

Scripture Reading:

Acts 2: "12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" 13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'"

"This is That! Joel's Prophecy is Fulfilled"

In our text this morning we see Peter come forward to address the massive crowd that has gathered on Pentecost. We will be considering what Peter has to say over two Lord's Days with this morning's focus being on his use of the Old Testament...

- Something which can be a great example for us today and one we will often see in the Book of Acts

Last week we considered the physical things that happened on this important Pentecost feast day and to whom they happened.

- There was a great noise heard throughout all of Jerusalem
- Tongues of fire appeared to the 120 who were gathered appearing over each man or woman
- Finally, we saw the disciples going forth proclaiming the wonderful works of God in various languages
 - Many of those who had gathered marvel at how this could be happening
 - AND we still have the old skeptics we have seen often in Luke's orderly account, proclaiming that it is just because they are drunk...

Though I don't remember the last time I saw a drunk speaking in a language he or she did not know!

The text tells us that Peter came forward to speak with the eleven...

- This confirms the authority now given to the Apostles, and the choice of Matthias by the others.

Peter addresses the Jews who have gathered from the nations around the world and those Jews who actually dwell in the City of Jerusalem calling on them to "heed my words!"

- First he dissuades those who call them drunks by reminding them it is early in the morning...
- Then Peter powerfully turns to the Old Testament to explain to them what is really happening

My sermon title begins with the words, “This is that” the Old English phrasing for what Peter said... THIS... what is going on before your eyes, IS THAT...

THAT which the Prophet Joel spoke of almost eight hundred years before. We are going to take a few moments to go back and review what Joel had to say, but first we must make sure that we understand what Peter said... **THIS is THAT**

What is happening here today in Jerusalem IS what Joel spoke of...

- **The Spirit is poured out on all flesh**
- **Your sons and daughters will prophesy & have dreams & visions**
- **There will be wonders in heaven**
- **There will be signs in the earth**
- **All those who call on the Lord will be saved**

Now if we review the commentaries, we can find agreement on the last point: Those who call on the Lord will be saved!

- **All the rest is controversial!**

This agreement is good, but again it has often fed the good old American spirit of rugged individualism:

- **As a result, the Gospel is seen as ONLY focused on saving souls... Snatching burning embers from the fire before all is lost**

This is not the Gospel foretold by the Prophet Joel and it is not what Peter and the other Apostles will present in the Book of Acts. Both Joel and Peter meant what they said:

- **As we studied at length last week, the Spirit has been poured out on all flesh just as Jesus predicted,**

Jesus promised the disciples that the Comforter would come and that: “when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

The Spirit is poured out on all flesh, & He will be here until Jesus returns

- **Joel prophesied it would happen & Peter says THIS is THAT!**

Many tend to just sort of skip over the part about our sons and daughters prophesying: It must have been something to do with all those tongues or languages there at Jerusalem on Pentecost.

- **However, just as the Spirit continues His work in the Church today, so we see this promise continuing to be fulfilled:**

Paul explains the importance of prophesying in the 14th chapter of his Epistle to that troubled church at Corinth, ironically just as he confronts them with the problems they are having with tongues: Those speaking out in unknown languages: I Corinthians 14:1 “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”

- Now lest we grow confused about what all this means, remember that Peter said, **THIS is THAT**
- What have we just seen the followers of Jesus doing?

Yes, they spoke in languages they did not understand as a miraculous sign of the Spirit's coming, but all those present could hear them speak in their own language and what they clearly heard were proclamations from these disciples about the wonderful works of God!

Prophecy is presenting the wonderful works of God, sharing the Gospel, whether through preaching, sharing with friends or family... And one might even argue sharing the wonderful works of God through right living as an example to others.

Paul proclaims this same truth, right in the midst of his discussion of God's sovereignty, using this same quotation from Joel: [Romans 10:13] "For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

- Yes, sons and daughters; menservants and maidservants shall prophesy in the power of the Spirit speaking of the wonderful works of God
- They shall carry on the Spirit's work by glorifying the Son!

Some will ask about the visions of those young men and the dreams of the old men, but this should become clearer when we consider how **THIS is THAT** is applied to the wonders in heaven and signs in the earth.

- The bottom line is that God works through history and the coming of the Spirit of God brings individuals to maturity and greatly impacts the events of history.

Thousands in Jerusalem will be shaken this day and moved from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light as we shall see over the next two weeks:

- The Spirit will have convicted them of sin and they will repent!

Next we will see the unity of the Church and the communion of the Saints...

- Saints, convicted to live as the righteous people of God

And finally we will see the outworking of the defeat of Satan...

- Because as Jesus said, the ruler of this world is judged!

We will see King Herod struck down by God, and then in history we know that Jerusalem fell in AD 70 and that Rome would be gone a few hundred years later.

Rulers and Kingdoms bent on the elimination of God and all traces of His Son have come and gone under God's judgment, but the Kingdom of Jesus continues to fill the earth.

- So how does God describe such events in history?

You guessed it:

- With the type of language Peter quotes from Joel the prophet!

There are dozens of examples of this in the Old Testament, so the people who were listening would have known exactly what Peter meant:

- Those who gathered for Pentecost were faithful Jews who would have KNOWN the O.T.
- Consider the words of Isaiah as he gave the oracle concerning the destruction of Babylon in the 13th chapter of Isaiah:

“9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; & He will destroy its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. 11 "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”

- This is a warning given to nations reminding them that they must obey the command of Psalm 2: **“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry!”**

It is not only individuals who bend the knee to Jesus, but entire nations will bow as we have seen over the past two thousand years.

- **And this will continue until ALL the nations have been discipled as we are commanded**

As Paul says of our Lord Jesus in I Corinthians 15 “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

As we turn back to the Prophet Joel, we must ask this critical question to determine if we believe Peter meant it when he said: THIS is THAT:

- **Do we believe that the only enemy left for Jesus to defeat when He returns in like manner as He left will be death?**

We must sadly take notice how much of Western Christendom has gotten things very backward at this point these past few hundred years... We talk a LOT about how Jesus defeated death at the cross... The penalty for our sins was truly paid at the cross and we no longer fear death: We are part of the first resurrection as we saw in Rev. 20

- **BUT death is still with us and Paul says it’s final defeat will come after the return of Jesus**

At the same time we speak of how all the stuff about ruling nations and bringing in the New Creation is left for after His 2nd coming and the rapture. The Bible says we, as the Church of Christ, the Bride of Jesus will bring all rule and authority under the feet of Jesus as we take His Kingdom to all of the world by simply obeying the Great Commission Jesus gave us.

- **THEN Jesus will return to present the Kingdom to the Father and defeat death by physically resurrecting all who have lived and casting death and hell into the Lake of Fire!**
- **The defeat of the final enemy!**

So your homework this week will be to keep this in mind as you spend some time studying the Prophet Joel...

- **It is a short book where God uses a great famine in Jerusalem to illustrate His plan for His people & the Kingdom of His Son:**

It is a story that the people of God were commanded to tell their children so they could tell their children and then their children, would tell another generation. What a great reminder of the importance of covenant faithfulness where we think not just of ourselves or even our immediate children and grandchildren, but of the third and fourth generations as well!

- The prophet Joel shows how the great famine in the land was to be a picture of the great spiritual famine of God's people
- It is a picture of utter destruction that should remind us of all those dry bones in Ezekiel

Then in verse 18 of chapter two before the words quoted by Peter we read this encouraging passage: "Then Jehovah became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. Jehovah answered and said to His people, Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations."

- Those dry bones are going to live again!
- God then has Joel give the picture of restoration after a great famine, including the early and later rains that must come with a passage that has been greatly abused.

God gives them and us His great covenant promise in verse 27:

- "You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am Jehovah your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame!"

Jesus did come to save His people from their sins... Jesus has been raised from the dead in power and ascended to heaven having promised to send the comforter...

- And now that day has come as foretold by Joel, a prophesy which Peter now quotes to those gathered in Jerusalem:

17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;"

Peter says THIS is THAT: Many in the Church today talk about being in the 'last days' and they are right, IF by that they mean...

- The last days that began with the coming of the Spirit and will end with the coming of Jesus!
- Peter then continues to quote Joel reminding all those who are listening what is going to happen in these last days:

"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy."

- Faithful Saints who are brought into the Church will mature in their understanding and preach the Gospel to the all the world.
- This faithful obedience will shake the entire world...

19 "I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord."

Now obviously there has been a lot of wild speculation about what these verses mean:

- Some argue it all took place with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70
- Other check each daily newspaper headline looking for new signs today
- And others hold these events are only applicable to the very end of time.

As you might expect: [and the reason the study of Joel is important homework for this week]

- The prophet Joel does not leave us in doubt.

- **The Church age begins with the coming of the Spirit and ends with the coming of the Son and we will see these types of events throughout ALL of this time.**

In the final verse of chapter two, Joel confirms that this takes place on the day of Pentecost there in Jerusalem: “For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as Jehovah has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.”

We should all remember what happens at the end of Peter’s sermon... Three thousand Jews gathered there in Jerusalem are survivors who call on the name of the Lord to be saved! Thousands more will be saved in the coming days and thanks to the warnings given by Jesus, they will all flee before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

But this is not all that the Prophet tells us about ‘those days.’ Continuing on in chapter 3 we read:

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.”

As you read on in this chapter you will clearly see that the nations are being gathered for judgment and salvation... Just as we see in Psalm 2. We must once again note that when God says He has restored the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem...

- **This cannot be speaking of national Israel nor the physical city of Jerusalem which is destroyed in just a few years.**
- **No, this is the Church, the Bride of Jesus, the people of God who are going to take His Kingdom to all the earth...**

Bringing the blessings that God promised Abraham his descendants would bring to those nations.

Joel ends with this great promise for the Church: “Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations.”

As we shall see Peter proclaim to this convicted crowd in two weeks, “The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself!”

- **We are those who were far off from that day in Jerusalem: Far off in space and time**

BUT God’s faithful promises have found even us and now we must share this great story of salvation with our children, so they can tell their children to remind their children that they are to tell the generation to come!

May we be faithful as we serve the Spirit of God who has come to glorify the Son!

Knowing that the final promise from the Prophet Joel that Peter quoted is as true today as it was on that Day of Pentecost long ago...

- **21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'**

Communion Meditation: Hebrews 12:

“18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”