

This is the first part of an examination of the sermon that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, answering the question, "What do these things mean." We do not need any flights of imagination of new revelations by ignorant people, for the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of the apostle Peter on that occasion and tells us exactly what the outpouring of the Holy Spirit meant.

Over the next few weeks, the Lord willing, I will try to explain to you and show you what Peter says about the phenomenon that took place at the Feast of Pentecost, the feast of first fruits. I plan at least five sermons on Peter's sermon:

Today: The Witness of the prophet Joel.

June 9: The Witness of the prophet David, part one.

June 16: The Witness of the prophet David, part two.

June 23: Peter's application

June 30: The Aftermath to the Sermon.

Today then, is Peter's citation of the prophet Joel, and it's meaning for the Jews standing there that day, and for us in the year 2013. There are three things: I. Joel's prophecy; II Peter's interpretation; III. Paul's interpretation.

I. Joel's prophecy. Calvin gives a concise summary of the book of Joel, and I summarize his summary.

A. Summary

1. God had sent a great many evils upon the nation of Israel but they did not repent: famine and insects and foreign invasions and disease. Spiritual and physical plagues multiplied.
2. He threatened even more plagues and discomforts, but they still refused to repent.
3. They were called to weep before the altar, but they would not.
4. In spite of these things, God assures the remnant of those who believed that He had not forgotten His covenant, but that the Messiah would come to "gather the scattered remnants and to restore to life his people, though they were not lost and dead."

B. Specifics of the promise are in Joel 2, that we read a moment ago, beginning with verse 15.

1. God would take away, for a time, the famine, the plagues, the diseases, the invasions and restore them
2. The rains would come, the former and the latter rains. Silly interpretations have used this idea that the former rains were Pentecost and the latter rains were the new pentecost of the modern movement, which is nothing like the first, as we shall see. This simply means that God would refresh Israel in terms of His promises and covenant. It is common for ignorant people to snatch and phrases and words and assigned deep and dark meaning to them to support their own departure from the faith.
3. This covenant would be renewed in terms of a New Covenant in the Holy Spirit.
4. This New Covenant would be accompanied with tremendous changes in heaven and in earth; not physical changes, but spiritual, powerful changes of God's relationship to the world and the powers of the devil and principalities and powers.

C. The result: Whosoever calls upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. It would begin at Mt Zion and Jerusalem, "in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

II. Peter's interpretation:

- A. "This is That." These are the days of Messiah. The day of the Spirit of God, the day of the Lord; the fulfillment of the Promise that God gave to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- B. Peter confirmed this himself in I Peter 1:1-12
1. The incorruptible inheritance: The promised land of Israel was merely a figure of the eternal inheritance.
 2. To the elect; those called by the Spirit of God.
 3. Presently: tribulation
 4. Prophesied by the ancient prophets: vs. 10, who did not always understand what they wrote: vs. 11
 5. But they knew that they wrote for "us" –verse 12, the preaching of the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent from heaven; even the angels didn't know, but are taught by the events on the earth.

III. Paul's Interpretation, which does not vary from Peter's: Romans 10:1-13

- A. Israel did not obtain righteousness because they were ignorant of God's righteousness. Paul will explain this. Israel did not submit to the righteousness of God. Vs. 1-3
- B. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness: vs. 4 The purpose for the law was to prepare for Christ. The contrast:
1. The law's righteousness, which Israel sought: "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." Vs. 6
 2. The righteousness of faith does not seek for some mysterious and difficult righteousness:
 - a. It is not hidden in heaven: did not Christ already come?
 - b. It is not hidden in the abode of the dead: did not Christ already rise from the dead?
- C. Righteousness comes by a single principle, newly revealed: it comes by faith, specifically faith in Christ:
1. It comes by confession with the mouth and faith in the heart.
 2. It is the same for the Jew and the Greek.
 3. It was prophesied by the prophet Joel, and it now preached throughout the world: vs. 13ff.
 4. It comes to the remnant of Israel and all those who are called: vs. 17,18ff.

Summary and application. What does this mean? It means that the age of Messiah is here.

1. Covenant at Sinai and the law is passing away to make room for the covenant of the Spirit.
2. There is a new nation and people: led by the Spirit, not descended only from Abraham's fleshly seed, but from every kindred and tribe and nation under heaven.

3. The Spirit will do what the law could never do: bring in true righteousness, righteousness from the heart and soul, not just the letter of commandment keeping.
4. The curse is now removed. I could make no better summary than that found in Galatians 3:
 - 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
 - 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
 - 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.
 - 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
 - 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.
 - 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.
 - 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
 - 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

What do these things mean: The scriptures referenced in verse 8 are now beginning to be fulfilled, by the establishment of a new and better covenant, with a new people of God; a new High Priest not of Levi; a new King in Heaven not on earth; new sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper, the New Testament in the blood of Christ, not bulls and goats. Satan's empire is overthrown and the whole world is open to the Gospel, that the remnant not only of Israel but of the Gentiles might be saved: whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord, the Name of Jesus: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the death, thou shalt be saved." "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shalt be saved." Amen and Amen.