the lost people of this fallen world. And the Apostle Paul quotes from several Old Testament Passages here (**Exodus 29:45; Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 31:1; Ezekiel 37:27**), where Moses and other Prophets foretold of a time that would be radically different from what God had given to Moses through the Law.

So, this would be a time when human beings would literally *be* the “Temple” of God. And a time when God the Spirit would walk *in* them; and would be *among*

them; and would dwell with them- *continually*. And this is why there is no Partnership; or Fellowship; or Harmony; or Commonality; or Agreement with those who are unsaved.

So, this radical, new relationship between God the Spirit and human beings- is the *main thing* that constitutes this Christian Separation. And based on that- Paul then draws a conclusion:

2Corinthians 6:17&18

17 "Therefore, ***COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,***" says the Lord. "***AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN;*** And I will welcome you.

18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

So, this "Coming out from among the lost pagans of this fallen world and being separate or distinct from them"- is brought about by this new, intimate *relationship* between God the Holy Spirit and the individual believer. And this is all we have ever known. We, who were saved at some point in either the 20th or the 21st Centuries- have never known a single moment when this radical and intimate new Relationship between us and God the Holy Spirit- did NOT exist.

You see, we live in what is called, the "Church Age" or another Way to understand this Time is in the way Paul put it in **Romans 11:25**:

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

So, we call the "Age" or the "Time" that we live in now: the "Church Age" or the "Time of the Fullness of the Gentiles." And that means that, at least, two things are true about this "Age" or this "Time" that we live in:

1. The Old or the First Covenant has been FOREVER ended
2. The New Covenant is now in force

And here is something that we must understand:

There will *never* be a time in the future when God will revive the Old Covenant.

The First Covenant is gone- forever. And it will *never* again be the Way in which God relates to human beings. And that is not true because the Old Covenant was NOT from God- because it was. But we must understand that the New Covenant is not merely “new”. So, it wasn’t the *age* of the First Covenant that caused God to replace it. No, the New Covenant is infinitely *superior* to the Old. And *that* is why the Old Covenant was ended. So, we must know and believe that the New Covenant is a *superior* Covenant; that is based on *superior* Promises; brought about by a *superior* Sacrifice; offered by a *superior* High Priest.

And *part* of what makes the New Covenant infinitely *superior* to the Old- is in *how* God the Holy Spirit now *dwells continually* inside the body of genuine believers. And so, to go back to the Covenant, which did NOT provide for that- would be to *digress*; it would be to go DOWN the Mountain. It would be a terrible insult to Who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. And *that* is what the Prophecy of Joel is all about.

So, Joel was NOT merely foretelling of a time when the Holy Spirit would use different categories of people. No, Joel saw the Way in which God was going to forever *abolish* the Old Covenant and replace it with the New. And in seeing that- Joel also saw the Birth of the Church- because the two things go hand in hand.

You *cannot* have one without the other- because they are connected. You cannot initiate this new, intimate Relationship between God the Spirit and humans and NOT have the both the end of the First Covenant and the Birth of the Church. So, as the First Covenant was *replaced*- the Church was born. And what caused the Birth of the Church- was in the way that God the Spirit now dwells in His people.

Now look again at what else Joel said,

Joel 2:32a

And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered...

Now when Peter quoted this on the Day of Pentecost- he said,

The Acts 2:21

AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.

Now you will notice that there is a slight variation between what Peter says here and what Joel said. Joel said “**delivered**” and Peter says, “**saved**”. And aside

from the fact that being “spiritually delivered” *is* being “saved”- down through the years- this variation has troubled some people to the point where they lost confidence in the veracity of the Bible.

But this slight variation is explained as Joel’s Prophecy was interpreted by Peter in the 1st Century- and the Old Testament that Peter quotes from was a Greek translation. But what we have now in our Old Testament- was translated directly from the original Hebrew.

But this slight variation does not change the thrust or the intent of what Joel was prophesying. Now how do we know that? Because of the way the Apostle Paul used this very *same* quote in his Teaching about Salvation from his masterpiece in **Romans 10:9-13:**

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "***WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.***"

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

13 for "***WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.***"

... now Paul quotes from **Isaiah 28:16** in verse 11. But his quote in verse 13 is from **Joel 2:32**.

And in verses 10- 13, Paul begins those verses with the word, “**for**”- which means “**because**”. So, the way we need to understand what Paul was teaching is:

... if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; [BECAUSE] with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. [And we know this is true BECAUSE] the Scripture says [in Isaiah 28:16] that “***WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.***” [BECAUSE] there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; [And we know this is true because Joel was used by God to prophesy in Joel 2:32] “***WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.***”

Now again, the Concept that “whoever calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved”; and the fact that there is “NO distinction between Jews and Gentiles”- is NOT new to us. It is all we have ever known. And that is because we have never lived a single day underneath the Old Covenant. Every moment of our lives has existed underneath the auspices of the superior New Covenant- in the Church Age (or the Time of the Fullness of the Gentiles).

But to his 1st Century readers- this was radical theology. Because the Old or the First Covenant was crystal clear: Salvation was of the Jews (**John 4:22**). So, from Abraham to Jesus- God dealt with the Jews- *almost exclusively*³. And in order to *empower* the First Covenant- God gave the Jews their land; their Government; their language; their culture; and their religion. He sent the Jews His Prophets and gave them His Word. And so, the Way that God dealt with the Jews, under the Old Covenant- was in an *exclusive* way.

And so, until the Church was born- if anyone wanted to have a relationship with God- he HAD to have that Relationship *within* the context of the Old Covenant- with its animal sacrifices; Levitical priesthood; and the Temple in Jerusalem. So, while it was in force- *nobody* could have a relationship with God- *outside* the unmovable parameters of the First or the Old Covenant. And everybody understood that. Even the pagan Gentiles understood that.

So, in order to birth the Church and bring in the superior New Covenant and forever end the Old- God had to do something *breathtaking*; something *radical*; something *powerful*- to make it crystal clear that He was no longer relating to human beings through the Old Covenant. And He did that in, by, and through this new radical Relationship between His people and God the Holy Spirit.

But that never happened (on any large scale) until God sovereignly brought about the End of the Old Covenant and the Birth of the Church. And God did all of that- through the First Advent of Jesus, the Christ. When Jesus lived and died and rose again- He gave one of the most precious Gifts that anyone could ever have- the ongoing; continual; permanent INDWELLING of the third Person of the Trinity- in every believer. Now look again at how John the Baptist described Jesus from **John 1:33**,

... this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

... and that tells us that what makes the New Covenant so wonderful and so different from the Old Covenant- is this “baptism” or this “infilling” of the Holy Spirit for genuine believers. Now, as I have told you before- the term, “baptize in the Holy Spirit” or being “filled with the Holy Spirit” is not understood very well,

³ Periodically, in the Old Testament, we see God dealing with Gentiles. This was a glimpse of what the New Covenant was going to bring in.

in our day. For example, when we see the word, “filled” we think of a glass “filled” with water. So, according to many- being “filled” with God the Spirit meant that we are completely “filled” or “occupied” or “possessed” by the Holy Spirit- leaving no room for anything else. And that interpretation sounded pretty good.

But it wasn’t long before they ran into a problem with this understanding. Because the people who were “filled” with God the Spirit in **The Acts 2**- were “filled” *again* in **The Acts 4**. And that had to be explained. So, what happened? Did they somehow “lose” the Holy Spirit? Did He “leak” out? And, if so, how can we *prevent* from losing the Holy Spirit or having Him leak out in our day?

And based on this faulty understanding- a completely *manufactured*, Man-made Doctrine about how we are “filled with God the Spirit”; and how “we *stay* filled”- was invented to try to explain how the people who were “filled” with the Spirit in **The Acts 2** had to be filled again.⁴

But the problem was in the understanding of the word, “filled”. To be “filled” with God the Spirit- in the Bible- means to be *empowered* by God the Spirit; and NOT “filled up” like water in a glass. So, when we are “filled” with God the Holy Spirit- we are “empowered”; or “led”; or “energized”; and “equipped” to do God’s Will; and to speak God’s Word. And that is *why* the people who were “filled” in **The Acts 2** had to be “filled” again in **The Acts 4**. And that means that being filled with God the Spirit is an *ongoing, present tense* Reality. So, we need to be *continually* “filled”; *continually* “empowered”; *continually* “led”; and *continually* “equipped” and “energized” by God the Holy Spirit.

But that also means that the common notion that we need MORE of God the Spirit- is completely off base. What needs to happen- is that God the Spirit needs more of US- since He has already been given to us- *in Fullness*. There isn’t any MORE of the Spirit that is going to be given to anyone. God has already given us EVERYTHING we need for a “life of godliness” (**2Peter 1:3**). So, to expect God to send us “something else”; or to give us “MORE”; or to help us to get “something better”- than what God has already provided- insults and belittles the Fullness of what God has already done and given.

So, what needs to happen- is that, as we understand more and more of the Bible; as our prayer life comes more and more into alignment with God’s Will; as we surrender and yield and submit more and more to God’s Word and Spirit- we are changing into more and more Christlikeness. That is what “Progressive Sanctification” is. In fact, that is one of the most *important* things that happens to

⁴ Many in the Pentecostal Movement teach that believers have to speak in tongues every day- or the Holy Spirit will “leak” out of them and they will have to be “refilled”.

us as we are molded and shaped and formed into the Image and Likeness of Jesus Christ in the process called, “*Holification*” or “*Sanctification*”.

So, the historical and orthodox way the term, “filled with the Spirit” or “baptized in the Holy Spirit” has been understood and taught by the Church for almost 2,000 years- has been “*hijacked*” and “*altered*” by the Pentecostal Movement. And today, more people are more influenced by what this wayward Movement teaches about the Holy Spirit- than they are by the Bible itself. And the Holy Spirit would NEVER do that.

Now the reason I’m bringing all this up in my sermon on **Joel**- is because the *majority* of what Joel prophesies here- has to do with God the Holy Spirit being “**poured out on**” **all of Mankind!**” So, Joel is “fore-telling” of a time- when God the Spirit will relate to ALL people- NOT JUST JEWS- in a *radically* new way- than the normal way He operated- under the Old Covenant. And, by default, that means two things:

1. God is going to *sovereignly* bring to an END- the First or the Old Covenant
2. God is going to *sovereignly* birth the Church

... and that happened AFTER the Life; Death; and Resurrection of Jesus, the Christ- brought about that amazing moment in the Upper Room in **The Acts 2**.

In other words, by saying that God is going to “**pour out His Spirit on all Mankind**”- Joel means to say that people, from every nation; tongue; culture; and tribe- will be saved. And that means that God is going to move OUT FROM the Jew- OUT FROM Israel- and AWAY FROM the Temple in Jerusalem- and into the entire world!

So, to understand what Joel meant by what he says here- requires that we FIRST understand the context of what Joel was operating in- as it pertains to the Holy Spirit- when he spoke these words.

The world that Joel lived in- was *radically* different than our world today. And I’m not talking about our technological breakthroughs; or air condition; or jet airplanes; or TV; or Computers; or internal combustion engines. I’m talking about the way that God the Holy Spirit related to them; and how He relates to us today- because that is what Joel was speaking about.

Now it’s hard to handle Old Testament Prophecy. And that’s because those Prophecies often seem obscure to us. And even if their meaning is clear- we’re not always sure about what period of History the Prophecies apply. And, to confuse matters even further, the Bible itself sometimes takes the Prophecies in more than one way. For example, they can be applied to a current event- but they can also be referring to a “Day of the Lord” that has not yet occurred. And this is why I call this a “Magnificent Perplexity”.

Now, while recognizing this, we still know that many Old Testament Prophecies are interpreted to us by the New Testament. And that makes them clear for us. So, *whatever* our problems may be with *other* Old Testament Prophecies- the ones interpreted by the New Testament- are *clear*; and *certain*; and *settled*.

And, of those clear and certain and settled Prophecies- none is *more* clear; or *more* certain; or *more* settled than **Joel 2:28-32**- a Passage that was *fully* and *completely* interpreted for us- by the Apostle Peter as applying to the events on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem around 29AD.

Now, last time- I told you that *some* Old Testament Prophecies have a “dual meaning” in that, *in some sense*, they have already been fulfilled; but, *in another sense*- they WILL BE fulfilled at some point in the future. And I told you to remember that I said that. And the reason I told you to remember that I said that- is because of what I am going to tell you right now. This Prophecy from **Joel 2:28-32** is NOT one of those kinds of Prophecies. This 800 year-old Prophecy was *fully* and *clearly* and *completely fulfilled* on *that* day; in *that* Upper Room; with *those* people. And therefore, this Prophecy does NOT have a future fulfillment awaiting it. Now why do I believe that? Because of what Peter himself said in **The Acts 2:16-36**:

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 PROPHECY, 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.

19 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

20 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

21 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know —

23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

24 "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

25 "For David says of Him, '*I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.*

26 '*THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;*

27 *BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.*

28 '*YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'*

29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

30 "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that *GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE,*

31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that *HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.*

32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

34 "For it was not David who ascended into Heaven, but he himself says: '*THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,*

35 *UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET."*

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now there are at least five Sermons I could preach from this Passage. But let's look again at what the Apostle Peter said in verse 16:

But this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

So, whatever else you get from this Passage- we must agree that what was going on in *that* Upper Room; on *that* day; with *those* people "**IS what was spoken of through the Prophet Joel**". Peter said, "**This is**"- NOT that "it WILL be (at some future point); or that, *in some sense*, it is a partial fulfillment- but simply THIS (what was happening in the Upper Room) IS what was spoken of

through the Prophet Joel. Peter simply could not have been any clearer about it. Peter is telling us (as God the Holy Spirit was moving upon him) in no uncertain terms that what was going on- with *those* people; in *that* Upper Room; on *that* day- IS (was) the complete fulfillment of Joel's Prophecy.

Now, last time, I told that when you have an Old Testament Prophecy that will be fulfilled twice- you have to have a *reason* to believe that it has that "dual fulfillment". And, specifically, you have to have a *New Testament* reason. In other words, you have to have at least two different New Testament Passages that offer two different fulfillments of the one Old Testament Prophecy. You do NOT have a New Testament reason to believe that this Prophecy by Joel has a "dual fulfillment". It doesn't exist. And so, to hold the position that this Prophecy has a "dual fulfillment" is to invent it. And that is wrong.

Now there are some, in the modern church, who teach that Peter was operating with "limited knowledge" here. And so, he simply didn't know. Therefore, the Prophecy of Joel may actually have *several* different fulfillments- some at a future date. But I categorically reject that logic. And there are several reasons- but suffice it to say that Peter was operating in the Office of an Apostle here. And one of the main Giftings that Apostles had- was to be able to correctly (and fully) interpret the Old Testament. And as they interpreted the Old Testament- their Interpretation was Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible. Now how do I know that to be true? Because their Interpretation is found in the pages of the New Testament. And that means that even their Interpretation is Scripture.

And on *that* balcony; outside *that* Upper Room; on *that* day- this Apostle interpreted no less than six different Old Testament Passages.⁵ No notes; no preparation; and no study time. This uneducated fisherman from Galilee just walked out on that balcony; and he opened his mouth; and God used this man to herald the very first Christian Sermon- which showed that Jesus, the Christ was the *fulfillment* of six separate Old Testament Passages- some of which had puzzled theologians for centuries!

Now how did he do that? How did Peter know that Who Jesus is; and what Jesus alone had done; and what God was doing right at that moment in the Upper Room- was the fulfillment of what God the Spirit moved on Joel to write down- some 800 years earlier? This is the amazing Anointing of a true Apostle.

So, that is hardly Peter operating with limited knowledge. Oh, he didn't know about the Internet; or semi-conductors; or jet planes; or E-mail. But Peter understood fully and completely that Jesus was the fulfillment of those six Old Testament Prophecies- including **Joel 2:28-32**. And he was able to put together a very cohesive Sermon that tied in all of those Old Testament Prophecies with what

⁵ Joel 2:28-32; Psalm 16:8-11; Psalm 132:11; 2Samuel 7:12; Psalm 89:3; and Psalm 110:1

had just happened in Jerusalem with the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus- along with what was going on right at that moment in the Upper Room.

So, in order to understand what Peter meant by his Interpretation of Joel's Prophecy- we need to look closely at the words that Peter used here in **The Acts 2**.

And we need to remember that about 500 people watched Jesus rise up into the sky. Yet, even after watching this amazing Event- only around 120 of them actually obeyed Jesus and went to the Upper Room to pray and to wait for the "Promise of the Father". Now what was the "Promise of the Father"? It was the Promise that God the Holy Spirit would come to them and never leave. But *why* was that a Promise? Because, for the most part, that is NOT the way that God the Spirit related to God's people. So, the Promise of the Father and the fulfillment of Joel's Prophecy are the same thing.

Now, according to my own calculations, this particular Prayer Meeting lasted, at least, ten days. So, for, at least, ten days- these people had been praying without ceasing- as they waited for God to fulfill His Promise. Now I have personally been in a three-day Prayer Meeting- where we fasted and prayed together for 72 hours- without stopping. And that was marvelous.

But there is something that is true about long, protracted seasons of Prayer: people get tired. And as they tire- they get quiet. And as they get weary- they stop kneeling; and they stop walking; and they, mostly, just sit and pray- quietly. So, what starts out very noisy and very busy- usually ends up- very still and very quiet. And after you have been in something like that- you notice the way that Dr. Luke described this long Prayer Meeting in the Upper Room from **The Acts 2: 1&2** that says:

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Now, according to History, the most *common* way that Jews prayed- was standing up; with their eyes opened; and their hands raised to God. The *second* most common way that Jews prayed- was on their knees or on their face before God. And yet, Dr. Luke tells us here, that after multiple days of non-stop praying- the people were weary- and they had gotten to a place where they were all sitting down.

And it's little things like that- that you find all through the Bible that helps me to know that every Word is true. Nobody would ever even think about the people sitting down- unless they had actually been in a long, protracted Prayer meeting.

Now let's read what Dr. Luke wrote in **The Acts 2:5**:

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.

Now, as we go further into Joel's Prophecy- this verse will become very important to us. But I want to look closely at the phrase, "**living in Jerusalem**" that Dr. Luke wrote here. According to history, all this occurred at the time of the celebration of the *Feast of Weeks* or the *Feast of the Harvest*. And, every year, during that time- devout Jews made the trip to Jerusalem to obey God and to keep the Feast- because they were *required* to go to Jerusalem- in order to keep this Feast.

Now the celebration of the *Feast of Weeks* (**Exodus 34:22**) or the *Feast of the Harvest* (**Exodus 23:16**) was the second of the top three Jewish holy days.⁶ And the estimates were that about a million Jews flooded into Jerusalem at that time, every year, to keep this Feast. And *most* of them came several days or even weeks *before* the Feast actually began. And so, they would have to find lodging. Now some stayed with family- but others had to stay at the various inns that were common in Jerusalem- for just this purpose. So, when Dr. Luke says that these devout Jews were "**living in Jerusalem**"- he meant that they were *temporarily* living there- due to keeping the Feast.

Now the phrase, "**from every nation under Heaven**" that Luke uses here might very well be a *literal* description. And those Jews, who had traveled to Jerusalem to keep the *Feast of Weeks* may actually have represented every single nation on earth (under Heaven). But it is also possible that Luke was using "literary hyperbole" here to simply mean: *a lot of nations*. Now why do I say that? Because in **The Acts 2:9-11a**- Luke gave us a list of the various languages that the 120 people in the Upper Room were speaking in- and they are NOT all the languages that were present on the earth at that time. However, it is also very possible that this list of languages may simply be *representative* of all the languages of the earth at that time.

But whichever way it was- the fact that devout Jews from all over the world could now hear the Word of God (the Gospel) in their own language- is going to be one of the most *amazing* fulfillments of this Magnificent Perplexity that we see in Joel's Prophecy that we will get into next week, Lord willing.

Amen. Let's pray.

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⁶ Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement); Passover; and the Feast of Weeks

The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729
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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.