



"I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh"

Don Harrison

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:28-32).

THIS PROPHECY from Joel 2:28-32 was quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, and it is understood by Pentecostals and others to have been fulfilled in the events of that day and in what followed. It seems that Christadelphians generally confine their understanding of the prophecy in a similar way, although with different conclusions. The purpose of this article is to suggest a much wider understanding of Joel's message, one which might strengthen our case against orthodox teaching regarding Spirit gifts.

The suggestion is that the outpouring of the Spirit began with the birth of John Baptist, and, for the Jews, continued through to A.D. 70 with its "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke". In fact this prophecy of Joel covers the most important, the most vital, period in Israel's history: the coming of Messiah and his ministry. "At sundry times and in divers manners" God had spoken to His people by His Spirit through the prophets (Heb. 1:1). "Holy men of God" had spoken "as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]" (2 Pet. 1:21). Finally, God spoke unto them "by His Son" (Heb. 1:2), and the bestowal upon Jesus of the Holy Spirit without measure (Jno. 3:34) must find a place in this outpouring.

The phrase "pour out" means literally just that; we can imagine someone pouring out water from a bucket, and whatever it is poured upon becomes drenched, or immersed, in the process. This will explain the use of the phrase "baptized with Spirit" which occurs in Scrip-

ture. But this same idea of pouring out is found in Lamentations 2:4; 4:11; Ezekiel 9:8; 20:8 and elsewhere, where it is to do with God pouring out His fury, sometimes like fire.

The manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the prophets was not unceasing; Micah 3:6 foretold a time when "night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and *the sun shall go down over the prophets*". And from the close of the Old Testament prophecies there was a complete silence for nearly 400 years. There was no message from the Lord. The Holy Spirit was not in evidence.

The spirit poured out again

But Joel said that the Spirit was to be poured out on "all flesh". This phrase occurs several times in the account of Noah's Flood, where it clearly means everybody. It occurs also in Isaiah 49:26, where it must refer to all the people of Zion: "and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob". In Jeremiah 45:5 God says: "I will bring evil upon all flesh"; which means He will bring judgement on the whole nation. It must be the nation of Israel on which, according to Joel, the Spirit was to be poured out, but that does not mean that everybody would receive a Spirit gift. Specified recipients were to see visions: sons and daughters, old men, young men, servants and handmaids. And if we turn to the opening chapters of Luke we shall find them all there.

According to Luke 1, Zacharias the priest was told: “thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John . . . and he shall be *filled with the Holy [Spirit]*, even from his mother’s womb” (vv. 13,15). John was a *young man*. After nearly 400 years of silence this was a great event. John’s mission was to turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God (v. 16). Then Mary was told: “*The Holy [Spirit] shall come upon thee*, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee” (v. 35). The Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon Mary, who evidently recognised the prophecy of Joel, and replied: “Behold *the handmaid of the Lord* (v. 38)”.

We should remember, too, that Joseph her husband was given a vision in which he was told: “fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy [Spirit]. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Mt. 1:20,21). Returning to Luke 1, “Elisabeth [a *daughter?*] was filled with the Holy [Spirit]”, and she prophesied (vv. 41-44). Immediately after this, Mary herself was caused to utter that lovely song known as the Magnificat (vv. 46-55). The Holy Spirit is not mentioned here, but was obviously the moving force.

Luke 1:67 reads: “Zacharias [an *old man*] was filled with the Holy [Spirit], and prophesied”. His prophecy is indeed significant. He related the Son promised to Mary to those basic promises of the gospel given to David and to Abraham. The message of all these early prophesying is that of *salvation and redemption*. Zacharias says: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an *horn of salvation* for us in the house of His servant David” (vv. 68,69). David had said: “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and *the horn of my salvation*” (2 Sam. 22:2,3). That horn—a symbol of strength—was now to be raised up in the Son who would sit upon David’s throne, and reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Lk. 1:32,33). He is the horn of David yet to bud forth in Zion (Ps. 132:17). He features too in Hannah’s Song, when she rejoices in God’s salvation (1 Sam. 2:1).

Zacharias was prophesying of the day when Israel would be saved from their enemies—a national redemption. But that reign of David’s Son cannot begin until the nation has been redeemed unto God as individuals. And it is this

matter of personal salvation that is the subject of what follows.

John was to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order that he might be “the prophet of the Highest”, to go before His face “to give *knowledge of salvation* unto His people by the remission of their sins” (Lk. 1:76,77). This was the express purpose of God in pouring out His Holy Spirit. And it was “through the tender mercy of our God” (v. 78). Here is that Memorial Name announced to Moses in Exodus 34: “The LORD God, merciful and gracious . . . and abundant in goodness and truth” (v. 6). This was when Moses asked to see the glory of God.

Then Zacharias continued: “. . . whereby the dayspring [sunrising] from on high hath visited us” (Lk. 1:78). The sun which had gone down over the prophets (Mic. 3:6) was now rising again, a new prophetic day was dawning. God had “visited and *redeemed His people*” by a visitation of the Holy Spirit, “to give light to them that sit in darkness . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk. 1:68,79).

The visitation continued when the Holy Spirit revealed to the aged Simeon (another *old man*) that “he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (2:26). Then, when he was able to look on the infant child Jesus, Simeon declared: “mine eyes have seen *Thy salvation*, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people”; which must mean, ‘in the eyes of all flesh’ (vv. 30,31). Simeon refers to himself as “*Thy servant*” (v. 29), another term featuring in Joel. If Simeon could see God’s salvation in that tiny baby then the nation could see it later in the words and works of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The anointing of Jesus

As Jesus emerged from his baptism in the River Jordan, Luke 3:21,22 tells that “the heaven was opened [Mark uses a word for “opened” which means ‘rent apart’], and the Holy [Spirit] descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him”. At no time in Israel’s history had the Holy Spirit been invested in a human being “without measure” as it was in Jesus. And why did the Holy Spirit descend in the form of a dove? Because the dove is a symbol of peace and that was to be his message; Jesus came “to guide our feet into the way of peace” (1:79).

Luke 4:17-22 records that Jesus was reading in the synagogue at Nazareth from the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1,2, which speaks of himself: “*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me*; because the LORD

hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek . . . to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD". And at that point he stopped and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Lk. 4:21). He was preaching the gospel of peace. "Grace" had been "poured into [his] lips" (Ps. 45:2), and so "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Lk. 4:22).

The voice in the wilderness was to cry, "the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5). John's Gospel says: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (1:14). And when Jesus had turned the water into wine at the wedding feast, we read: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory" (2:11). The miracle witnessed to his Divine mission.

When John Baptist quoted Isaiah 40 he said: "all flesh shall see the *salvation* of God" (Lk. 3:6). Christ was that way of salvation, and his message was clear in all he said and did: "I am come that [ye] might have life, and that [ye] might have it more abundantly" (Jno. 10:10); "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (5:40). In spite of all they saw and heard, they did not believe. Jesus marvelled at the unbelief of his own countrymen (Mk. 6:6), and he told those of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum that if the mighty works which he had done amongst them had been done in ancient Sodom, Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented (Mt. 11:20-24). Those mighty works of the Holy Spirit did not turn those people of Israel to the Lord their God.

Jesus began his ministry at about thirty years of age, which places it just in the middle of that seventy-year period of the prophetic day. He said: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (Jno. 9:5). He was indeed the full noonday sun shining in all its brilliance upon the nation. He said also: "I must work the works of Him That sent me, while it is *day*: the *night cometh*, when no man can work" (v. 4). Jesus knew that day would come to an end and Spirit activity would cease. Peter is thought to have written his second epistle between A.D. 61 and A.D. 65, when that day was coming to its close, and he wrote: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a *light that shineth in a dark place*, until *the day dawn*, and the day star arise in your hearts" (1:19), or until another day begins.

The days of vengeance

The Spirit of the Lord God had anointed Jesus "to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and *the day of vengeance of our God*" (Isa. 61:2). At the close of his ministry Jesus foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and said: "these be the *days of vengeance*, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:22). He wept over the city, and said: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! . . . they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not *the time of thy visitation*" (19:42-44).

When John Baptist was preparing the way, he saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees coming to his baptism, and he said to them: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?". He then told them that the one who should come after him would "baptize you with the Holy [Spirit], and with *fire* . . ." (Mt. 3:7,11). Nobody could imagine that a generation of vipers would receive those precious gifts of the Spirit listed in Corinthians! John explained what he meant when he continued: ". . . whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will *burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*" (v. 12).

Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus made reference to these words of John: "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy [Spirit] not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). Jesus had been baptized with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, the symbol of peace—that was his message. On the Day of Pentecost the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit and with *fire*—that was to be *their* message.

Pentecost was not the occasion for the gifts of the Spirit to come floating down upon everybody with joyous shouts of 'Hallelujah', as the Pentecostals might imagine. It was in fact a grim warning to the Jews to flee from the wrath to come. The only gift of the Spirit in evidence that day was the gift of tongues, and that was not given then to facilitate preaching to the Gentiles, but that the apostles could speak to all those visiting Jews who had come from distant parts and who could speak only the tongue of the land in which they were born: "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (2:11)—no doubt a reference to those miracles, wonders and signs of which Peter speaks in verse 22. The apostles presumably acted as

interpreters while Peter was delivering his address.

The great and notable day of the Lord

Peter quoted that prophecy of Joel, having in view the “blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke” which was to befall Jerusalem in “that great and notable day of the Lord” to come in A.D. 70 (Acts 2:19,20). Peter called upon them to “hear these words”, and he proceeded to remind them that “Jesus of Nazareth [was] a man approved of God among you by *miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know*” (v. 22). The Holy Spirit had been poured out upon all flesh to show them God’s salvation. They had all seen it; they had no excuse. But they had crucified and slain the Son of God. They could expect now the Spirit to be poured out upon them in judgement of fire.

But that prophecy of Joel provided still a way of escape: “it shall come to pass, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (v. 21). At that point Peter broke off the quotation from Joel; he stopped to explain to them that anyone who now wishes to call on the Name of the Lord must do so in the name of Jesus Christ, whom God has raised from the dead and appointed to be both Lord and Christ. Everything that Peter said in that address can be traced to the instructions by Jesus given to his disciples in Luke 24:44-49. And no doubt, while Peter was speaking, the other apostles were saying the same things to those visiting Jews.

His listeners were conscience stricken, and asked: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter responded—as instructed by Jesus in Luke 24:47—“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit]” (v. 38). Using the phrasing of Zacharias in Luke 1:77, the Holy Spirit had come “to give knowledge of salvation unto [God’s] people by the remission of their sins”. That was the gift of the Holy Spirit: “For the promise [of salvation] is [as the Lord had said in Joel 2:32] unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39).

Peter has now ended that quotation from Joel. There is no evidence that the newly baptized converts that day received Spirit gifts as such, but they did receive salvation. The final words of Peter to the Jews on that occasion were:

“Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (v. 40).

The Holy Spirit in the believers

The great day of the Lord came in A.D. 70, and brought to an end the history of Israel as a nation in the land. The people of God were no longer to be found therein; they were now to be found in the ecclesia of Christ. And the Holy Spirit powers invested in the apostles provided for the formation and conduct of his church. There was a further outpouring of the Spirit soon after Pentecost, when the company of believers prayed that they might be allowed to witness in the name of the holy child Jesus, by a performance of signs and wonders similar to those described by Peter in his words recorded in Acts 2:22. “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken . . . and they were all filled with the Holy [Spirit]” (4:31).

After this, apart from the exceptional cases of Paul and Cornelius, it appears that the Holy Spirit was bestowed on believers only by the laying on of the hands of the apostles (8:17). The gifts imparted, and their purposes, are listed in the epistles. These gifts distributed amongst the believers contributed to “the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12,13). The body of Christ being established, the demise of the apostles saw the sun go down once more on the prophets.

Salvation in Zion

Peter did not quote these words of Joel 2:32: “for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance”. This would hardly be true of the Jerusalem of A.D. 70, but it was a fact that when Peter quoted Joel 2 he was standing in Jerusalem, from whence Jesus had instructed that the gospel should be preached among all nations. Jerusalem was the original centre of apostolic activity, and, despite A.D. 70, our salvation depends upon our faith in God’s assurance that His Son will one day reign in Zion. And Joel 3:16 speaks of the day when “The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem”. In that day “the LORD will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel”.

Having visited His people of Israel to offer them salvation, God later visited the Gentiles to take out of *them* a people for His Name. Our hopes are still centred on Mount Zion, where we shall find deliverance. We must make sure we

recognise the time of *our* visitation, and look earnestly for that Day Star to arise, “when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds” (2 Sam. 23:4), and when there will be a future outpouring of the Spirit.

The prophet Isaiah tells of this time yet to come when “the spirit [shall] be poured upon us from on high”, with the happy result that “the wilderness [shall] be a fruitful field, and the fruit-

ful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (32:15-17). How apt then will be those lovely words: “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14)!



Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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Universal worship and the temple in the age to come

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THE PURPOSE OF this article is to examine the passages of Scripture listed below which speak of the nations going to worship the King at Jerusalem in the age to come, and to show how they are in harmony with the concept of a ‘small’ temple, as expounded in the series “Ezekiel’s visions of the Millennium”:¹

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:2,3);

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (27:13);

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up

of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zech. 14:16,17).

What is meant by ‘Jerusalem’?

This is the first question to be addressed. In the terms of Ezekiel’s prophecy, is ‘Jerusalem’ just the temple described in chapters 40–43, or will it include the city Ezekiel describes in chapter 48?

In both Old and New Testament times ‘Jerusalem’ was more than just the temple and the surrounding area, and there is no reason to suggest it will be any different in the future. Concerning the future literal Jerusalem, Jesus himself declares: “it is the *city* of the great King” (Mt. 5:35).

Two separate locations are identified with Jerusalem in Old Testament times; the first is Mount Moriah, where Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2). This is also the place where Solomon built the temple: “Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite” (2 Chron. 3:1). Thus Moriah is associated with sacrifice for the nation of Israel.

1. Dec. 2001 to Jul. 2002.