

Shayla: I thought Joel's reference to the "Day of the Lord" dealt with the end times. Why does Peter apply it to the day of Pentecost?

In detail: I was just reading in Acts 2 about the Holy Spirit. I then became confused at 2:16-21 where it references Joel. I remembered you referenced these verses for the end times, so why did they use it here when the people were confused about all the different languages?

Midrash:

- **Joel 2:27-32 HCSB** You will know that I am present in Israel and that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other. My people will never again be put to shame. (28) After this I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. (29) I will even pour out My Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days. (30) I will display wonders in the heavens and on the earth: blood, fire, and columns of smoke. (31) The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awe-inspiring Day of the LORD comes. (32) Then everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved, for there will be an escape for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the LORD promised, among the survivors the LORD calls.
- **Acts 2:16-21 HCSB** On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: (17) **And it will be** in the last days, says God, that **I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.** (18) **I will even pour out My Spirit on My male and female slaves in those days,** and they will prophesy. (19) **I will display wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.** (20) **The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and remarkable day of the Lord comes;** (21) **then whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

The phrase, "the day of the Lord" appears twenty-five times in the Bible. Twenty of those are in the Old Testament and **every one of them are** obvious references to a battle. It is a battle that will take place "in the last days." Of the five New Testament references, this one in Acts is the first. The second two, 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 2 Corinthians 1:14 are references to the "day of **the Lord Jesus**" and refer to the "Blessed Hope." The next is in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and is also references the "Blessed Hope." The final New Testament reference is in 2 Peter 3:10 and it encompasses the "Blessed Hope" at the beginning of the verse and the new Heaven and new Earth at the end. So clearly the principle intent is a discussion of the end times.

Yet we **cannot** ignore the fact that it matches Romans 10:13 almost to the word.

- **Romans 10:13 HCSB** For **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

So I believe that there is definitely more than just an end time prophetic application here.

You need to keep in mind that in the Old Covenant times the Holy Spirit would come and go, come and go. The Spirit would come upon Samson and he would perform some great feat. The Spirit would come upon King Saul and he would prophecy. However the Spirit would go when there was sin or when the Lord was done with that person. That is why when David was caught in his sin with Bathsheba he cried out:

- **Psalms 51:11 HCSB** Do not banish me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me.

This day of Pentecost was different. This time the hope of the Holy Spirit coming and **STAYING** was at long last possible. It was the indication of a new era and an indication that

the next phase was beginning. Did you notice that the Holy Spirit was to be available to “all of humanity” and not merely the Jews of Israel?

Peter was at the beginning of that phase, the so-called “Church Age” or “Age of Grace” (as if grace did not exist in the Old Covenant!). We are nearing the end of that phase. The age began with sons and daughters prophesying, young men seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams. The Holy Spirit is poured out on all of us. Thank God, for we will certainly need that blessed Presence as the end of the phase will be marked by blood, fire, smoke, the sun turned dark and the moon all bloody.

So Joel’s prophecy was that there would be a coming age that would begin with the Holy Spirit’s visitation and would end with the Day of the Lord. Peter was telling the Jewish people present who were very familiar with that prophecy that that particular Feast of Pentecost was the beginning of that era.

As a soteriological (theology of salvation) sidebar in all this eschatological (study of the end of man) discussion, note that salvation is only possible BEFORE the great and remarkable day of the Lord. This is one more reason to adhere to the Prewrath model of the rapture rather than the Pretribulational model.