

Joel Lesson 30

This is our eighth (and, I believe, final) lesson on the final five verses of Joel 2. So, yes, after today, we will have had eight lessons on five verses! But, as we have seen, the prophecy in those five verses is crucial to our understanding of the great events that we find in the opening chapters of Acts.

Our plan today is to finish our study of the second chapter of Joel by looking at the final two and a half verses from Joel 2 that Peter quoted in Acts 2.

Acts 2:19-20

Acts 2:19-20 - And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, **before** the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

In these two verses from Acts 2, Peter quotes Joel 2:30-31, which we looked at previously from just an Old Testament perspective. Let's now look at these two verses again to see what more we can learn about them in the New Testament.

And, as we said before, there are two events in these two verses, with the first event explicitly said to occur "before" the second event.

- The first event is described as "wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke" and "the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood."
- The second event, which happens after that first event, is described as the coming of "the day of the Lord," "the great and magnificent day."

And our question, of course, is what are these two events?

Let's start with the second event. **What is this great and magnificent day of the Lord?**

I think there are three possibilities (which you can find listed on the Handout for Lesson 30).

- This great and magnificent day of the Lord is the last great day at the end of the world.

- This great and magnificent day of the Lord is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70.
- This great and magnificent day of the Lord is the day of Pentecost when the eternal kingdom of Christ was established in Acts 2.

And what then about the first event - **the wonders and signs**? For each of those possible second events, what is the most likely *preceding* first event?

- **Option 1:** If the great and magnificent day of the Lord is the end of the world, then the wonders and signs are most likely the events described in 2 Peter 3.

2 Peter 3:12 - Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

- **Option 2:** If the great and magnificent day of the Lord is the destruction of Jerusalem, then the wonders and signs are most likely some of the events described in Matthew 24. (And, yes, Matthew 24:29 does sound a bit like the end of the world, but we know it is **not** the end of the world because we have also read Matthew 24:34.)

Matthew 24:29 - Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

- **Option 3:** If the great and magnificent day of the Lord is the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, then the wonders and signs are most likely the events in the life of Christ that are described by Peter in Acts 2.

Acts 2:22-24 - Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and **wonders and signs** that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Can we rule out any of these three options? I don't think so. In my opinion, one of these options is more likely than the other two, but I think any of them could be correct - and each of them certainly

has its defenders!

And we should note that, if we wanted to, we could create a few more options from these three options that we are considering.

For example, the first event could be the signs and wonders from the life of Christ, and the second event could be the end of Jerusalem or the end of the world - both of which occurred **after** those signs and wonders from the life of Christ. But I think the most natural way to read these two verses is with a more immediate connection between the first event and the second event, which is why are looking at only these three pairs of events.

So, in my opinion, which of these three possibilities is more likely than the other two? I prefer the **third** option - that the day of the Lord is the Day of Pentecost, and that the signs and wonders are describing the life of Christ before the establishment of his eternal kingdom.

Why do I prefer that third option? Several reasons.

First, I like the **time frame** with the third option.

When Peter quotes Joel 2 in Acts 2, Peter says “this is that.” We know the word “this” in Peter’s statement includes at least the outpouring of God’s Spirit that we find in the first part of the quotation from Joel, but, with the third option, the word “this” also includes the great and awesome day of the Lord that we find in the second part of the quotation from Joel.

In short, the third option keeps the focus of Joel’s prophecy on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The second option, by contrast, would push things ahead about 40 years, and the first option would push things ahead 2000 years and counting. So, the time frame is one reason I like the third option.

Second, I like the **context** with the third option.

Peter quotes verses from Joel 2 to explain what was happening on the very day that he quoted those verses. Only the third option maintains that same context into these two verses.

The second option shifts the context of Joel 2 to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the first option shifts the context of Joel 2 to the end of the world. But with the third option, the context of Joel 2 remains on the events in Acts 2, and (as we will see) that same context will continue into Joel 3. In short, there is much less jumping around with the third option.

Third, I also like the third option because of the evidence for that option that I can see in Peter's sermon.

Yes, we found potential scriptural support for each of the three options, but the scriptural support for the third option came from Peter *himself* in Acts 2 *itself* immediately after Peter's quotation of Joel 2 in that same chapter.

Acts 2:19-24 - And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, **a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst,** as you yourselves know — this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

In my opinion, that is pretty strong evidence, and that evidence by itself might be reason enough for me to prefer the third option.

And, yes, I think there is some figurative, apocalyptic language being used here to describe these events as involving "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke" and as a day when "the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood" - but such figurative language is also used in Matthew 24 for the second option.

Also, this vivid language about the darkening of the heavenly bodies fits very well with what was happening in both the **spiritual** realm and in the **physical** realm while Jesus was being crucified.

Luke 23:44-45 - It was now about the sixth hour, and there was **darkness over the whole land** until the ninth hour, **while the sun's light failed.** And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

The sixth hour and the ninth hour are noon and 3 PM, and so there was darkness over the whole land in the middle of the day.

And keep in mind that this strange event had happened just 50 **days** earlier! Many of the people listening to Peter had just experienced total darkness in the middle of the day. I suspect that most of

them were still talking about and wondering about what had happened.

And now these same people were hearing Peter talk about a prophesied time when “the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood.” What do we think those people would have been thinking about when they heard that part of Joel’s prophecy?

But what about the great and magnificent day of the Lord? Can that great and magnificent day really be this day of Pentecost in Acts 2? Was that day in Acts 2 really great, magnificent, and awesome?

Absolutely it was!

If someone favors option one or option two over option three, then, as I have said, that person may be right. I don’t think we can entirely rule those other two options out.

But, if someone rejects option three because that person doesn’t think the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 was great enough, or magnificent enough, or awesome enough - **then we have a problem!**

Why? Because the day when the eternal kingdom of Christ was established was most certainly a great and awesome day! It was most certainly a great and magnificent day!

Let’s just think for a moment about all of the great things that happened on that day in Acts 2.

I think we all know the events of Acts 2. We know what was seen and heard on that day. But what about what was not seen or heard? What was going on behind the scenes, so to speak, on that great day when the kingdom of Christ was established?

I think we can point to quite a number of things that were happening on that great day in Acts 2.

- The great promise in Joel 2, Isaiah 32, Isaiah 44, Ezekiel 39, and Zechariah 12 of the outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit was fulfilled on that day.
- God’s promise in Daniel 2:44 to “set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed” was fulfilled on that day.
- God’s promise in Daniel 2:44 to “break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end” was also fulfilled on that day while the church was still in its infancy. (See also Daniel 2:35.)
- The great promise of Isaiah 2:3 that “out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the

LORD from Jerusalem” was fulfilled on that day.

- The great prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14 of “dominion and glory and a kingdom” being given by the Ancient of Days to the Son of Man was fulfilled on that day.
- Jesus’ great promise in Matthew 16:18 to build his church was fulfilled on that day.
- Jesus’ great promise in Matthew 16:19 to give Peter “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” was fulfilled on that day when Peter preached the first gospel sermon.
- The great prophecy in Zechariah 13:1 that “on that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness” was fulfilled on that day.
- The restoration of the kingdom to Israel that the apostles asked Jesus about in Acts 1:6 after being taught by Jesus about the kingdom for 40 days happened on that day when Jesus, a descendant of King David, occupied the throne of David. (See also Acts 2:30.)

What can we say about such a day? What we can say is that it was a **great** day! It was a **magnificent** day! It was an **awesome** day! It was **a day of the Lord!**

And so I prefer the third option over the other two options. I think the great and awesome day of the Lord in Joel 2 and Acts 2 was the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 rather than the last day of Jerusalem or the last day of the world.

But is there any more evidence for that view? Yes, perhaps there is.

One of our questions about Joel 2 is why Peter quoted Joel 2, or, more precisely, why Peter was inspired to quote Joel 2. With the third option, the answer to that question is pretty easy: **Joel 2 was Peter’s sermon outline!** They match point by point!

- Joel 2 starts with the outpouring of God’s Spirit, and Peter’s sermon started with that event as well.
- Joel 2 then talks about how God’s word would be conveyed to man at that time after the outpouring of God’s Spirit, and Peter’s sermon itself was an example of God’s word being conveyed to man.

- Joel 2 then talks about the signs and the wonders that happened prior to the day of the Lord, which for Option 3 are the signs and wonders of Christ, including his death and resurrection. That is what Peter discusses next in Acts 2:22-32 - the signs and wonders in verse 22, the crucifixion in verse 23, and the resurrection in verse 32 - all of which happened prior to the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
- The quotation from Joel 2 then ends with those who call on the name of the Lord being saved - and that is precisely where Peter ends his sermon in Acts 2:38-39 ("For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, **everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself**").

I think Joel 2 was Peter's sermon outline. And several of our questions about Joel 2 are answered when we view Joel 2:28-32 that way.

As we just saw, it explains why Peter quoted Joel in the first place, but I think it also explains why Peter ended his quote halfway through verse 32. Peter could have continued his quotation to the end of Joel 2 or even into Joel 3 without leaving the subject of Acts 2, so why did Peter stop where he did?

I think the answer is simple. Peter ended his quote of Joel 2 at the same point where Peter ended his sermon - with the gospel call!

Yes, the second half of verse 32 explains the first half, but the first half of verse 32 ends at the point of salvation, which is precisely the point where Peter's first gospel sermon ended. (And, I might add, also precisely the point where **every** gospel sermon ends! If a sermon does not end with the gospel call, then that sermon may be many things, but it is not a *gospel* sermon. One of the many patterns that we find in the book of Acts is the pattern gospel sermon in Acts 2.)

But what about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70? Could that day be this great and awesome day of the Lord?

As I have already said, it could be, but I don't think it is. And one reason I don't think it is comes from the last verse in the Old Testament - Malachi 4:6. And we will read that verse, but let's start a verse earlier in Malachi 4:5.

Malachi 4:5 - Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the

LORD comes.

Malachi 4:5 contains a prophecy that I think is parallel to the prophecy in Joel 2:30-31. They both describe something that would happen “before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes” - one being the ministry of John the Baptist and the other (in my opinion) being the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. But let’s look at the next verse:

Malachi 4:6 - And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with **a decree of utter destruction**.

What is that decree of utter destruction that would come if the people did not heed the message of John the Baptist? I think it is the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

And, if so, what does that tell us? I think it tells us that the great and awesome day of the Lord and the destruction of Jerusalem are two **separate** events.

I think Malachi 4:5 tells us that the first of those two events was going to happen **no matter what**. But Malachi 4:6 describes the fall of Jerusalem as a **conditional** event that could be averted if the people turned their hearts to God.

And so I think Malachi is describing two different events in the final two verses of the Old Testament - the **unconditional** establishment of the eternal kingdom in verse 5, and the **conditional** destruction of Jerusalem in verse 6. And that is another reason why I favor the third option over the second option.

Acts 2:21

Acts 2:21 - And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

When we looked at this verse from only an Old Testament perspective, we said it would very likely have been viewed at that time as a promise of **physical** salvation from the **earthly** kingdoms threatening Judah.

But, now, from a New Testament perspective, we know exactly what was being promised in Joel 2 - the salvation from sin and death made available **only** through the gospel of Christ and possible **only**

because of the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

The promise here is **spiritual** salvation rather than **physical** salvation. And how do we know that for sure? We know that for sure because Peter was not the only Apostle to quote Joel 2:32 - Paul also quotes that great prophecy.

Romans 10:12-17 - For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. **For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all **obeyed the gospel**. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**

Paul confirms what we just said. The salvation in Joel 2:32 is spiritual salvation. It is the salvation that we preach. It is the salvation that comes when people hear the gospel and obey the gospel. It is the salvation through faith that comes from hearing the word of Christ. That is what Paul tells us in Romans 10.

And what does it mean to call upon the name of the Lord? Paul also answered that question, or rather Ananias did when he spoke to Paul.

Acts 22:16 - And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, **calling on his name**.

We call on God's name when we answer God's call - and God calls us through the gospel of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 - To this **he called you through our gospel**, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And one more point - what we are seeing here is yet another reason why I prefer the third option for the previous verses.

With that third option, the temporal order here is **linear** - the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the day of Pentecost, and the gospel call. Those events are all lined up in order on the time line.

But with the other two options, we leap ahead in time to either AD 70 or the end of the world **prior** to the gospel call at the end of Peter's sermon. The events are not in temporal order with those other two options.

But what about the end of Joel 2:32 that Peter did not quote in Acts 2?

We know that the end of Joel 2:32 is connected to the beginning of Joel 2:32 because the end of the verse begins with the connecting word "for." And we know that the first half of Joel 2:32 is discussing our salvation through the gospel because Paul tells us that in Romans 10, where he quotes Joel 2:32.

And so, what I think we know is that our hypothetical Old Testament scholar was right about the **end** of verse 32 - it is discussing **the faithful remnant**. Those who escape and those who survive are those who obey the gospel of Christ. That view fits both the context and the time frame. Those who obey the gospel are those who have escaped.

Hebrews 2:3 - How shall we **escape** if we neglect such a great salvation?

2 Peter 1:4 - By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped from the corruption that is in the world** because of sinful desire.

So where are we? Where we are is that we now have only one remaining question about Joel 2.

What period of time is or was "the last days"?

In Acts 2:17, Peter begins his quote of Joel by saying: "And **in the last days** it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh..." The verse Peter is quoting says: "And it shall come to pass **afterward**, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh..."

Why the difference between "last days" and "afterward," and to what do the "last days" refer?

Let's start with that second question because in answering it I think we will also answer the first question.

Here are the most likely options for the second question (which are also listed on the Handout for

Lesson 30):

- **OPTION 1:** The time period of the “last days” refers to the church age starting in Acts 2 and extending until the last day.
- **OPTION 2:** The time period of the “last days” refers to the time leading up to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- **OPTION 3:** The time period of the “last days” refers to the age of miracles, which ended at or around the death of the last apostle, likely John and likely around AD 80-90.
- **OPTION 4:** The time period of the “last days” refers to what is today usually called the “end times.” That is, the “last days” is a time period close to and leading up to the end of the world.

Of those four options, I think we can draw a line through one of them. As to the remaining three, I think any of them could be correct, but I think one of them is more likely than the others.

Which option can we rule out?

I think we can rule out Option 4, which is the “end times” option. Whatever period of time Peter is referring to, I think we know it must include the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Peter says that very plainly in Acts 2:16-17. Peter says **this is that**. Option 4 says **this is not that**. And so, I think we can draw a line through Option 4.

What about Option 2 and the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70?

When it comes to the fall of Jerusalem, there are two big mistakes that seem to come up a lot - some people see the fall of Jerusalem everywhere, and some people see the fall of Jerusalem nowhere.

The first mistake causes some to misinterpret what the Bible says about the end of the world (such as in the second part of Matthew 24), while the second mistake causes others to misinterpret what the Bible says about the end of Jerusalem (such as in the first part of Matthew 24).

Some may say that I am falling into that second error here, but I don't think so. In any event, **I do not think that Acts 2 is telling us anything about the fall of Jerusalem**. I think that both Joel 2 and Acts 2 are both telling us about the establishment of the kingdom of Christ and telling us about the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

What about the third option, the end of the age of miracles? If, in fact, Peter has **narrowed** what Joel proclaimed so that “afterward” has become a short period of time called the “last days,” then this option is the most likely.

And perhaps we can say that it would make sense for the duration of the “last days” to be determined by the specific activities that are said to occur: prophecy, dreams, and visions.

The third option is my second favorite option, but my favorite option is the first option - that the period of the “last days” refers to the church age.

Why do I like the first option the best?

First, it does not require us to interpret Acts 2:17 (which says “last days”) any differently than Joel 2:28 (which just says “afterward”). With the first option, they both just mean “afterward,” which means that Peter was not necessarily referring to a short period of time with his use of the word “days.”

Second, the church age fits nicely with what Peter promises in his sermon. Yes, there are some things that ended soon (such as prophecies, dreams, and vision), but not everything ended soon. The promise of salvation in verse 38, for example, is a promise for the entire church age.

But again, if you tell me that you prefer the first or second option, I will just say that you may be right. (But if you prefer the fourth option, I will say that I think you are wrong.)

We have reached the end of chapter two - **again!**

And, yes, I suspect we are not all in agreement about the details of this prophecy. And, as I said when we started, that sort of disagreement over matters of opinion is a good thing. It shows that we are studying our Bibles trying to figure these issues out, it shows that we care about these issues, and it confirms that we do not have any creed or counsel telling us what we must think about these issues.

But with such disagreements aside, I want to end Joel 2 with something about which I am certain that we all agree. I want us to end this chapter by looking at the big picture of this prophecy - and that big picture is great blessings from God.

God promises here to pour out his Spirit on all flesh! Whatever that means, we know it is a promise of great blessings! And we know that the entire world was blessed by the Messiah just as God had long

before promised to Abraham, and we know that the people of God were blessed by the kingdom of Christ just as God had long before promised to Daniel, Isaiah, and the other prophets.

Most of our disagreements in the church about the Holy Spirit are really just disagreements about how God has blessed the world and blessed his people!

And we should not let any such disagreements obscure the big picture of this wonderful prophecy.

Christ brought great blessings to the entire world and even greater blessings to the faithful people of God.

So far, Joel has moved from a locust invasion at the beginning of Joel 1 to the great blessings of Christ and the kingdom of Christ at the end of Joel 2! What's next? Joel 3 is next!

Joel 3:1

Joel 3:1 - "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,

What part of verse 1 is the most important clue in properly interpreting and understanding verse 1?

Is it just the part that says "when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem"? No, it is not. That phrase is certainly crucial, but if that was all we had we would have a big problem with verse 1. Why? Because there are numerous times in the Bible where we see God restoring the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem. For example, we saw such an event when we studied the book of Ezra and learned all about the return of the exiles under King Cyrus.

So how do we know which restoration is under discussion here? The answer is that we look at the time frame in first half of verse 1. That time frame is the most important clue we have in properly understanding this verse.

And, having studied both the Bible and many commentaries about the Bible, I think I can say two things about prophetic time frames in the word of God: (1) most prophecies have them, and (2) most commentaries ignore them! And that fact likely explains why so many commentaries take so many wrong turns. But rest assured that we will not ignore any time frames in our study of Joel!

So, what is the time frame of the prophecy at the beginning of Joel 3? The time frame is this: "In

those days and at that time.”

What days? What time? The Bible answers those questions for us. Just look at the previous verse at the end of Joel 2.

Joel 2:32 - And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

When Joel 3:1 refers to those days and that time, it is referring to the days and the time when the previous verse occurred. I don't think there is any other way to read Joel 3:1.

And when did the previous verse occur? Again, we don't have to guess. The Bible answers that question.

Peter quoted Joel 2:32 in Acts 2:21, and, referring to the great establishment of the church in Acts 2, Peter in Acts 2:16 said **this is that**. And Paul quoted Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13, again confirming that it was fulfilled in the church and in the first century.

And so, we know with complete certainty that “those days” and “that time” refer to the time when the gospel would be proclaimed to all and when those who obeyed the gospel would be added to the Lord's church, which all started in Acts 2.

I think we know all of that from looking at Joel 3 and Acts 2, but I also think we can reach that same conclusion another way.

As math teachers like to ask, can we check our answer by working the problem another way? Yes, we can. We can get to the same result by looking, not at Joel 3 and Acts 2, but by looking at Joel 3 and Acts 1.

When Acts 1 opens, verse 3 tells us that Jesus appeared to the apostles during forty days and spoke to them about the kingdom of God. We don't know for sure, but I suspect Jesus taught the apostles a great deal about these prophecies from Joel, along with many other Old Testament prophecies.

And, if so, I suspect Jesus taught them about this prophecy right here in Joel 3:1 - that God would **restore** the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem. And note the keyword in that prophecy - **restore**. Some sort of **restoration** had been promised in Joel 3:1 for the people of Israel.

Now, jump ahead a few verses in Acts 1, and what is the question that we hear from those same apostles?

Acts 1:6 - So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time **restore** the kingdom to Israel?”

Now isn't that interesting. The prophecy in Joel 3:1 is that God would **restore** the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the question in Acts 1:6 is when God would **restore** the kingdom to Israel.

I think that in Act 1:6 the apostles were simply asking Jesus when Joel 3:1 would be fulfilled! And how did Jesus respond?

Acts 1:7-8 - He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 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.”

In short, Jesus told them to leave the timing to God, but they would know the timing when they received the promised Holy Spirit. They would know when Joel 3:1 was fulfilled. And they did know.

When the apostles received the promised Holy Spirit happened at the beginning of Acts 2, what did Peter then know? Peter knew the timing of Joel 3:1! And Peter knew the timing of the previous verses in Joel 2! Instead of asking “when,” we suddenly hear Peter proclaiming “this is that!”

Peter now knew when! In Acts 2, Peter and the other apostles all discovered the answer to the question they asked in Acts 1!

And what can we conclude from that? What we can conclude is that Joel 3:1 was fulfilled in Acts 2.

And, given that we have now reached the same conclusion by taking two different paths, I think we should be pretty confident in our answer to the question of when Joel 3:1 was fulfilled.

And that leads us to our next question: If that is our time frame, then what is this promised restoration in Joel 3:1? How did God “restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem” in Acts 2?

I think we will find a number of ways in which God did that, but one way God did that is explained to us by Peter himself in Acts 2.

Acts 2:29-31 - Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, **and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne**, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

One way in which God restored the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem was by restoring the throne of David - that is, by restoring the kingdom to Israel as Acts 1:6 describes it.

The throne of David had been unoccupied since the days of King Zedekiah. We should recall that he was the king whose rebellion against Babylon led to the destruction of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. And what happened to Zedekiah?

2 Kings 25:6-7 - Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon.

Zedekiah was the final occupant of the throne of David in the Old Testament, and that throne was still unoccupied when the events of the New Testament began to occur.

But that throne would not remain unoccupied for much longer! And who was the first person in the New Testament to be told that? Mary. Mary was told that she was to be the mother of an eternal king.

Luke 1:30-33 - And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. **And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.**"

And what word can we use to describe that great event? I can't think of a better word than the word that is used in Joel 3:1 and that is used in Acts 1:6 - the word "**restoration**"! God restored the kingdom to Israel by setting Christ on the throne of David to reign forever over a kingdom that has no end!

#JOEL