

## Part 8

**The Great Promise of the Holy Spirit**

- Chastening followed by repentance and the promise of spiritual blessing

- Abundance

- Afterwards

- For all types of people, everywhere

**Speaking for God with words given by God**

- Knowing God's will

**The Blessings of the Holy Spirit (2:28-29)**

Joel's promises lead on to the great promise of the Holy Spirit.

“And afterwards,  
I will pour out My Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams,  
your young men will see visions.” (2:28)  
*Even upon My servants, both men and women,*  
*I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”* (2:29)

We must keep in mind the context of this passage. Joel has been speaking of the judgement of God. The Day of the Lord drew near in a plague of locusts. The people turned to the Lord in repentance. Then God ended the chastening.

Now this leads into a prediction of something that will happen afterwards. God has blessed them materially. But there is more to come. There is a blessing that God will send that is more spiritual.

‘I will pour out my Spirit...’ says God. This word ‘pour out’ always refers to something large and abundant. You have this phrase in connection with the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 32:15; 44:3,5; Ezekiel 39:29; Zechariah 12:10. It is used in connection with the Holy Spirit and in these cases it is always referring to the future. The Day of Pentecost was future from the viewpoint of the Old Testament prophets. In the New Testament this word comes in Acts 2:17, 18, 33; 10:45; Romans 5:5; Titus 3:6.

This is a prediction of what began on the Day of Pentecost when God introduced a greater level of experiencing of the Holy Spirit than had ever been known before among the people of God.

It refers to the experience of the Spirit that Christians are meant to enjoy since the Day of Pentecost. It refers to something not known much in the Old Testament. It was predicted for ‘afterwards’.

The Spirit will come upon ‘all flesh’. What is meant by ‘all flesh’? In the prophecy of Joel it is possible to see what is initially meant by this phrase. It refers to ‘Sons ... daughters...’ all types of people everywhere. It also means that one day even Gentiles would be saved and blessed by the Holy Spirit when the Spirit was poured out <sup>¶1</sup>, the progress of events made it clear that ‘all flesh’ would include even Gentiles.

The prophecy speaks of ‘My Spirit’. This is the breath of God. In the New Testament this ‘breath of God’ is called ‘the Holy Spirit’.

‘Sons and daughters will prophesy’. Prophecy is speaking for God with words given by God <sup>¶1</sup>. The Holy Spirit will bring all sorts of people to see the will of God, and will enable them to speak for God, with words given by God.

They receive understanding from God by ‘dream’ and ‘vision’. These were modes of receiving words from God. ‘Vision’ does not have to be visual. It refers to knowing God’s will, in any way at all. Prophetic understanding was often called ‘vision’ whether there was anything to be seen or not. In the Old Testament God often spoke in vision and dream. This is Joel’s way of predicting what will happen through the outpouring of the Spirit, when people will have a heightened knowledge of God’s will.

<sup>¶1</sup> Acts 10:11

<sup>¶1</sup> see Deuteronomy 18:18

- **For all sorts of people without discrimination**

## Fulfilment

- **Initially on the Day of Pentecost**

- **New Testament experience**

- **The Spirit gives equality -**

**Jews & Gentiles**

**Male & female**

**Slaves & free**

**Rich & poor**

- **Any thirsty person**

This outpouring of the Spirit will bring into being a community where all sorts of people are to be found ('sons . . . daughters. . . young... old. . . men-servants... '). In the Old Testament times, slaves experienced much discrimination. They were excluded from many of the privileges of Israel, but a day is promised when all this will change.

This prediction was initially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. What happened on the Day of Pentecost outclasses anything of the Old Testament level of knowing the Spirit. The Old Testament believer had many blessings of the Spirit. The Spirit led them to faith. Abraham is a model of salvation. David knew the Spirit in a permanent way <sup>¶1</sup>. The Old Testament believer knew something of the special blessings of the Spirit. People like Samson, the judges, Bazalel (who built the tabernacle) did their work by the Spirit. They knew something of the Spirit's resisting sin <sup>¶2</sup>. But they looked forward to a day when the Spirit would be poured out in a richer and deeper way.

What is this New Testament level of the receiving of the Spirit? John's Gospel speaks of rivers of living water <sup>¶1</sup>. 'This he said of the Spirit'. Romans 8:15–16 and Ephesians 1:13, 14 tell of assurance, joy, power, freeness in prayer, calling God 'Abba', experiencing the 'Spirit of truth'. This is the kind of thing Jesus was referring to in John 7:37–39. 'Let him come to Me and keep drinking... Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water... the Spirit'.

There are side-effects to the outpouring of the Spirit. One is that people experience equality. In the church of Jesus Christ the Spirit gives equality. The Spirit abolishes discrimination in the church of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament there was favouritism towards Israel and within Israel. The law was for Jews. Men were favoured. The 'upper-classes' were favoured. Certain nationalities near Israel were excluded from the worship of the tabernacle.

But the coming of the Spirit abolishes these discriminations. The Spirit transcends divisions in the human race. Male and female, rich and poor are all open to the Spirit. Matters of race or nationality make no difference. Slaves and free, Gentiles and Jews – the Spirit is given to all who believe in Jesus. Old and young may equally know the will of God. Even a slave may know the outpouring of the Spirit. 'All flesh' is able to receive the Spirit. This happened historically. Gentiles came to know Jesus. The Spirit was poured out even on them. God blessed everyone everywhere – who knew Jesus. 'Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have...', said Peter. This is why Galatians says there is neither male or female in Jesus Christ. 'If any person is thirsty, let him come to me and drink...'. If you keep 'drinking' from Jesus you too will know these blessings of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>¶1</sup> 1 Samuel 16:13

<sup>¶2</sup> Micah 3:8

<sup>¶1</sup> John 7:37–39



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