

Intro: The Christian life is life in the Spirit of God. In fact, all of Christian life is because of the gracious work of the Spirit of God within us and upon us. From the life-giving work of regeneration that awakens our souls which were dead to God to the ongoing work of forming us into the image of Christ as He points us to the glorious work of Jesus all the way to the fulfillment of His glorious task of transformation into glory, the Spirit of God is active throughout all of our salvation from beginning to end. Just as the Father elects and sends and the Son of God redeems and purchases, the Spirit of God baptizes, seals, and fills us with the presence of God so that all the church might declare the prophetic words: Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Joel’s word from the Lord continues beyond the mere restoration of material blessing to the glorious promise of all spiritual blessings that we have in Christ (see Eph 1), and these blessings are sourced in the atoning work of Jesus, His powerful resurrection from the dead for our hope, and His sovereign Lordship over our lives as the crucified and risen Lord. Joel promises something new, something better than what believers had known in the OT: the Spirit of God poured out upon all believers in a way that emphasizes the prophetic word. This does not imply that the Spirit of God was doing different work in the OT, but rather than this work of prophecy was somewhat limited to specific believers for specific times, but it would be, according to this promise, a universal blessing upon all the church so that all would proclaim the greatness of God.

Now, Old Testament prophecy is difficult to interpret, but it is much easier to interpret when the Spirit of God has given us His interpretation in the New Testament. This is such a case, for Peter quotes this promise from Joel when it was fulfilled (or beginning) as recorded in the book of Acts. But, before we look at its fulfillment in the gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, let us look at its expectation and how the saints of old longed for such a pouring out of God’s Spirit.

1. Before Christ, the Spirit of God Was Not Given to All People for Ministry

- a. Real Need for the Spirit of the Lord
 - i. Numbers 11:16-30
 - ii. Moses' desire for the HS to fall on all
- b. The Role of the HS in the Old Testament
 - i. Localized
 1. "came upon" or “clothed”
 2. 2 Ch 18:23
 3. Eze 11:5
 - ii. Removable
 1. 1 Sam 16:14
 - iii. Individual ability to serve
 1. 1 Sam 10:6-9
 2. Judg 6:34
 3. 2 Ch 20:14-15

2. God Promised to Pour Out His Spirit on *All*

- a. on **all**
 - i. from young to old, strong to weak, powerful to powerless
 - ii. Clergy/Laity historical distinction (erroneous)
 1. In the NT, the officers of the Church (elders, deacons), are never referred to as priests
 2. How did this distinction arise?
 - a. Power for the powerful (literacy, politics, control)
 - b. Apathy of the people (laziness, moralism, cultural norm)
 - i. “What does the layman really want? He wants a building that looks like a church; a clergy dressed in the way that he approves;

services of the kind he's used to; and then *to be left alone.*" – Sir John Lawrence

- ii. A culture of individualism lends itself to clericalism because "somebody else can do that"
- iii. The great promise of God's Spirit is that all His people would do the great and powerful work of ministry in the Kingdom of Christ here and now
 1. The clergy serve the laity in order to encourage and strengthen them to use their Spirit-enabled gifts to do the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-13)
 2. The laity are to do the work of ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit...all of the laity!
- b. differing gifts, all to proclaim the LORD (prophecy, dream, see visions)
 - i. The purpose of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was to enable people to know and worship God
 - ii. The purpose of all prophecy is the revelation of God, not merely the foretelling of the future or of a vague sense of what will happen
 1. The most important Truth revealed is the character and works of God
 2. This is what we need most from preaching today, all ministry of the Word of God (prophecy) is to know Him as He is, to "see" Him so that all of our experience take their proper place in proportion to Him
 3. In fact, this "prophesying" promise is fulfilled in the NT with strong (bold) witness to Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God
 - a. Acts 2:4-41
 - b. "filling of the Spirit" in the NT is always accompanied by testifying of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (9 times)
- c. Pouring Out in Scriptures
 - i. Used to portray an overflowing abundance, a totality, an immersion under something
 1. Used of God's wrath or anger in judgment (Ezek 22:22; 36:18; Isa 42:25)
 2. Used of prayers to the Lord (Psa 62:8; 102:1; 142:2;
 - ii. My Spirit
 1. See Isa 32:14-18; 44:1-8; - promise to pour out His Spirit and bring righteousness, and thereby peace, and thereby safety, security, and a dwelling of trust
 2. Zech 12:10 – the Spirit of grace and supplication, so that they will look on the one whom they pierced and will mourn as over an only son
 3. Rom 5:5 – it is God's love that the Spirit of God brings
 4. Titus 3:5-6 – The pouring out of the Spirit brings washing of regeneration and renewal that saves through Jesus Christ, so that we would be justified by His grace and made heirs of eternal life, our hope.

3. God Fulfilled This Promise (and is fulfilling it still) at Pentecost

- a. All believers are baptized and sealed with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:20-22; Eph 1:13)
 - i. Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit, as opposed to mere water like John (Matt 3:11)
 1. This began at Pentecost (Acts 1:5)
 2. This baptism was different than the Spirit's power to work before
 - a. Jesus had given them His Spirit already (John 20:22)
 - b. This gift of the Spirit was to proclaim the work of Christ with authority
 3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not evidenced by any miraculous signs, but by boldness to witness to Christ
 - a. While the Pentecost believers did speak in tongues, the 3000 who came to faith through their testimony did not
 - b. Neither was tongues evidence of the Spirit's work in the immediately following passage (devotion to the apostles teaching, breaking of bread, prayers, etc. was emphasized)

- ii. *Seal* is “to confirm, authenticate, place beyond doubt”
 - 1. The Spirit is given as a seal, a guarantee or down payment, on our inheritance (the presence of God as His children)
 - 2. His presence and work establishes God’s promise as sure and steadfast
- b. All believers are enabled for ministry (Rom 8:14-15; Ezek 36:25-27)
 - i. All believers are gifted for the furthering of the Kingdom of Christ, not just the leaders
 - ii. This is connected with the priesthood of all believers as well
- c. No clergy/laity separation **b/c of the HS**
 - i. We all have the Spirit of the Lord by grace
 - ii. We don’t all have the same gifts, and that was not promised (some saw visions, some dreamed dreams, some prophesy, etc.)
 - iii. But all are given the Spirit for the purpose of proclaiming the great works of God and calling men to repentance and faith (v32)
- d. The promise of Joel began with the founding of the Church, recorded in the book of Acts
 - i. Acts 2:17-21
 - ii. In fact, this is the major difference between the OT church, Israel, and the NT church: the pouring out and presence of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, moving the revelation and redemption of God into all the nations by all the people of God!
 - iii. I do not believe that Pentecost has ended, but was merely begun, for there are still those who are called who have yet to hear the gospel of Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
- e. The Spirit's role is to reveal to us the glory of the Lord, changing us in the process, and *making us witnesses of Christ*
 - i. John 16:14 – He will glorify Me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine, so the Helper will disclose all that is the Father’s and mine
 - ii. 2 Co 3:18
 - iii. Every event of “filling of the Spirit” (9 times) in the NT involves people testifying to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God
 - iv. This Spirit-empowered witness leads to people repenting and believing in Jesus (Acts 2:37-41), thus connecting strongly with Joel’s oracle and the promise of the Spirit

4. Is All of Joel 2:28-32 Complete?

- a. What does Peter think?
 - i. Peter quotes this entire passage as being fulfilled at Pentecost!
 - ii. What does it imply about the signs and wonders?
 - 1. It implies that they refer to the miracles of Jesus, as Peter applies it in Acts 2:22, and what follows in Acts may also be referred (Acts 2:43)
 - 2. This means that the day of God’s judgment had somehow also arrived
 - a. Note Paul’s mention of Jesus as having the authority to judge b/c of His resurrection (Acts 17:30-31)
 - b. Therefore, the authority of Jesus as the Judge over all men is secured by His resurrection from the dead
 - 3. However, it also means that there is still a Great and Awesome Day of the LORD yet to come
 - a. Note the “before” in Acts 2:20 and in Joel 2:31
 - b. All these things take place before the Day of the LORD, thusly this promise of the Spirit and the signs and wonders take place logically before the Day of the LORD comes
- b. Judgment mentioned in Matt 24, signs and wonders, sun darkened and moon fails
 - i. There also seems to be two events referenced here by Jesus to answer the specific questions given by the disciples: when will the temple be torn down? And what will be the sign of your coming at the completion of the age?

- ii. Two questions – two answers
 - c. The Spirit has come upon God's people, thus a Day of the LORD has occurred, but the Day of the LORD comes with Jesus' 2nd coming
 - i. Again we see a dual promise: an immediate “day of the LORD” and a still future “day of the LORD”
 - ii. This is common in the OT prophets, particularly in reference to days of the LORD
5. We Must Emphasize What God Emphasizes: The Spirit of LORD is Poured Out so that All His People Would Proclaim the Gospel and Call Many to Repentance
- a. We must end by noting the strong relationship between Joel's call to repentance and Peter's call to repentance
 - i. The purpose of the pouring out of God's Spirit upon God's people is that through God's power and God's presence the people might repent of their sins and turn to trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sins and as the Risen Lord over their lives
 - ii. “this promise is for you and for your children, as many who are far off”
 - b. If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior-King, then you have been given the Spirit of God as promised, so that you might testify to the greatness and glory of Jesus
 - i. Don't concern yourself with seeking 2nd blessings or of power gifts, but concern yourself with what the Spirit is concerning Himself: glorifying Jesus and His glorious cross
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
 - 1. We preach Jesus crucified, buried, and risen again
 - 2. We preach so that you believe (v11)

Conclusion:

Trust in the glorious promises of Christ, seek Him, fix your eyes upon Jesus, for the Spirit of God is working to that very purpose, that all who are called might see and know Christ to the glory of God the Father. Call upon the name of the LORD, and find in Him your Deliverer and your Lord as we come to Him in repentant faith. There is hope for anyone, for the promise is for everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD.

May the Lord Jesus Christ work His powerful gospel deep within our souls by the power of His Holy Spirit at work within us to the glory of God the Father, so deeply that we, too, respond with such deep devotion to His Word, to His people, to prayer, and that as many as are called by Him would receive His Word and be saved.