

“IN THE LAST DAYS”

INTRODUCTION

The term, “in the last days” in scriptures, usually refers to the days in which the Lord speaks to us in the gospel age. Cf Heb. 1:2. It had been prophesied that the Lord’s house would begin in the last days. Isa. 2:2-3. The first time the term is found in the New Testament is in Acts where Luke records the quotation of Peter who quotes from the book of Joel in the Old Testament. IN this context, Joel, a minor prophet, foretold several things that would occur IN “the last days” **before** the great and notable day of the Lord at the end of the world. (Give context of Acts 2:14-21, then read or quote the text itself.)

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, Joel said God was to pour out His “Spirit” on all flesh.

- A. This began on the Jewish celebration of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Spirit came upon the Jewish apostles, and only the apostles. Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:2-11, 26; 2:1-4, 13-14 (Tie these verses together with the pronoun “them” associated with the apostles).
1. The term “all flesh” in Joel’s promise has to be qualified, for He was not to come upon animal flesh, or upon all human flesh, but upon “all flesh”, in the sense that He would come upon Jewish and Gentile flesh through certain representatives of these races.
 2. This prophecy only **began** to be fulfilled that day, and did not fall upon the 120 disciples, (including the women) or upon all the thousands of Jews who were gathered there.
- B. Then, the Spirit DID later fall upon the Gentiles, completing of that promise of “all flesh” receiving the Spirit. Acts 10:44; 11:15-18
1. Not ALL of the Gentile race received the Spirit in this baptismal measure.
 2. The Gentile house of Cornelius was thus the “representative head” of all non Jews
- C. The miraculous measure of the Spirit would be given to **some** (not all) believers in the miraculous age of the Spirit.
1. This would be done through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, and would enable them to receive various gifts of the Spirit. Acts 6:5-7
 - a. Among the disciples was Stephen who preached to the Jews in Acts 7.
 - b. Also among the disciples, was Philip who preached in Samaria. Acts 8:5-6, 12-13
 2. Following Philip’s preaching, a new convert named Simon, was told that such gifts came through the “laying on of the apostles’ hands.” Acts 8:13-21
 3. The gifts were for the benefit of edification and revealing things in the immediate future, until such time that the New Testament message would be recorded. 1 Cor. 12:4-7
 - a. Obviously, the prophets were the agents through whom the name “Christian” came into existence in Antioch. Acts 11:26-27
 - b. Paul sometimes had to receive guidance from the prophets in his travels.
 4. These gifts were temporary, and were to cease when the apostles and those upon whom they laid their hands, passed away. 1 Cor. 13:8
 5. The many signs and wonders had begun on Pentecost, and continued for awhile in early Christianity.

II. 2nd, the destruction of Jerusalem would be “in the last days.”

A. Jesus had foretold it's destruction and the hold it had upon Christianity. Matt. 24:29

1. The figure of the sun, moon and stars was often used in the Old Testament to picture the demise or end of rulers and nations. Cf Isa. 13:1, 6-13; 14:4, 12

2. Jesus used the **same figure** to describe the plight of Jerusalem and it's inhabitants when the Roman army would come in and bring destruction upon them. Matt. 24:29; cf Acts 2:20

B. Apparently, Joel was highlighting some of the events of this period that would occur **“before”** that great and notable day when the Lord comes again.

III. 3rd, Joel said salvation would be offered to man in “the last days.”

A. Joel finally said, “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Acts 2:21

1. This statement in the last verse from Joel's prophecy was just before Peter began speaking.

a. He used the miracles, wonders and signs to establish his credibility. v. 22

b. He then spoke of the death of Jesus of Nazareth as part of God's plan. v. 23

c. He next spoke of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. vv. 24-26, 31-32

d. He also spoke of the ascension. vv. 33-34

e. Finally, he spoke of the coronation of Jesus as Lord and Christ. v. 36

2. The results of Peter's sermon were remarkable.

a. Thousands of men “heard” the message by Peter. vv. 22, 37

b. Many were convicted of sin. v. 37

c. They sincerely asked what they needed to do. v. 37

d. They were told to repent and be baptized (immersed in water). v. 38

e. They were told that they would receive the remission of sins as a result.

f. They were exhorted to **“save”** themselves by being baptized, and some 3,000 did so that day. vv. 40-41

1) Joel had said that whosoever called on the name of the Lord would be saved, which was not a “prayer”, but a submission to the authority of the in obeying him.

2) The apostle Paul was told to arise and **be baptized** to wash away his sins, which is said to be “calling on the name of the Lord.”

g. Being saved, they were added TO the “church.” v. 47

h. The saved then continued in worship unto God. v. 42

B. Thus, the final part of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled with the harvest of souls.

CONCLUSION

I. The things we have studied refer to great events that would occur “before” that great and notable day when the Lord is to come.

II. Are you ready for that great day?

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