

THE PROMISE OF SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS: JOEL 2:28-29, 32:

28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

God sent His servant Joel to warn His people Israel of pending judgment if they continued in their wicked ways. The priest and leaders were instructed to gather the people for prayer and repentance. Intercessions should be made, and mercy should be sought. They should turn from their wicked ways and turn to God. When they did, God would withhold His judgment and bless them instead.

These blessings were promised in Joel 2:18-27; Prosperity, Protection, A Bountiful Harvest and Restoration. However, the most important blessing was reserved for after all those blessings; he continued in verses twenty-eight to thirty two by saying “afterwards.” The Spiritual blessings would not and could not be received unless the previous requirements of repentance were met. The afterwards does not mean it was an afterthought, but it emphasized the purpose and importance of the blessings.

AFTERWARD: “I will pour out My Spirit on all people” (NIV) At the time of the prophecy and

during the Old Testament period, God's Spirit was given in drops on individuals for specific purposes for example, His Spirit was upon prophets, judges, priests, and kings. All people did not have access to His Spirit. This promise was a promise of grace and mercy which the Messiah would bring to establish the kingdom of God; therefore, it was a promise of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would come to deliver man from his sins as was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in chapter fifty-three. His coming would make it possible for the bountiful harvest of souls, and He would restore the kingdom. The Israelites and even the apostles misunderstood the meaning of "pour out My Spirit on all people" they thought it meant all people in Judah and Jerusalem. The promise was that the Spirit would be poured out on all people; not just the elite, the nobles, the priests, or Levites but upon all, the rich, the poor, the peasants, and the servants alike. Status was not important but calling on the name of the Lord in repentance was required.

Jesus came and fulfilled the promise of restoration through His sinless life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. He instructed His followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations, that is the bountiful harvest. (Mark 16:15) He told them that before they went to preach, they should wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. (Acts 1:4) After Jesus' ascension 120 of His followers obeyed His instructions and went into an upper room in Jerusalem and waited. On the day of Pentecost, while they were waiting the Lord poured out His Spirit on all those that were there in the upper room. Each spoke in a language that he / she was never taught. The Spirit remained in the believers giving them the power and endurance they needed to serve faithfully in preaching the gospel to all nations.

On that day there were Jews from all over the known world who were gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. They all heard the followers of Jesus praising God in their native languages. (Acts 2:1-13)

Some wondered while others mocked.

Peter, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit Whom he had just received, that was then dwelling in him, seized the opportunity to explain to the crowd what they had witnessed. He explained that they were eyewitness to the fulfillment of what was prophesied by the prophet Joel that God promised that He would pour out His Spirit on all people, what they were witnessing was that outpouring. (Joel 2:28-30, 32) He continued to point out to them through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah for whom they have been waiting. That He came, fulfilled all that was prophesied about Him, was crucified, buried, rose from the dead on the third day and ascended to be with the Father. When they heard, they asked, what should they do. Peter told them to believe on Jesus and they would be saved and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That day 3000 people accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. That was the beginnings of the bountiful harvest and the restoration of the kingdom. Those at Jerusalem continued in prayer, fellowship and the reading of the word and the Lord added to them daily those that were saved (Acts 2:14-47) The event took place in Jerusalem; however; those who accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior were from all over the known world and they were able to take the gospel to their respective countries where the harvest continued.

The followers of Jesus and the apostles who were from Jerusalem remained in Jerusalem preaching to the Jews. They were very contented in their work there because they were of the mindset that salvation was only for the Jews. Jesus told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations. After a while they were faced with persecution in Jerusalem, which caused some to flee from Jerusalem. When they went to new countries, they would share the gospel to Jews. It was not until the conversion of Cornelius a gentile who also received the

infilling of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in an unlearned language that they fully understood the prophecy in Joel 2:28 which says “I will pour out My Spirit on all people” it meant Jews and Gentiles alike. With that understanding the gospel was then available to all. (Acts 10:1-48 (44-48) The harvest continues to this day. It is ripe but the laborers are still few. We should not get too comfortable where we are and wait until we are forced out of our comfort zone before we start laboring in the harvest. We have to be intentional in reaching the lost and talk to them about the blessings for those who follow Jesus and warn those who do not repent of the judgment for those who reject the gift of salvation. Everything must be done in humility and love.

We looked at the warning, the response by the people, the promises, and the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29, 32 All these were pointed to the people of God. You will recall that the prophecy is about the day of the Lord, and we understand that to mean a day of Judgment. Just as we see the fulfillment of the blessings there will also the fulfillment of judgments for the world. There are portions of this prophecy not yet fulfilled. Verse thirty-two tells us that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Salvation came through Jesus Christ when He died and rose from the dead. The harvest started on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached his first message and three thousand people called on the name of the Lord and were saved. The bountiful harvest and restoration of the kingdom will continue until He returns. We are called to go into the harvest and to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:37) Those who hear the word and repent will not enter into His judgment.

Verses 30-31 address signs that will take place on “THE DAY OF THE LORD “  
It speaks of the wonders on earth and in the sky with the sun and moon.

Let us not be contented, we are in the LAST DAYS, the return of Christ is near. We need to reach the lost. In the same way that the blessings are fulfilled, the punishment of the unjust will be fulfilled on THE DAY OF THE LORD. BELIEVERS WILL NOT BE JUDGED; THEY WILL RECEIVE THEIR REWARDS FOR THEIR DEEDS. While we enjoy the privilege of the blessings, the responsibility of reaching the lost rests on us.