Joel Lesson 27

Last week we started our second pass through Joel 2:28-32.

In our first pass, we looked at those verses from the perspective of an Old Testament scholar living between the Testaments, and one of the questions we asked was what was new? Prophecies almost always announce something new, and so what was new about the Holy Spirit in this prophecy?

After looking at many Old Testament verses, what we discovered is that the new thing about the Holy Spirit in this prophecy was that the Spirit of God would be poured out on all flesh. Not just **dripped** out here and there on a **few** famous people such as Daniel and Ezekiel - but **poured** out on **all** flesh, even on male and female servants.

And, so, now we have started our second pass through this prophecy, and for our second pass we are reading the prophecy as it was spoken by Peter in Acts 2:17-21.

And we saw some minor wording changes between those two accounts of the prophecy. One change we talked about last week was the change from “afterward” in Joel to “last days” in Joel, and another change is that Acts 2:18 specifies that the male and female servants will prophesy. Joel 2:29 did not include that extra detail.

We ended last week at the doorstep of a big question: **what did God mean when he promised to pour out his Spirit on all flesh?**

The Old Testament included some parallel passages to the prophecy - is that also true of the New Testament? Is this promised pouring out of God’s Spirit described anywhere else in the New Testament? Yes, it is.

The Handout for Lesson 27 shows a number of potentially parallel verses to the great promise of Joel 2:28. I say “potential” because it is possible that some of these passages just use similar wording without being strictly parallel and that some are related to the promise in other ways. In any event, there are quite a few potential parallels.

In fact, Peter mentions the promise again himself in the immediate context of Acts 2.

> **Acts 2:33** - Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the

> Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.**

And we certainly see that same promised pouring later in a different context as well.

> **Acts 10:44-46** - While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because **the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.

> **Acts 11:15-17** - As I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.** And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' **If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ,** who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

And I think we see descriptions of that promised pouring out when Jesus told the apostles what was about to happen to them in a few days.

> **Acts 1:4-5** - And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, **but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.**"

> **Acts 1:8** - But you will receive power **when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,** and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And, of course, based on that description by Jesus we should consider the promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit in Mathew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, and John 1.

> **Matthew 3:11** - I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit** and fire.

> **Mark 1:8** - I have baptized you with water, but **he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit**.

> **Luke 3:16** - John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit** and fire."

> **John 1:33** - I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is **he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit**.'

Are there any other New Testament references to this promised pouring out of God's Spirit? Yes, possibly a few more:

> **John 7:37-39** - On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If **anyone** thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **Whoever** believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" **Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

> **Romans 5:5** - And hope does not put us to shame, because **God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**

> **Titus 3:4-7** - But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration **and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,** so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

So what then is the promised pouring out of God's Spirit?

I think our answer to that question largely depends on how we view the phrase "all flesh." Let's look at the possibilities.

(1) If the pouring out in Acts 2 **includes** the baptism with the Holy Spirit that was experienced by the apostles in Acts 2 and later by the household of Cornelius in Acts 10, then "all flesh" must include **at least** the 12 apostles and that one Gentile household.

(2) If the pouring out in Acts 2 **includes** those who prophesied, had visions, and dreamed dreams, then "all flesh" must include **at least** the apostles, the other New Testament authors such as James, the brother of Christ, and Jude, the brother of Christ, and some others such as Stephen (Acts 7:55), Ananias (Acts 9:10), and Agabus (Acts 21:10).

We don't have a single example of anyone dreaming a dream after Acts 2, although we do have

visions in the night in Acts 16:9 and Acts 18:9, which might have been dreams. And, of course, the New Testament opens with God speaking to Joseph in a dream.

(3) If the pouring out in Acts 2 **includes** the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, then "all flesh" must include **at least** the apostles and those Christians in the first century who received miraculous gifts through the laying on of an apostle's hands as described, for example, in Acts 8:15-19.

That requirement of having an apostle lay his hands on you immediately excludes any first century Christian who never met an Apostle, such as (most likely) the Ethiopian eunuch. And, of course, that requirement also excludes all Christians (such as us today) living after the last apostle died.

(4) If the pouring out in Acts 2 **includes** the "promised Holy Spirit" with which we were are "sealed" and "who is the guarantee of our inheritance **until we acquire possession of it**" (Ephesians 1:13-14) and includes those whose "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God" (1 Corinthians 6:19) and includes the "promised Spirit" received "through faith" (Galatians 3:14), then "all flesh" must include **at least** all Christians for all time.

Why all time? Because if I see a promised blessing for Christians in the New Testament, then my initial presumption will always be that I am included in that promised blessing. That presumption can be overcome, of course, by verses that teach otherwise (such as with modern day miracles), but my starting point will always be that I am included in the promise. For example, why would this promised "seal" or this promised "guarantee" be limited to the first century? Neither is miraculous. And, more to the point, where is the verse that imposes such a limitation?

(5) If the pouring out in Acts 2 **includes** the proclamation of the gospel by "those who preached the good news to you **by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**" (1 Peter 1:12), then "all flesh" must be just that - **all flesh** - because "the gospel is proclaimed in **the whole world**" (Matthew 24:14; Mark 14:9; Mark 16:15).

So, here are the possibilities for the promised pouring out of the Holy Spirit: (1) the baptism with the Holy Spirit, (2) prophecies, dreams, and visions, (3) miraculous gifts, (4) the promised Spirit received through faith, with which we are sealed, and the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, and (5) the proclamation of the gospel to the world.

And so what now is our question? Is our question to decide which one of those possibilities is correct? That is, should we circle one of them and draw a line through all of the others? Is that our next task?

I don't think so. After all, we just went through the list. Did we hear any on that list that we can just absolutely rule out from the start? Can we find a Scripture somewhere that allows us to just immediately draw a line through any of them? Can we be 100% certain that one or more of those possibilities is wrong?

Yes, we know that the promised pouring out of the Holy Spirit is related in some way to the baptism with the Holy Spirit because Jesus tells us that in Acts 1:4-5, but what is that relation?

Should we say that the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God **is** the baptism with the Holy Spirit, or should we say instead that the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God **includes** the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

And likewise with those first century miracles. Should we say that the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God **is** the first century miraculous gifts, or should we say instead that the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God **includes** those first century miraculous gifts?

And what about being "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (Ephesians 1:13-14)? Is that non-miraculous sealing with the Holy Spirit and guarantee of our inheritance included in the promised pouring out of the Spirit?

Do you see where I am headed with this? At each step we have a decision to make - do we read this promised pouring out broadly or narrowly?

And if neither choice violates the Scriptures, then which way should we jump? If neither view can be ruled out, should we prefer the broad view or the narrow view? How should we choose?

Here is my opinion on that question: **If I have a choice between a narrow view of the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God and a broad view of the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God, then I will choose the broad view.**

Now, let me quickly say that this broad view cannot be so broad that it violates something in the Scriptures.

For example, we know that the promised pouring out of the Spirit cannot be viewed so broadly that it would include modern day miracles. When I say that I prefer a broad choice over a narrow choice, I am referring to a broad choice **that violates no Scriptures** and a narrow choice **that likewise**

violates no Scriptures.

And let me also say that **broad does not mean loose**.

We hear a great deal of loose language these days about the Holy Spirit, both in and out of the church. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 4:1 that the Spirit speaks **expressly**, and I think that is a good example for us to follow when we speak **about** the Holy Spirit. We should speak expressly.

We should plainly say what we believe on the subject. We should not hide behind vague, loose language that can be understood in different ways by different listeners. And, I should add, we should treat such loose language the same way whether that loose language is spoken or sung!

And so if I have a choice between a narrow view of the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God and a broad view of the promised pouring out of the Spirit of God, then I will choose the broad view.

But why? When I am faced with such a choice, why do I prefer the broader option? There are several reasons.

One reason is what we found when we studied these verses from just an Old Testament perspective.

We asked what was new about this prophecy, and what we found was that the thing that was new was the tremendous breadth of the promise. The Holy Spirit would not just be dripped out here and there on just a few famous people, but God would instead **pour out** his Spirit on **all** flesh and **even** on the servants.

A second reason why I prefer the broader choice is what we saw on the Handout for Lesson 25.

That Handout compared the direct references to the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, and what we saw on that Handout can only be described as an **explosion** of the Holy Spirit!

We found only 73 direct references to the Holy Spirit in the entire Old Testament, but we found 179 of them in the New Testament. And quite a few from the Old Testament are pointing to the New Testament. Just the book of Acts alone has more direct references to the Holy Spirit than we find in all but three Old Testament books combined!

And there is a third reason why I prefer the broader choice.

When we open the Bible, we find only one criticism about how those present in Acts 2 understood the events in Acts 2. And what is that one criticism? It is the implied criticism in Acts 10-11 that some who were present on that great day described in Acts 2 understood the events of that day too **narrowly**.

And, of course, we know that implied criticism was directed at the very person who quoted the prophecy from Joel on that great day - Peter.

In hindsight, looking back at Acts 2, it is very interesting that it was Peter who later wrote about prophets struggling to understand their own prophecies.

> **1 Peter 1:10-11** - Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours **searched and inquired carefully,** inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

I think Peter knew something firsthand about that struggle. Why? Because I think Peter struggled to understand his own prophecy in Acts 2, which he quoted from Joel 2.

And why do I say that? Because of what we see in Acts 10-11 about Cornelius, who was a Gentile.

> **Acts 11:17-18** - "If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

I don't think Peter really understood the meaning of "all flesh" in Joel 2 until God showed him in Acts 10 what that phrase meant. Before that point, I think Peter was thinking that "all flesh" just meant "all **Jewish** flesh."

In fact, I think the only reason we have Acts 10 is because the apostles were viewing "all flesh" too narrowly in Acts 2.

So what does that all mean? I can tell you what I think it means. I think it means that I should read and understand that promise in Joel 2 as broadly as the Bible will allow me to understand it. I think Peter initially viewed the promise too narrowly, and I want to make sure that I don't make that same mistake!

I am not going to draw a line through any possibility unless there is a Scripture somewhere that tells me I must draw that line, such as what we find with the so-called modern day miracles and such as what we find with those who believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding or teaching us today apart from the written word of God.

And if there is a disagreement among us over whether the promise is **limited** to A or the promise is **limited** to B, then my inclination will be to say that the promise includes **both** A and B **if** the Bible will permit that broad of an understanding of the promise.

Has that always been my view? It has not.

In fact, I had not even thought to ask myself this question about broad versus narrow until I undertook this current study of the Holy Spirit. And why did I think to ask this question now? Because of what we saw when we studied Joel's prophecy from an Old Testament perspective and what we saw when we asked about what was new in that prophecy.

Look at it this way: after looking at the tremendous breadth of this promise in Joel 2, from which direction should we approach the promise?

Should we start at the narrow end, asking whether the promise is limited to just this thing or limited to just that thing? Or should we instead start at the broad end, asking whether the Bible says the promise must exclude this thing or must exclude that thing?

In short, should we be trying to read this great promise as broadly as we possibly can or as narrowly as we possibly can?

And let me ask a related question: why has there been so much agitation and uncertainty in the church about this particular promise?

And if anyone thinks that is an overstatement, I encourage you to read every article on the subject in the *Firm Foundation* published since 1890 as I have done!

There are not too many topics in the church where we find such a broad range of opinions and such long lasting disagreements as we do with the Holy Spirit. Why is that?

I have a proposed answer to that question. I think it may be because of that "blind men and the elephant" problem that we mentioned in an earlier lesson.

Why did those blind men all disagree about what they were examining? The answer is that they all disagreed because they were each focused on only one specific aspect of a much larger topic!

One blind man was feeling only the elephant's leg, while another was feeling only the elephant's tail, and another was feeling only the elephant's trunk. And so, when asked to describe what was before them, one said it was a tree, another said it was a rope, and another said it was a snake.

What was the reason for those mistakes? Why did that first blind men make the mistake of thinking that the elephant was a tree?

The reason for the mistake was **not** that the blind man felt only the elephant's leg - **the reason for the mistake was that the blind incorrectly concluded that the elephant was limited to just that leg.**

And the solution? The solution was to understand that the elephant included all three of those aspects and possibly even more.

Is there a lesson for us in that ancient parable? Have I been guilty of looking at only a single verse and concluding that the Holy Spirit is limited to that one thing, while you have been looking at another verse and concluding that the Holy Spirit is limited to this other one thing?

Is much of that disagreement in the church about the Holy Spirit just another example of the disagreement between these blind men? I think we should at least consider that possibility.

But perhaps, some might say, the disagreement is really over whether or not there is a verse that limits our view. And, yes, that is something we should always be asking. But we need to find that verse! That verse needs to exist!

Not just a verse telling us that the elephant sometimes feels like a tree - but also a verse telling us that elephant does **not** ever feel like a snake! Not just a verse telling us that the pouring out of the Spirit is this one thing - but also a verse telling us that the pouring out of the Spirit is never this other thing.

We have such verses when it comes to modern-day miracles and modern-day guidance apart from the Word; we know that those must be excluded.

For what other aspects of the Holy Spirit do we have such verses? What other aspects of the Holy Spirit must be excluded in this promised pouring out? And what are those verses?

So, back to our question: what is included in the promised pouring out of God's Spirit on all flesh if I follow my proposed approach of preferring a broad answer over a narrow answer if the Scriptures allow both answers?

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the baptism with the Holy Spirit experienced by the apostles in Acts 2 and by the household of Cornelius in Acts 10? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the proclamation of God's word by those in the first century who miraculously prophesied, dreamed dreams, and saw visions? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the miraculous gifts of the Spirit that were done by the apostles and by those upon whom the apostles laid their hands in the first century? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the Holy Spirit given today as seal and a guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of that inheritance? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the fact today that your "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God"? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the "promised Spirit" received today "through faith"? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include the proclamation of the gospel by "those who preached the good news to you **by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**" whether that good news was received directly in the first century or received by hearing the inspired word of God in our own century? Yes, in my opinion, it does. It is limited to that? In my opinion, it is not.

- Does the promised pouring out of God's Spirit include miracles and the direct leading of the Holy Spirit **after** the first century? No, it does not. I must draw a line through those because the

Scriptures plainly teach otherwise.

In short, I think the promised pouring out of God's Spirit includes the entire elephant! I want my understanding of the promised pouring out of God's Spirit to be as broad as the Bible will allow it to be understood.

But what if we disagree? What then?

A very common view is that this promised pouring out is just the baptism with the Holy Spirit and no more. What if that is your view? What will I say then? I will say two things.

First, I will say what I will likely say regarding many of the opinions about the Holy Spirit that we encounter today in the church - I will say that you may be right.

Yes, we hear a few things in the church about the Holy Spirit that are definitely wrong, but most of our disagreements are in the realm of opinion. And if I don't have a verse that makes me 100% certain that your view is wrong, then I have to admit that your view may be right. That is what it means not to be 100% certain. And that is always where we are when we leave behind matters of faith and venture into matters of opinion.

But second, in addressing our disagreement, I will give you my opinion. And my inability to be 100% certain that some view about the Bible is wrong does not mean that I can't be 90% certain! And, of course, others can and I'm sure do feel the same way about my opinions.

But what about the view that the promised pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all flesh is just the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

Yes, that view might be right, but in my opinion it is not right. My opinion is that it is too narrow. My opinion is that the phrase "**all** flesh" is an odd way to describe 12 Jewish men and the household of Cornelius! To me, that sounds more like "**almost no flesh**" than it does like "all flesh!

But am I really saying that "all flesh" means "all flesh"? Am I really saying that "all flesh" includes **everybody** - both believers and unbelievers? Yes, that is what I am saying. I think this promise of God to pour out his Spirit on all flesh is an example where "all" really does mean "all."

But, in saying that, I should add that I think there is an important difference between having the Spirit **poured out** on you and **receiving** the Spirit after it has been poured out on you. I don't think those

two things are the same at all.

Nowhere in the Bible is there a promise that "all flesh" would **receive** the Spirit. Instead, in John 7:39, Jesus said that the Spirit would be **received** by those who believed in him. Also, John 14:16-17 tells us that the world **cannot receive** the Spirit of truth, and Jude 1:19 tells us that worldly people are "**devoid** of the Spirit."

But what about Cornelius? Doesn't Acts 10:47 tell us that Cornelius **received** the Spirit before he was baptized in Acts 10:48? Yes, it does - but that was not a result of the promise of the Spirit for believers.

We know that Cornelius was not a believer when he received the Spirit in Acts 10. How do we know that? We know that because Cornelius had not yet heard the gospel. There was nothing yet for Cornelius to believe.

In Acts 11:14, an angel told Cornelius that Peter would declare a message by which Cornelius would be saved, and Acts 11:15 tells us that the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius as Peter "began to speak." Cornelius had not yet heard the gospel, and so Cornelius could not yet have been a believer. "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?" (Romans 10:14)

So what is the conclusion? The conclusion is that Cornelius' receipt of the Spirit was not the result of any promise from God to believers. Cornelius' receipt of the Spirit was not the promised receipt of the Spirit by believers in John 7:39, and it was not the promised receipt of the gift of the Spirit following baptism in Acts 2:38. We know that with certainty.

So what was it? Cornelius received the Spirit of God, not as a result of God's promise to believers, but rather to teach Peter something about God's promise to all flesh. The Holy Spirit fell on Gentile Cornelius to teach someone else a lesson, just as the Holy Spirit had much earlier fallen on Gentile Balaam to teach someone else a lesson.

In the Bible, God certainly on occasion gave his Spirit and miraculous experiences to those who were not believers. We see that with Cornelius' vision in Acts 10:3 and the subsequent events, but we also see it with Saul's heavenly vision in Acts 26:19. And, as with Cornelius, Saul's vision was also related to the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 26:20).
Cornelius and Saul were both unbelievers when those events happened, and, in each case, God did what he did for a specific purpose at a specific time.

John 14:16-17 tells us that the world **cannot receive** the Spirit of truth, and so we know that any such promise of **receiving** the Spirit cannot be directed to "all flesh." And yet this promise of God pouring out his Spirit is specifically directed to "all flesh."

And so I think we must conclude that receiving the Spirit of God is different from having the Spirit of God poured out on you.

And that means we also have different promises. We have a promise of the Spirit being poured out on all flesh, and we have a different promise of the Spirit being received by believers. We have two different promises for two different (but overlapping) groups: all flesh and believers.

But how can we say that the Spirit of God is poured out on the disobedient?

I think we can say that because the Bible tells us that even the disobedient world has some interactions with the Spirit of God. Perhaps it is like water being poured out on all the earth - when that happened in Genesis, Noah and his family lived and the others drowned. But the water from God was poured out on all flesh.

What interactions do disbelievers have with the Spirit of God?

- They are **convicted** by the Holy Spirit.

> **John 16:8** - And when he comes, **he will convict the world** concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

- They **resist** the Holy Spirit.

> **Acts 7:51** - "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, **you always resist the Holy Spirit.** As your fathers did, so do you."

- They **do not accept** the things of the Spirit.

> **1 Corinthians 2:12-14** - Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. **The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually**

> **discerned.**

- They **outrage** the Spirit.

> **Hebrews 10:29** - How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has **outraged the Spirit of grace**?

- The gospel is **preached** to them by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

> **1 Peter 1:12** - It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through **those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**, things into which angels long to look.

If the world can resist, refuse, and outrage the Spirit, then doesn't that tell us that those in the world are having some sort of interaction with the Spirit? If they are convicted by the Spirit, then doesn't that tell us the same thing? That those in the world are, as we say in the legal business, somehow in the jurisdiction of the Spirit?

The question is not whether the Spirit has been poured out on them. The question is whether they will receive the Spirit or reject the Spirit. The question is whether they will sink or swim. When the heavens open up and the water pours down, are you in the ship with Noah or are you outside that ship trusting in your own power to save yourself?

Here is what I think we are seeing in these verses:

- God's promise to **pour out** his Holy Spirit was directed to all flesh - to everyone.
- A different promise of the Holy Spirit is **received** by some - by believers.
- That different promise of the Holy Spirit is **rejected** by all others - by non-believers.

And remember what we said about Joel 2:28 when we looked at it the first time. The promise to all flesh is the outpouring of the Spirit. The prophecies, the visions, and the dreams are not promised by Joel to all flesh. Instead, those activities are promised to specific groups as evidence that the promised outpouring to all flesh had occurred.

So how then is the Spirit of God poured out on everyone in the world, including even unbelievers? Simple - through the proclamation of the gospel to everyone in the world. We just read about it a moment ago:

> **1 Peter 1:12** - It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through **those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**, things into which angels long to look.

And perhaps now we know why the evidence of the promise in Joel 2 was not all miracles, but was instead was just prophecy, visions, and dreams. As we said, each of those activities is a way by which God spoke to the world. I think the focus here is on the proclamation of God's word - "in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven."

And we don't have to leave Acts 2 to find an example of that. Those listening to the apostles in Acts 2, some of whom were mocking the apostles, were in the world. And what happened to all of those present on that great day when the Spirit of God was poured out on all flesh? What happened to all of them is that they all heard the gospel. In fact, they heard it in their own language. That miracle was specifically designed so that **all** would hear the gospel. Only some of them obeyed the gospel, but they all heard the gospel.

> **Acts 2:33** - Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.**

"He has poured out **this** that **you yourselves are seeing and hearing**." And what is **this**? This is the Holy Spirit. And what were they all **hearing**? They were all hearing the gospel.

#JOEL