



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Joel 2:18-32

"Joel - Joel and the Day of Pentecost"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we come to Thee again in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the greatness of our redeemer, for the shedding of the blood, for the death, burial, and resurrection, for the present ministry of our great high priest, and for the hope of the Second Advent. We thank Thee for the program of the ages set forth in the word of God, and we do ask Lord that Thou wilt speak to us through the Scriptures as we read them together tonight. Give direction to our thoughts and to our time. May the Lord Jesus Christ be honored and glorified through our study. Bless also the studies of the hour that follows. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Returning tonight to Joel chapter 2 and verse 18 through verse 32 for our third study in the prophecy of Joel, our subject for tonight is "Joel and the Day of Pentecost." Joel, we have said, is the prophet of the day of the Lord and the prophet of the day of Pentecost. Probably as I think I said in the first of our series of studies, the term the prophet of the day of the Lord is a little more apt than the prophet of the day of Pentecost. But the later term is very suitable for our study tonight, because we're going to look at that well known passage which is cited in the last few verses of the 2nd chapter of

Joel and is quoted by the Apostle Peter in the New Testament in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

We have said in the introduction in the first message that there were three unusually important truths that were committed to the Prophet Joel. One is the doctrine of the day of the Lord. He does not have all of the teaching concerning that day, but he does have some important teaching concerning that day. He lets us know that it is a day of judgment. In verse 15 of chapter 1 he wrote, “Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty.” He seems there, incidentally, to be warning that the day of the Lord will not be a happy day for Israel. But then in chapter 2, verse 31 in another reference to the day it is clear from the context that for another part of the nation it will be a day of deliverance for we read in chapter 2, verse 31, “The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 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.” So the doctrine of the day of the Lord receives some of its first teaching in some of its first content in the Book of Joel.

The second of the doctrines that Joel teaches in some detail is the doctrine of repentance, and we looked at that in our last study because in Joel chapter 2 when the prophet calls upon Israel to respond to the things that have happened to them through the invasion of the locusts. He writes, “‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘Return to me with all your heart and with fasting, weeping, and mourning.’” And so we have in the expression “turn to me” a call by Joel in chapter 2, verse 12 to repent of the evil that has caused their disagreement with the Lord God. There is a text in the Old Testament in 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14, and I think I also referred to this. A very common text often misapplied which says,

“And My people who are called by My name (this is 2 Chronicles 7:14) If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and I will heal their land.”

In that text in the Old Testament there are given the conditions for repentance and restoration to relationship to the Lord, and the Prophet Joel writes about repentance and as we shall see about restoration.

The third of the doctrines that Joel especially emphasizes is the doctrine of the outpoured Spirit, and that is the passage that we will look at in a few moments in this study for tonight.

Remember the argument for the book so far a vast locust plague described in great detail has come or is to come to Judah. I think it's difficult to tell whether Joel understands that locust plague as having already come or whether it's on the horizon. But nevertheless, he speaks about a vast locust plague. It is described in length in which goes beyond the day of Joel to the eschatological day of the Lord. In other words, he writes similarly to the passages in the Old Testament that we speak of as being typical passages. That is, prophecies are given which go beyond the local scene, certain things are said which indicate that they cannot be completely fulfilled in history. The prophet intending us to understand that they shall find their ultimate fulfillment in the future.

There are many of these types of passages in the Old Testament, and we see a number of them in the Psalms. Particularly when David writes speaking of his own experiences but then here and there through the descriptions he will make statements that cannot be fulfilled in David's life or lifetime but go beyond him. It is a case of the prophet being carried on by the Holy Spirit when he was in the ecstasy of his prophetic office, and he writes of things that go beyond himself and stretch on into the indefinite future. It seems to me that that is probably the better way to interpret Joel.

Now, of course, there are some who say that Joel wrote only of things that happened in his day, and then there are some who say that Joel didn't write of things that happened in his day. He wrote entirely of the future. But both of these interpretations it seems to me are less satisfactory than the one in which we say Joel wrote of a plague that was to come to pass in his day but which is given in language that moves on beyond Joel to the day of the Lord.

The plague is a judgment for disobedience. That is very clear. In other words, God says this locust plague is designed to be a means of discipline for the nation Israel or judgment of them because of their turning away from him. And so Joel after describing the locust plague and the desolation and catastrophe that it shall bring encourages repentance in the middle part of chapter 2 after the description of the locust plague in chapter 2.

So he has an appeal for repentance and he calls upon them not only to repent but also we saw in verses 15 through 17, he calls upon them to have a national service of repentance. He says in the 16th verse,

“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber. (It's that important.) Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, “Spare Thy people, O Lord, and do not make Thine inheritance a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

So that's the desire of God that there by repentance and there also be a national service of repentance in which the nation as a whole, Judah together shall come and weep publicly before the Lord in the temple area asking for the forgiveness of God.

With verse 18 through verse 27, we move on to the next section of the book and I have entitled this, “The Promise of Immediate Blessings.” Now we are intended to assume I think that the appeals that Joel made on behalf to the Lord for the nation were successful. That is, that those who were citizens in Judah and heard the message of the prophet did repent and they did carry out the directions of the Lord.

So that we read in the opening promises in verse 18, “Then the Lord,” now if you have a New American Standard Bible you will read, “Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and will have pity on his people.” You know you may have been told that if you buy a New American Standard Bible then you won’t have to worry about changing the text all the time. But all of the changes that people make in the Authorized Version are already made in the New American Standard Bible. That’s usually a kind of selling point for buying a New American Standard Bible. Well, of course, that is simplistic because it is the Hebrew text that is inspired and not any English translation even this one as accurate as it may be.

Now if you do have a New American Standard Bible you will notice there is a little one by the word “Will be jealous for his people.” And if you look over at the marginal notes you will see that the editors of this version have said, “Or was jealous.”

Now the difference is between the future tense and a past tense. You will notice also a little two before “Will have pity on his people.” And if you look at the note it says, “Or had pity.”

Now I believe that it should be rendered by the past tense. I think if you know Hebrew and you look at the tense that would be the normal way for you to take it. “Then the Lord was jealous for His land and had pity on His people.”

So the prophet is writing as if his appeal to Judah to repent and have a national service of repentance was successful, and therefore, God was jealous for his land and did have pity on his people in response to the repentance of Judah. Therefore, we’ll look at it in that way.

Now, of course, if we should be after intense study convinced that this is future, then, of course, we'd have to look at this as a promise merely of what God would do if they did what he said for them to do. But in the light of the Hebrew text I think it is better to take it as past, and so it is an attempt on the part of Joel to assume that the appeal was successful. I think we are intended to assume that that appeal was successful. That's the way then that we will take it.

Now this section which begins at verse 18 and goes through verse 27 is really a section that is bound together by promises of immediate material and spiritual blessings which are based upon the repentance of Judah. The opening three verses 18, 19, and 20 give us some opening promises, and then in verse 21 through verse 23 there is a song of encouragement that breaks into the midst of the promises. And then the closing promises are given us in verses 24 through 27, the prophet taking up again the idea of the things that are going to happen in the light of Judah's repentance.

So let's look at it that way. I want to read now verses 18 through 20 and just make two or three comments. In verse 18 we read,

“Then the Lord was jealous for His land and did have pity on His people. The Lord will answer (or answered) and said to His people, ‘Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied in full with them; and I will never again make you a reproach among the nations. But I will remove the northern army far from you, (notice the word army is supplied by the translators) far from you and I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, and its vanguard into the eastern sea, and its rear guard into the western sea. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, for it has done great things.’”

Now these are the opening promises. The priest's prayer of verse 17 is answered. They have wept and they have said spare Thy people oh, Lord, and we are read, “Then the Lord was jealous for his land and did have pity on his people.”

Now I want you to notice in verse 18 the use of the little pronoun “his”. “The Lord was jealous for his land and he did have pity on his people.” You can see from this that the prophet is writing as if the land and the people were in covenant relationship with him. The relationship between Israel and the Lord is a relationship of covenant. That is, God has given Israel unconditional promises, and these unconditional promises have blessings that are to be Israel's.

Now the enjoyment of these promises is always limited by the obedience of the nation. When the nation is in a state of disobedience their promises are not enjoyed. That's the condition today. Israel has been scattered to the four corners of the earth. They still have their blessings. They shall have their blessings. They will be fulfilled. They are not, however, being fulfilled now because they are in disobedience. The promises have not been canceled, but the promises and the enjoyment of the promises is conditioned upon the obedience of the people.

Now the prophecies say that in the future God is going to bring the people to obedience, and therefore, they will then have to their promises. So it is certain that they will have them, but at the present time they do not have them. The situation was that way on a limited scale in Judah. So the answer is given in terms of the covenant relationship. “Then the Lord was jealous for his land and had pity on his people,” because they met the terms for the enjoyment of the blessing of God. He continues. In verse 20 he says, “But I will remove the northern one far from you.” Army is supplied by the translators. I have always felt in translation, it's a very dangerous thing to interpret the text when there are two possibilities of rendering with relatively equal likelihood of being erect. It is much better to leave it ambiguous, because very, very often people sitting in the pew arrive at the sense when

the professors and the scholars don't. They fight among themselves, and they have other considerations and they often miss the point of the passage. Whereas, a person who reads it over and over again and studies it in the light of the general context will almost inevitably be able to tell which of the alternatives is the desirable rendering.

Now in this case they've supplied the term, army. But the text really doesn't say army. It says simply, "I will remove the northern one far from you." Now the question is, is this a reference to the locusts or is this perhaps a reference beyond the local scene in Joel's day to the day in which in the future Israel will be troubled by the northern king who should come down in the last days during the tribulation age and shall be responsible for some of the last of the troubles that shall touch the land. You may remember that in the prophecy of Jeremiah, in the prophecy of Daniel, in the prophecy I believe of Isaiah reference is made and I should have said Ezekiel. In Ezekiel chapter 28 and 39 reference is made to the northern armies or the northern one. In fact, the reference is made to the apocalyptic hordes of Gog in the land of Magog. And it just may be that this is something that goes beyond the local scene and goes on into the day of the Lord and is a reference to the northern one or the antichrist and his hordes.

Now that might seem rather strange to you to introduce that here, but the problem is this. Locusts did not ordinarily come into the land of Palestine from the north. They usually came from the southeast. It's very hard to find in history any illustration of a locust plague attacking the land of Judah from the north; almost always from the south or southeast. There is one reference that I know of one that came from the northeast, but almost always from the southeast. And so therefore, this seems very strange. And for that reason a great deal of study has been given to it in an attempt to see, perhaps, a reference to the final days of the tribulation era and a reference to some of the conflicts of the day of the Lord just preceding the Second Advent.

Now I'm not persuaded totally of that, but I bring it to your attentions so you can do some studying and you can come tell the students and scholars around Believers

Chapel why you believe that is a reference to the antichrist or a reference to the things written about in Ezekiel chapter 38. Bible study is fun if you really take something like this and study it for yourself. So study Ezekiel. Take a concordance. Look up northern and look at the passages and see if you can tell what this really means. Then come tell me.

Now the next thing that the prophet writes about is a song of encouragement. He breaks into these blessings that he is going to do. He is going to destroy the locust plague, and he breaks into the promises with a kind of song of encouragement. Listen to verse 21 through verse 23.

“Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, for the Lord has done great things. Do not fear, beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, for the tree has borne its fruit, the fig tree and the vine have yielded in full. So rejoice, O sons of Zion, and be glad in the Lord your God; for He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, the early and latter rain as before.”

So he breaks into the statement concerning the promises with a song of encouragement and exhortation. The locusts did great things of havoc. Notice verse 20, “For it has done great things.” But then God has done great things in restoration.

Now there is also an interesting expression here in verse 23. Right in the middle of that verse it says, “For He has given you the early rain for your vindication.” That’s a strange expression; “The early rain for your vindication.”

Now if you were reading this in the Hebrew text you might be startled to read this particular passage because they expression may be very easily rendered, the teacher of righteousness; literally, the teacher for righteousness. And if you will remember in the Quran literature discovered a generation ago reference was made to a teacher of righteousness over which the sect in Quran made quite a bit. Then if you go back in the

study of the Book of Joel in the past you will undoubtedly, ultimately come to information that will tell you that some of the earliest of the rabbis interpreted this expression in verse 23, “the early rain,” as the teacher of righteousness. For example, Rashe, one of the well known rabbinic interpreters took this as, “the teacher of righteousness even Ezra did the same.” The Old Testament text in Latin has a similar rendering and some other places there is some textual evidence for this. And if that is so I will give you the teacher of righteousness, it was only natural that they should then think that this is a reference for a personal Messiah.

So that this expression then, “For I will give you or he has given you the early rain for your vindication,” might well be, “He has given you the teacher for righteousness,” a reference to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as the teacher of righteousness in his Second Advent. Incidentally, in some modern literatures, some modern studies of the Old Testament a very lengthy defense, a very able defense of the personal interpretation has been given in recent years by a man whose name is Ahlstrom, and I know you are anxious to rush to the library and get that book and read it but there has been some interesting things written concerning the expression. Again I am just a little bit inclined to reject that interpretation but I mention it to you. It might be so.

Now let’s look at the closing promises. Verses 24 through 27 are the closing promises which are promised as a result of Judah’s repentance. We read,

“And the threshing floors will be full of grain, and the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil. ‘Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you.’”

Incidentally, did you notice that expression, “my great army that I have sent among you?” Because all of the things that happen in the experiences of men are

ultimately things that are done by the determination of God. So he says, “My great army.” In other words, this judgment that came upon Judah from the locust was something that the Lord had sent ultimately. The experiences of life are ultimately to be traced to him in order that we may be exercised by them.

So that’s a good experience. The things that happen to us in our life, we should look at them as if they have come to us from God for our edification, for our instruction, for our exercise; spiritual exercise. We should be concerned about the things that do happen to us. They do have a purpose. All of the things that happen to us, the providence of God covers all of the experiences of our life and that providence is for our edification. He calls it,

“My great army which I sent among you. You shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; then My people will never be put to shame. Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and there is no other; and My people will never be put to shame.”

This I say as a continuation of the opening verses in this section in which the promises that come to them because of their repentance are set forth. You know there is, I think, a practical application of these verses that we do not want to miss. And that is that in state of disobedience before the Lord, the teaching of the word of God from the Old Testament on through the New Testament is a teaching that calls upon us to repent of the sin that disturbs our relationship with the Lord. That’s a lesson, I think, that is important for all of us. It’s so easy to allow the things that disturb our relationship with the Lord to persist, and when they persist they always get worse. “A little leaven leavens the lump.” It spreads. It spreads even in our own lives so that we become hardened to

the things of God. We do not understand the things of God then, thus we become even more hardened.

So it is an ever more widening and an ever deepening circle that affects all of our lives. But there is the promise of the word of God that if the things are made right before the Lord then the blessing of the Lord follows. That's what Joel is speaking about. That applies to an individual. That applies to a local church. That applies to all of the relationships that we have before the Lord. Then verse 28, we come to the promise of not immediate blessing but of a kind of supernatural and ultimate blessing.

Now this is a collection of undoubtedly more profound promises, and again, these promises are in three strophes. There is the outpouring of the Spirit in verses 28 and 29. Listen to Joel,

“It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, (the original Hebrew text says) and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”

The Hebrew text says simply, “And it will come about after this.” Now that would ordinarily be taken as a reference to the immediate preceding context. “It will come about after this,” but again, the after this may refer on into the future and the New Testament I think makes it very plain that it does. In other words, what is referred to here in the outpouring of the Spirit is that part of the Abrahamic blessing which shall find its fruition in the Messianic age.

Just for a moment let's turn over to Acts chapter 2. We're going to look at that a little more in detail in a moment, but I need to look at one expression in Acts chapter 2. In Acts chapter 2 and verse 14 we read, perhaps to save time I'll read verse 17 where the quotation from the Joel passage begins.

Now notice how Peter cites this passage in his sermon. We read in Acts 2, verse 17 that's page one hundred and eighty-two, “And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind.”

Now notice it shall be in the last days. So Peter in citing the passage from Joel instead of saying after this has interpreted the “after this” as a reference to “in the last days.” So I think we are on safe ground in saying that when Joel wrote, “It shall come about after this,” he means after this in the ultimate sense. He looks on into the future into the Messianic days just preceding the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and he speaks of an outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh, the sons and daughters prophesying the young men dreaming, the display of wonders in the sky, and various other thing; so the outpouring of the Spirit.

What is the outpouring of the Spirit? Why it is part of the Abrahamic blessing. It is the means by which “the promise made by Abraham in Thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” It is one of the means by which that prophesy is fulfilled. It is fulfilled in the coming of Christ who offers the atoning sacrifice. It is fulfilled also in the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers in consummation of the Abrahamic promises.

Now the reason I know that is because Paul says that in Galatians chapter 3, verse 14. He says that those who have been justified by faith receive the promise of Abraham, and a reference is made to the Holy Spirit. So in the Abrahamic promises no mention was made of the Holy Spirit, but nevertheless, in the blessing intended there as time unfolded the Holy Spirit was included.

Now the second of the strophes has to do with cosmic signs. Listen to verse 30 and 31, “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.” These are the things which shall transpire just before our Lord comes at his Second Advent. The upheavals in nature anticipate Yahweh

or our Lord's intrusion into this earthly scene by his theophany, by his appearance; the appearance of God at his Second Advent.

So surrounding the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus there are these upheavals in nature so that those who are living in those days will have some indication that some great thing is going to happen. So in case you are there at that time you see the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood, well be warned ahead of time that the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus is near at hand. This reference, incidentally, is to the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood is repeated in the New Testament in Revelation chapter 6 in the unfolding of the judgments of the seals in that book. So that Joel and the author of the apocalypse agree in relating this to the time preceding our Lord's Second Advent.

Now this is a time of judgment. It is very difficult for us to speak in the proper way when we speak about judgment. We should speak of judgment truly with tears in our eyes or at least with a sense of the sadness that comes from the knowledge of the fact that there may be some people in this room, in Believers Chapel come to think of it, who may have to experience the judgment of God. It is a serious subject.

Mr. Spurgeon was once admonishing a class of students in his college on the importance of making facial expressions harmonize with their speech in delivering their sermons. He use to say that when you speak of heaven let your face light up and be radiated with a heavenly gleam. Let your eyes shine with reflected glory. And when you speak of hell, well then your every day face will do. [Laughter]

Now the last words of this section give us a reference to the security of the people. “And it will come about that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered for on Mount Sinai and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape as the Lord has said even among the survivors who the Lord calls.”

So the God of Exodus is at work, but there is deliverance and safety for those who are the called. You know back in chapter 2, verse 3 when he was describing the great

locust plague he said, “A fire consumes before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land,” what am I looking at? Joel chapter 2 and verse 3, “And the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, but a desolate wilderness is behind them and nothing at all escapes them.” But now here he says in chapter 2, verse 32, “There will be those who escape as the Lord has said even among the survivors who the Lord calls.” It is those who are called who shall escape.

Now as we close I want to ask you to turn back again to the passage in the New Testament because it is cited by the Apostle Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost and quite a bit of discussion has taken place over the use that Peter makes of this particular part of the prophecy of Joel. Remember on the Day of Pentecost there was a great crowd of people gathered around because a miracle had taken place. The Holy Spirit had come. Those who were there gathered there the believers in Jesus Christ had begun to speak in tongues as the Holy Spirit had fallen upon them. And they spoke the wonderful works of God, and there were people gathered from all over the face of the inhabitable earth and they listened to these men and they heard them say or speak the wonderful works of God in their own language. An evidence, incidentally, one of the many evidences that to speak in tongues is to speak in a known language not in ecstatic speech, not in gibberish. To speak in tongues was to speak in a known language.

Well the multitude was amazed and they were perplexed and some of them were mocking. They had gathered in the temple and there this mighty miracle had taken place. And so Peter arose on that occasion, it was an occasion when he led by the Holy Spirit felt there was an opportunity to preach.

Someone wrote Mr. Spurgeon one time a request and said, “Can you send us a preacher who will fill our church?” And Mr. Spurgeon wrote back and said, “It is not the duty of the preacher to fill the church. We will send you a preacher who will fill the pulpit, but it is your duty to fill the church.” Which is true! It is not the preacher’s duty to

fill the church. Unfortunately, that’s the way we often think. We like to sit back and let him do it. But it is not his duty to do that. It is the people’s duty to fill the church.

Well, here now is a crowd that was gathered and they were gathered because there was an interest in spiritual things and Peter stood up with the eleven and he began to speak. This first apostolic sermon, incidentally, is a good model of sermons. It’s plain. It’s pertinent. It was personal. It was persuasive. It was simply an exposition of the Bible. He put together passages from the Old Testament, linked them together to give a message concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. It was very definite. He did not speak, I must say as I often do, he didn’t say so far as I can see this has taken place or he didn’t say it seem to me that such and such is the case or the weight of scholarship demands that we interpret this of the Messiah, but he spoke definitely and firmly out of the knowledge of the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And he explains because there were men there who were saying these fellows just had one drink too many. He says in verse 15, “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day.” That’s always amused me. What would he have said if it were not the third hour of the day? At any rate, but this is what was spoken of through the Prophet Joel, he says. “And it shall be in the last days God says that I will pour forth my Spirit upon all mankind,” and then he cites the rest of the passage.

But now notice the statement in verse 16, “And this is what was spoken through the Prophet Joel.” This is that. What does Peter mean? It has been interpreted in several different ways. Some have said that everything that Joel said was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. But then, of course, we have no indication from the account in the Book of Acts that the sun became dark, that the moon turned into blood that the other things that are described here happened; “wonders in the sky above, signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapor of smoke.” We have no indication that that took place then.

So if we interpret it that way we have to spiritualize all of this, and furthermore, in Peter's second epistle many years later he refers to the things that he referred to in Joel and says they're going to take place in the future. So it seems clear that that's not the proper interpretation of the passage.

Now there are many good Bible students who say that there was no real fulfillment here at all. This is the opposite interpretation. One saying that it was totally fulfilled; the other saying it was not really fulfilled at all. They like to point out and say, “You'll notice that he does not say it stands written.”

Now when the New Testament speaks of the fulfillment of certain passages it is true it says, “It stands written.” And the interpreters say it doesn't say that it stands written here, and so therefore, there is no real fulfillment at all. Well it seems to me that you couldn't say anything is more identified more clearly what was spoken by Joel and what happened on the Day of Pentecost than to say that this is that. That's even more definite than “it stands written.”

So it seems to me that we must say that there is something here of Joel that is taking place on the Day of Pentecost. Well, what is it? Well we know that there is one thing that took place on the Day of Pentecost which is the primary, the first message that Joel gave, and that is the Spirit was poured out. That's clear. In chapter 2, verse 33 we read, “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.”

So I say that this prophesy is by Peter said to be fulfilled in this respect that the Spirit was given on the Day of Pentecost in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesy. Well what about the rest of the things? What about the reference to the wonders and signs and the blood and the fire and the vapor and the smoke and the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood? Well that was not fulfilled on that day. Well, why was it not fulfilled? Well, for the simple reason that Israel was in disobedience and as a

result of Israel's disobedience the effects of the outpouring of the Spirit do not take place. The Spirit comes for the Old Testament prophesied that he should come at a particular time. He would've come on that day remember even if everybody had been down at Tel Aviv lounging on the beach. The Holy Spirit would still have come all in Jerusalem on that particular day because the Old Testament prophesied that he must come on that particular day.

So he did come and that's what Peter means when he says, “And this is that.” This is the gift of the Spirit as the Old Testament prophesied. But the other things are dependent upon the relationship of the nation Israel to the promises of God. When they believe, when they respond through the work of the Spirit in the future, then the remainder of this prophesy shall be fulfilled. So when he says, “This is that,” that's exactly what he means.

Now the rest of the message he gave is a kind of interpretation of that Joel passage when he calls upon them to believe. When he says, “The promise is to them that are far off as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself,” he's just interpreting the words of Joel which contain within them an invitation to the call to respond and receive the blessing of God.

Well, it's time to stop. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words that the Prophet Joel has spoken. And we thank Thee for the hope of the future, and Lord, we do pray that in our own individual lives we may maintain a relationship with Thee that will make it unnecessary for us to go through the experience of divine chastening and discipline. We thank Thee for these things. Thou art a Father who does love enough to discipline, but Lord enable us to stay in the center of Thy will and be fruitful. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.