

Session 9 The End-Time Outpouring of the Spirit

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

This is our ninth class and session notes number eleven. The session notes don't correspond exactly with the class number. We're looking at the most well-known passage in the book of Joel, Joel 2:28-32. Typically it's known by the line, "I will pour out My Spirit" (Joel 2:28). There are quite a few significant descriptions of what the Lord plans to do related to the global outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These are very significant and often overlooked. Even though we honor the main point of the passage, "I will pour out My Spirit," you can't ignore what comes before: "It shall come to pass afterwards." You want to circle *afterwards*; that's the key word in this whole passage.

"IT SHALL COME TO PASS AFTERWARDS... I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH"

"I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens"—or the sky—"and in the earth" (Joel 2:28-30). The three particular types of wonders that will be shown on the earth are blood, fire, and smoke. Those are terrifying signs, by the way.

Now he goes to the heavenly wonders. The sun will be so dramatically touched by the power of God that it will turn into darkness, and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31). Now this whole thing will happen before the second coming; that's another key word, *before*: "before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord" (ibid). The signs in the sky and on the earth, the outpouring of the Spirit, will happen before the second coming. That's one of the key verses that lets us know there will be a global outpouring of the Spirit, backed up by signs in creation, signs in the heavens and signs in the earth. These will grow and escalate in their importance and magnitude leading up to the second coming of Christ.

"WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED"

Now look at verse 32. The idea here is that in the midst of all this danger, and even drama, though danger is the part Joel is emphasizing here, "It shall come to pass that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32, paraphrased). "Anyone who establishes a prayer life," is really what He's saying. He's not talking about a one-off, "Help Lord," on the way down, when you suddenly find yourself troubled. This refers to those who have set their life in a place of calling on the Lord. Even in the midst of this drama and trouble, this glory and greatness, whoever will call on His name shall be saved, or delivered. To call on the name of the Lord is the same idea in the New Testament as, "Watch and pray." Jesus used the phrase, "Watch." Those who watch, those who wait, are calling on the name of the Lord. It's much more than a one-off prayer of desperation in crisis. If you're in crisis, give that cry, but it's talking about more than that; it's talking about a life of calling on the name of the Lord.

JERUSALEM WILL BE THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE ON THE ENTIRE PLANET

"For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance" (Joel 2:32b). Mount Zion is a subunit of Jerusalem. It's only several acres; it's a small part of Jerusalem. But Mount Zion and Jerusalem often are synonymous ideas. It's literal, earthly Jerusalem. "There will be deliverance."

You say, “Well that’s good.” The point is, Jerusalem will be the most dangerous place on the entire planet. That’s the point. Yet even in the most dangerous city on the earth, there will be supernatural intervention and deliverance. If it’s true in the most dangerous city on the earth, then we know it’s true in the other cities of the earth. Because again, this passage is speaking directly to the Jewish people in the city of Jerusalem; and although it has its application to all who call on the name of Jesus worldwide, and throughout all Church history, it comes to a crescendo in the generation in which the Lord returns.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITIES THAT DWELL IN CORPORATE WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

Roman numeral I. The promise of the outpouring of the Spirit. The word *afterwards* is the key word here.

“After what?”

That’s the key idea. That’s the question we’re supposed to ask. When you read the whole context carefully, I believe it’s clear that it comes after the turning to the Lord with all of our heart, with prayer and fasting. It’s the corporate wholeheartedness described in chapters 2:12-17. I believe that here in verse 28, he’s going back to chapter 2:12-17. What I mean by “corporate wholeheartedness” is that Joel is saying, “It’s not enough for one godly man or for one godly woman to turn the tide of a nation.” He says, “It’s going to take a group of dedicated believers.” It’s more than individual wholeheartedness, though it always comes down to individual wholeheartedness. Joel is saying, “It’s not enough that you’re wholehearted. Exert the energy, spend the money it takes; take the risks it takes to get people in your geographic area or country to be wholehearted.” It takes a lot of effort to develop and cultivate a corporate group that has sustained wholeheartedness. It’s not wholeheartedness for a summer; it’s a community of believers, and it could be all over the land, not just in one place, that lives with a spirit of wholeheartedness, with prayer and fasting as a part of their lifestyle. That’s what he’s talking about.

Having called people to prayer over the years, I can tell you this: It takes a lot of energy, it takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of money, it takes a lot of line-upon-line teaching from the Word. It takes a leadership team that embodies it. There are many issues involved in establishing a community that has sustained corporate wholeheartedness.

There’s no one that I honor more on this point than Lou Engle. When I look at Lou over the past ten or fifteen years, this man has put so much energy and effort and taken so many risks, financial risks on these million-dollar events to which no one else is committed. He’s at the point; no one else is necessarily committed. They say they’ll give... maybe. Lou signs his name on it. Not just the financial risk, but the social risk and the stigma that goes with calling thousands and millions to fasting and prayer. I’ve watched him crisscross the nation for nearly fifteen years, pressing this and just tirelessly doing it. I say, “Lou it’s remarkable.” He’s a picture to me of what it takes to build or to seek corporate wholeheartedness; to see thousands in a sustained way seek the Lord. It’s not a small thing, this word *afterwards*. Whether you’re twenty or whatever age you are, set your mind that you’re going to be one who helps cultivate wholeheartedness; not just in your own life, but in whole regions. You’re going to give yourself to serve fasting and prayer initiatives in your region all the days of your life.

That was a decision I made back in my early twenties. I’m fifty-five now. Based on this passage in Joel, I said, “I will spend my life energies strengthening people to do this.” It’s the place of power and safety as the events

of the Lord, the good and the bad, the difficult and the glorious, begin to crescendo and intensify as we get closer to the time of the Lord's return."

GOD WILL GIVE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE WORLD TO THOSE WHO SEEK HIS HEART

Here is what Joel is saying: "Afterwards, God will manifest His zeal and compassion." It's the passage we looked at in the last class in Joel 2:18. He's going to release spiritual and material blessings. You can add to that note there that in chapters 3:1-21, even after this, He will give world leadership to the people of God, particularly the Jewish people. In Joel 3, God is giving world leadership to these people who turned to the Lord with all their heart. That's in the millennial kingdom. Still there's a continuity and a connection between what we do in this age and the age to come.

Jesus taught that principle in Matthew 25: "What you're doing now in days of smallness will result in you having leadership, government, and influence in My purpose in the age to come."

He says this to the nation of Israel in Joel 3: "You're going to have leadership and victory worldwide, but you have to respond with all your heart even in these days."

JESUS PROMISED HIS DISCIPLES THAT THEY WOULD SEE THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT

I'm getting ahead of myself. Paragraph B. Jesus promised that if His disciples would tarry, would wait, in prayer—meaning not getting in a hurry; taking it, however much it takes. In that particular situation, it took ten days. It may take ten years; however long it takes until the full breakthrough comes, tarry. Wait, persevere. He told them, "Tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:48). Basically Jesus is teaching the Joel 2:12-17 principle of wholeheartedness. There are 120 of them who pressed into God. They all failed. I don't know if they all failed. Certainly all the men, the leaders failed. They all had to receive forgiveness; they had to return to a commitment to the Lord. They pressed in for fasting and prayer for these ten days. Nowhere does it say fasting, but we assume there was that element.

I believe Jesus is actually pointing to the book of Joel when He speaks to His disciples, because He meets them for forty days after the resurrection. He appears for forty days, teaching them what's happening. Jesus has a resurrected body; they have natural bodies, obviously. There they are in the room. Jesus for forty days in a resurrected body teaches them about what the prophets say is coming. After the forty days of teaching, He tells them, "Now go into a prayer meeting." I don't think there was any question that in that forty days, Jesus spoke from the prophets about where it was required to gathered together to seek the Lord in prayer. In my opinion, there's no passage more dynamic or more descriptive than Joel 2. The only other passage that would equal it is 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people who are called by My name..." My assumption is that Jesus pointed to those two passages.

After forty days of teaching, He says, "Now go do it. Go to the prayer room together with all your heart, seek Me, and you will see the breaking-in of God." Of course when the breaking-in happened, Peter got up and said, "This is what Joel said." How did Peter know what Joel said? My assumption is that for forty days when Jesus taught them, He made that point to them. I believe the fact that Peter mentioned Joel wasn't a spontaneous insight in that moment on that morning. They understood that they were following the model of Joel 2 because the great Teacher Himself had been in their midst teaching them from the prophets. That's what the Scripture says.

THE MODEL OF JOEL 2 IS FOLLOWED IN ACTS 2

Paragraph C. In Acts 1-2, the pattern is followed. They follow what Joel taught and the Spirit is poured out. And since Jesus had taught them for forty days, I have no question that Jesus appealed to this: “Pray, seek Me, and you will receive the outpouring of the Spirit.” I assume He emphasized it a number of times. They gathered in corporate intercession and cried out to the Lord. The breakthrough came. Peter said, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Again, I don’t believe that was a spontaneous thing that dawned on him in that moment. I believe the community understood that they were seeking the Lord according to Joel 2 in fasting and prayer for the purpose of an outpouring of the Spirit that would confirm the coming of the Messiah.

JOEL GAVE THE PROMISE AND THE PATTERN OF THE OUTPOURING

Page 100. Paragraph E. What did Joel speak of? Because Peter said, “This is what Joel spoke about.” What did Joel speak about? Yes, he discussed the fact of the outpouring, but Joel spoke about more than the fact of the outpouring; he spoke of the conditions necessary for the outpouring as well. I believe Joel gave the promise and the pattern of the outpouring. The promise: “It’s coming.” The pattern: “Seek Me together with all your heart until... Seek Me until...”

I’ve been asked many times over the years, “How long is *until*?”

I say, “Until we get the fullness.” Whatever breakthrough we get, we will continue seeking the Lord for a greater breakthrough.” As far as I’m concerned, I’ll be operating on that until the day I meet the Lord. No matter what measure He gives us, I want more. He gives us the level of the book of Acts, I want twice the level of the book of Acts. “Lord, release twice the level of the book of Acts! I want twice again what we have.” I mean, Jesus is really powerful; He has a lot of power. So let’s go for it.

THE DOWN PAYMENT OF THE SPIRIT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Roman numeral II. The down payment of Joel’s prophecy. I believe what happened on the day of Pentecost 2,000 years ago was only a down payment. It’s significant, but it’s a down payment guaranteeing that the fullness will come at a later time. It was a down payment, which was a dynamic blessing on its own, but it was also the guarantee, the first fruits, a guarantee of more to come.

THE ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT OF JOEL’S PROPHECY AWAITS THE LATTER DAYS

Paragraph B. The promise of Joel 2 wasn’t completely fulfilled in Peter’s day. What Peter saw was only a portion of what Joel promised. You can’t look at the day of Pentecost and successfully argue that everything Joel said happened. Only a small percent of what Joel said happened in Peter’s day. I don’t believe Peter believed it was fullness, either. The reason I say that is because you’ll read some commentaries, and they’ll tell you, “Don’t press in, in fasting and prayer for the fullness of Joel 2. It already happened; it’s past tense.” They want to dismiss themselves from the urgency of seeking God for a breakthrough. We’re not interested in dismissing this passage; we want to enter into the fullness of it in our day, in the lives of our children and grandchildren, until the Lord returns, however long that is.

The reason I say it wasn’t completely fulfilled in Peter’s day, paragraph B, is because there are significant differences between what Peter saw and what Joel prophesied. Joel said the sun and moon would be affected. The sun and moon were not affected in a global way in the way that Joel describes. Some people point out that at the cross it got dark and there was an earthquake. I don’t believe that’s what Joel was talking about; he was talking about the outpouring of the Spirit associated with the sun and moon growing dark. Joel went on to say

something else: that blood, fire, and smoke would be witnessed as signs on a global level. That didn't happen in Peter's day. There was some fire: Fire rested on 120 intercessors. I like the fire. It didn't just say the fire rested on them; when you read Acts 2, the story of that prayer meeting, it says, "Each one saw the fire on the other" (Acts 2:3, paraphrased). Beloved, how would you like to see with your eyes the fire resting on the others? Of course you might be tempted to go run into a mirror to see if it was on you, but I think you would already know if it was. Tongues of fire rested on 120 people. But there's a global dimension; it's not fulfilled with just 120 people experiencing the fire of God for an hour or two. That's only a down payment, which again is a guarantee of more to come.

Paragraph C. Even more significant is the fact that Joel said, "On all flesh." When he says, "On all flesh," it's talking about all human beings who call on the name of the Lord. The power of the Spirit didn't fall on every believer in the earth. In one sense that would be true, because there were only 120. This has a global dimension, where all the nations of the earth will have people with a spirit of revival operating in the Holy Spirit. All nations; you could put "all nations" in the place of "all flesh." It's not the same word in the Greek or Hebrew, but it's the same idea. When the Holy Spirit told Joel "all flesh," He meant that all the nations of the earth would prophesy. This prophecy requires a global dimension.

PETER PROCLAIMS THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS TO THE JEWISH LEADERS

Page 101. Paragraph D. Peter understood this global dimension because, remember, he had just been with the resurrected Christ for forty days of teaching on the kingdom. In Acts 1:3, Luke says that Jesus appeared and spoke for forty days about the kingdom. Also, in Acts 3, right there in the context of the day of Pentecost, Peter mentions a far bigger dimension of the Holy Spirit's movement than what they experienced that day of Pentecost. Here is what Peter said; this is in the context of that very outpouring of the Spirit. He lets the people know that there's a far bigger dimension than what they were experiencing in that hour.

He said in Acts 3:19, "Repent... that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). What would happen when Israel repented? Because he's talking to the Jewish people in the city of Jerusalem. This is actually a word spoken specifically to the Jewish people in the city of Jerusalem: "When you repent, not only will you have your sins blotted out, not only will there be a season of refreshing, but here is what will happen." He says, "That [the Father] may send Jesus Christ" (v. 20). The Messiah will come again. Again, in those early days right there, in the context of the day of Pentecost, he says to them, "Jesus is coming again." This is a declaration of the second coming of Christ. "That He may send Jesus Christ... whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things" (ibid). The idea here is that heaven must keep or retain Jesus up there until the times of the restoration of all things.

PENTECOST WAS BUT THE TOKEN OF THE PROMISE OF MUCH MORE TO COME

Here's the point: There is coming a time where the restoration of everything prophesied will come to pass. Everything prophesied—far more than 120 people being filled with the Holy Spirit. There's coming an hour, Peter said, when everything prophesied, the fullness, will be released. It's related to Jesus' second coming. My point is that Peter had the big vision; he had the vision of the big picture. He wasn't at all satisfied with 120 people filled with the Spirit as though this was all God had to give. He greatly appreciated that and valued it, but he knew it was only the beginning, the down payment, the token that would be the promise of much more to come. There's coming a day when everything will be restored—everything. The full power of God and every sphere of society will be completely restored.

THE TIMING OF JOEL’S PROPHESED OUTPOURING: WHEN WILL IT OCCUR?

Roman numeral III. The timing of Joel’s prophesied outpouring. When is this outpouring going to happen? Peter said that it would happen in the last days. That’s the key phrase. Now the phrase “last days” is used five times in the New Testament. We have it there in the notes. It has two distinct different meanings, two meanings that overlap with one another. There’s a distinction in these two meanings, though they overlap and are connected.

Meaning one: The last days began on the day of Pentecost. The last days began with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the outpouring of the Spirit. So it has been the last days in one sense for 2,000 years. If you think of the verse in 2 Peter 3:8, “A thousand years is like one day and one day is like a thousand years” (2 Peter 3:8), it means that because God dwells in eternity, He interprets time very differently than we do. If 1,000 years is like one day to the Lord, then from Adam to Jesus, 4,000 years, is like four days to the Lord. The last 2,000 years is two more days. So there are those six days and then the Millennial Kingdom is the seventh day. That seventh-day pattern, I believe, will be employed again. In reality, it’s the last two days compared to the six. The last two days are the last days. We’re in the final moments. That’s not just cute; it’s real. When are the last days from that perspective? The final two days out of the six.

Then, other passages talk about the last days as being the final years of the last days. In other words, the generation in which the Lord returns, I refer to as “the end times.” The last days have been going on for the last 2,000 years and the end times are still to come. I will typically use the word “end times” to refer to those final decades leading up to the coming of the Lord. The Lord also calls those “the last days” as well. So the last days can mean the last two days, which are 1,000 years each, or it can mean those final years leading up to the coming of the Lord. Either way. I use the term “end times” in reference to the last days so that people don’t get confused on it, just so you have it clear. I think many of you do by now.

WE ARE IN THE LAST DAYS OF THIS AGE, NOT THE LAST AGE OF THE WORLD

This idea keeps reoccurring: when you read commentaries or hear people interviewed, they talk about the end of the world. The world never ends. It’s the last days of this age; not the last days of the world. People talk about the end of days or the end of the world. No, no. Time will go on forever and the earth will go on. It’s the last days of this age. In other words, in this age the nations are ruled with Satanic interference. That’s one of the main characteristics of this age. There’s demonic interference with the government of the nations. But that only goes on for 6,000 years, for six days. When God’s Sabbath day comes, the seventh day, the Millennial Kingdom, Satan is in prison, the age is new, and there’s no interference from Satan in the government of the nations. The age is over, but the world goes on.

I run into this all the time; people ask me, “So wow, you believe in the end of the world?”

I say, “No, absolutely not.”

“You don’t? I thought you guys are really into the end of the world.”

I say, “No. I’m into the Devil being thrown into prison. That’s what I’m into, the end of the age. I’m into Jesus’ physical presence governing the earth from Jerusalem with the heavenly and earthly realm brought together on the earth. That’s what I’m into.”

When I say that to people, they smile: “Cool!” They feel the Spirit touching them a little right there. They say, “Whoa, where did you come up with that idea?”

“Well it’s in the Bible, all through the Bible actually.”

OUR INHERITANCE AS A BODY IS TO PROPHECY THROUGHOUT THE EARTH

Roman numeral IV. The bottom of page 102. Our inheritance. Joel says, “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” In 1 Corinthians 14:31, Paul tells us that everyone can prophesy—everyone. God’s will is that every single believer can operate in the spirit of prophecy. There are many different expressions of the spirit of prophecy, by the way. The spirit of prophecy isn’t only the most dramatic expressions of the open vision and the world-changing prophetic utterance. There are subtle impressions; there are many different expressions of the spirit of prophecy. For those of you who are completely new to this, I want to recommend a book I wrote on it called *Growing in the Prophetic*. It’s free on the website; you can download it. I break down the different expressions of the spirit of prophecy: how beginners work with it, how we govern it, how it works in a public assembly and a lot of different facets of the spirit of prophecy.

MANY BELIEVERS EVEN NOW ARE PROPHESYING, BUT ARE UNAWARE OF IT

A lot of folks have a lot of wrong ideas about the spirit of prophecy. They only have in their minds the most dramatic experiences, those that surpass Elijah himself. I remember talking to one pastor and he said, “I’m just so offended at IHOP-KC.”

I said, “Tell me why?”

“You guys think you can prophesy.”

I said, “Well we do.”

He said, “You even teach people to prophesy. That’s blasphemy; that’s horrifying; that’s presumptuous.”

I understood what he was saying, but I asked him, “Why?”

He said, “If you prophesy, it equals Scripture itself and you’re saying you can teach people to give utterances that are infallible and equal to Scripture.”

I said, “By that definition of prophecy, I understand your trouble. There are many different dimensions of prophecy, and the New Testament is very different than the Old Testament.”

I explained it to him for a while. He said, “Oh...”

I said, “No, we just tell them to value the impressions they get and give expressions to those impressions. It’s a very elementary expression of the spirit of prophecy, but it’s important that we express it and grow in it.” I said, “You prophesy all the time. You don’t call it prophecy; you just call it, ‘Wow.’ That’s what you call it. Remember when you were talking to that one lady in the counseling time? You gave her this new idea; it touched her heart. There was a breakthrough and you said, ‘Whoa, that was good.’ That was prophecy.”

He said, “Oh. Huh! Where is that in the Bible?” I appreciated that, but I don’t have energy. I’ve been asked for years about this prophesying and the gifts of the Spirit. I don’t have energy to argue about it at all because I’m so sure that everyone is going to prophesy. I’ve had many through the years ask, “Where is that in the Bible?”

I say, “I don’t want to argue about it. Let’s talk about the beauty of Jesus, the magnificence of Jesus. You love Him; I love Him. Let’s spend an hour enjoying Jesus. Here’s why: You’ll be prophesying in a minute anyway. So I don’t want to argue about it. You’ll heal the sick and prophesy; if you don’t, your wife will and then you will a minute later.” It’s true! I say, “Let’s talk about Jesus. You’re a cool guy; you love God; I love God; we have an hour; let’s go somewhere together in our fellowship.” Because I’m so confident that everyone will prophesy and everyone will heal the sick. That’s where we’re going and we’re racing toward that hour. It’s possible now. The day is coming when it will be more than possible; it will be actual. All the Body of Christ will operate in the prophetic anointing before the Lord returns. It’s been the inheritance of the Church for 2,000 years, but it will be an actual experience of the Church in the final years before the Lord returns.

In Joel’s day, paragraph A, this was really dramatic. We can’t really grasp how radical this was, because in Joel’s day, only one small group of people ever prophesied. It was mostly older Jewish men who were prophets, kings, and priests. It was very small; I mean a fraction of one percent, like a thousandth of one percent. Only a fraction of a fraction of one percent prophesied. It was so rare. Joel comes on the scene; I can picture him. He’s in Jerusalem, I imagine. He says, “Well, huh, this is new. The young people will prophesy.”

Their eyes get really big: “The young people? All the young people?”

“Yes.”

“Not just Elijah, not just the king, not just David?”

“No, all the young people.”

“Wow.”

“The girls are going to prophesy.”

I can imagine these Jewish leaders: “Girls?”

“Yes. The girls. But even worse than the young and the girls, the Gentiles are going to prophesy.”

“Not the Gentiles!”

So young Gentile girls are going to prophesy. Do we have any young Gentile girls in this room? Prophesy! Prophesy! Prophesy! This was mind-blowing in Joel’s day. It’s easy for us to see it now.

WE WANT TO AVOID PRESUMPTION ON ONE END AND UNBELIEF ON THE OTHER

The Lord told Jeremiah, “Don’t say, ‘I am but a youth’” (Jeremiah 1:7, paraphrased). In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul told Timothy, “Let no man despise your youth” (1 Tim. 4:12). Young people can prophesy. They’re not earning

it. It's not like, if they've been in the kingdom for ten, twenty, thirty years, finally they're ready. No, you can begin to prophesy the day you're born again. It's true. The key is that we want to cultivate the spirit of prophesy with a spirit of truth. We want prophecy that's true, not just Hamburger Helper prophecy. We want to cultivate an atmosphere where they understand, where they're not presumptuous nor held back in unbelief, but understand how it works. Not that the book I wrote on that answers every question. I try and stay away from presumption, because we don't want to believe we're doing something that isn't even true; where the Holy Spirit doesn't believe it but we all believe we're doing it. The Holy Spirit says, "That's not what I'm doing." But neither do we want to go to the other extreme so that we're so cautious with unbelief; where it has to be so real, the fear sets in and we never prophesy. We want to avoid presumption on one end and unbelief on the other end. We want a spirit of truth as we prophesy. This is where this thing is going. "Don't despise your youth," is what God told them. Prophesy now.

"ALSO ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT"

Paragraph B. The only qualifier to the "all flesh." Again, the "all flesh" means Jews, Gentiles, young and old, male and female; all nationalities, all ages. New believers, old believers; brand-new believers, seasoned believers. Everyone can prophesy. The only qualifier is, He says, "Those who are My menservants and maidservants" (Joel 2:29, paraphrased). They're servants of Jesus. This means more than just naming the name of Jesus in a worship service. It's in their spirit to be true servants of the Lord, really obedient, humble servants of the Lord, who are eagerly seeking Him. It's not a statement of maturity; it's a statement of sincerity. The servants of the Lord. Some people say, "Hey, if I went forward and prayed the Jesus prayer in my heart, I could prophesy."

I say, "Yes, technically." The reality means that if we're servants, if there's a sincerity in our hearts to be obedient bondservants of the Lord in our life—not that we earn prophecy by being bondservants, but it positions us with the right spirit to receive those impressions and then to give expression to those impressions in a way that glorifies Jesus.

IN THE DAYS TO COME, PROPHECY WILL BE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Top of page 103. Roman numeral V. The spirit of prophecy. Paragraph A. What I'm saying in paragraph A and paragraph B is this: We operate in the spirit of prophecy all throughout Church history and we operate in the spirit of prophecy today. There's one time frame in Church history, those final years before the Lord returns, where it will be an issue of life and death. It's not like if we prophesy the meetings will be more exciting. Prophecy will be more than exciting and making our lives zippier; prophecy will be an issue of life and death. It's not possible to make it through that hour without operating in the Spirit. We're to seek to prophesy, but beloved, we want to prophesy now and not wait until then. I'm telling you that though it's powerful and important to prophesy now, it will be a life-and-death issue in the days to come that we operate in the spirit of prophecy. The spirit of prophecy will equip the Church to win the harvest. It will equip the Church to expose the deception of the enemy. We will expose the enemy's plans against us; we will understand the Lord's promises. There are many things in which the spirit of prophecy, the supernatural dimension of dreams and visions, will strengthen us.

WE DISCARD ALL PROPHECY THAT GOES AGAINST THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

One of the key things about the spirit of prophecy is, we never believe or receive a prophetic utterance, a dream or vision that doesn't honor the written Word of God. We say that over and over again: It must honor the written Word of God. Anything that contradicts the Word of God, we throw it away, no matter if an angel

appeared to us; if it goes against the written Word of God, we throw it away. That's self-evident, but it's worth saying over and over.

THE WORD OF THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

The spirit of prophecy will be one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful—it's hard to say what the most is, most powerful reality in the world. In other words, the spirit of prophecy really is speaking the word of the Lord. It's just a small expression, a very, very small expression of what Jesus was doing in Genesis 1. Jesus spoke in Genesis 1 under the Father's authority. The power of the Spirit was released; the heavens and the earth were created and put in order. Bring that way, way, way, way down, but it's the same day. Jesus, our Bridegroom King, is inspiring us by His Spirit to speak His words. When we speak His words, the power of God is released. That holy arsenal of God's kingdom is the spoken word. We speak the word, again, in a very small way in comparison to what Jesus did in Genesis 1. He spoke, the power of God was released, things were set in order.

PROPHECY IS THE VERY ARSENAL OF GOD STRIKING THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

Now a hundred million, a billion believers will speak the word under Jesus' leadership, in much smaller dimensions, but the same Holy Spirit moving. The Church is equipped, the Devil's plans are exposed; they're cut off and thrown down by the spoken word, whether speaking or singing. Singing the Word will bring it to another dimension. With the singing of the Word, so many more people will be captured into the musical dimension. A person can speak the Word of the Lord and it's powerful, but when you sing it, a hundred thousand people in a stadium can do it together. It has a whole different dimension when prophetic music is added to it.

The thing about prophecy is, it's not just a neat thing that makes our life more exciting and meetings better. It will be an issue of life and death, but more: It will be the very arsenal of the kingdom of God striking the works of darkness. It will be the utterances of our God, Jesus Himself, through His corporate people, under His leadership; the Word going forth and the power of God backing up the Word. That's where this thing called prophecy is. When Joel said, "You will all prophecy," he was saying, "You will all operate in heavenly arsenal at the highest dimension," which is the spirit of prophecy: the power of the spoken word or song, which is the same thing, and the Spirit breaking in with power when that word is given utterance. Even if you're with a friend or in ministry time, speak a little encouragement; it doesn't matter what context. You could be with a friend having a cup of coffee together; you speak an impression you feel and power touches the person who hears it.

They say, "Wow, that helped me." That's the power of God. It doesn't happen if we don't speak it. It has to be spoken or sung; they're the same idea.

Let's look at Roman numeral VI. Prophetic ministry. Here are the cosmic signs, the signs in the heavens. Middle of page 104. Now Joel brings it to a whole different level. He brings in the signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. Remember, the heavens are the sky. These are signs and wonders that affect the sun, the moon, and the stars. Notice that here in this very short book of three chapters, Joel emphasizes the heavenly signs, three signs in one little book. Joel connected the heavenly signs to the spirit of prophecy. This is a very, very powerful reality.

THE LITTLE-KNOWN CONNECTION BETWEEN SIGNS, DREAMS, AND VISIONS

Page 105. Paragraph E. Often there's a connection between the dream and vision and the sign in the sky or the sign on the earth. I had never known anything about this; I still don't know that much about it, but I know a little more. I remember the shock of my life was in 1983. I've just moved to Kansas City; I've been in Saint Louis for several years, church planting. I'm twenty-seven years old and I come to Kansas City. I don't know anything about dreams, visions, and signs in the heavens. No one ever talked about that, except for maybe an occasional person here or there who always seemed a little weird. I have no experience. I met Bob Jones. I remember the day I met him. It was in March 1983. He walks into my office. It's just a shock to me, a paradigm shift, straight from the hills of Arkansas right into my office in Overland Park. He turns to Acts 2 and starts going on about dreams and visions.

I say, "Yes I know the verse."

He says, "Signs in the heaven. Did you know there's a relationship between the dream and vision and the sign in the heavens?"

"No, I never thought about it."

He says, "Here is how it works. The prophet gives the vision or dream. The people say, 'Well, maybe it will or maybe it won't.' The prophet says, 'Here's what's going to happen in the sky.' He predicts a sign in the sky or the weather patterns or a sign in the sky that no man can manipulate. He gives the date it will happen, some time down the road. The people hear the vision and say, 'Maybe the vision is good, maybe it's not; who knows?' Then they hear this confirming sign, because no one can manipulate a sign in the heavens." I don't know if you've ever tried to make one happen, but it's hard to make one happen. "The man gives the dream or vision. The people say, 'OK...' They're not overly moved. Some time later, the sign happens on the very day the prophet said. Now you go back and read that transcription. You want to read that prophecy again."

YOU CAN FAKE A LOT OF THINGS, BUT YOU CAN'T FAKE A SIGN IN THE HEAVENS

Men can fake a healing. You can fake a healing; you can fake a salvation; you can fake a manifestation; you can fake a vision; you can fake a dream; you can fake a heavenly experience. You can testify something that didn't really happen. I've seen fakes of so many things over so many years because there's such a temptation for people to fake it so they can look powerful and cool. But no one can fake a sign in the heavens. This happened three times in 1983—three times and really not since then. It happened three times in one year and that was about it. It's happened once or twice since then in a secondary way. But there was one year where it happened dramatically on three occasions. I thought this was how it would always be. Now it's twenty-seven or twenty-eight years later and it hasn't happened quite like that yet. But it happened three times in one year; that was the good year, and almost not at all since then.

Bob tells me, "This is what will happen." He tells me there will be this young adult worship movement of singers and musicians. "You'll be over in Grandview next to Harry Truman's property."

We're over in Overland Park, an affluent neighborhood, things are going well, and the church is growing.

I said, "We're not moving next to Harry Truman in Grandview." I said, "Bob, my people don't really shop there."

He said, “Mark my word, they will.”

I said, “Uhh, whatever.”

He said, “Singers and musicians. Are you a singer or musician?”

I said, “No.”

He said, “There will be prayer for Israel. Do you pray for Israel?”

I said, “No.”

He said, “You don’t know anything about this youth movement, the singers, musicians, Grandview, Israel, you know nothing about this? And from Asia, the believers there will be connected to you in a very dramatic way. Do you have a heart for Asia? Are you connected with the believers in Asia?”

I said, “I don’t pray for Israel, I don’t know many singers and musicians, I’m not one. I don’t know about this young adult movement; I’m not connected to believers in Asia. No.”

Bob looked at me, and he really meant this seriously. He said, “The Lord told me you would be dull; I didn’t think you would be this dull.” He actually said that to me! He said, “Well, let me tell you what’s going to happen.” He gave me a sign in the heavens. I won’t go into it now, but you can hear it in the prophetic history, when I gave the eight sessions in the tenth year of our history. On the first day of spring, he predicted a weather pattern that was out of the ordinary; that happened. Then a few months later, it happened again. A few months later it happened again. It happened three times dramatically, dramatically. He gave the prophecy and pointed to a sign in the heavens: “A comet will come on this day.” He said three months in advance, “There will be a drought. On August 23, the rains will come.” He said this in May. It was the second worst drought in Kansas City’s history. On August 23, three months later, the rains came. When the rain came, I dug up the transcriptions: “What did he say back then?” Three times he gave a word and then it confirmed by a sign in the heavens.

DON’T WAIT FOR SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS TO CONFIRM DOMESTIC ISSUES IN YOUR LIFE

Again, I thought this was going to be how it always was. Now I understand that God only does this when He’s confirming a salvation purpose far bigger than any one person’s life, sphere, or ministry. Some of the young people would hear these stories back then; they wanted a dream, a vision, a comet, weather patterns changing to confirm their girlfriend. “God, if you want me to marry her, then let a comet come.”

If you like her, just go talk to her. Don’t wait for a comet, don’t wait for an angel. If you like her, talk to her. This is easy. If she likes you back, see where it goes. “I heard that prophetic history. I’m waiting for a dream, vision, or angel.” She is the angel; she’s right in front of you. My point is this: Don’t take these cosmic signs and weather patterns in the sky that can’t be manipulated by man and ask for them to confirm domestic issues in your life—whether you should go to school, not get a job, get married, buy a house. No; because in all these years since then, those were the most the three most dramatic events. Again, there’s been a time or two since then, but not even of the same magnitude. It was like, “What was that about?” Then it became clear: The Lord was confirming a worldwide purpose that would have an implication far bigger than my life or my ministry.

IF THERE'S DELIVERANCE IN ZION, THERE'S DELIVERANCE FOR ALL BELIEVERS

Top of page 106. Roman numeral VIII. The end-time deliverance and harvest. God says, "And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance" (Joel 2:32) Those are key words: *saved* and *deliverance*. Jerusalem, in this hour of history yet future, will be the most dangerous city on the earth. If there's deliverance if you call on the name of the Lord in the most dangerous city of the earth, then there's deliverance in every city of the earth. That's the principle we can all walk away with. It's interesting: He says, "They shall call on the name of the Lord." That's the theme of Joel 2:12-17, the theme of the solemn assembly, the people who call on the name of the Lord individually. Even more dynamic is when we call on the name of the Lord collectively. Yes, we do have our individual life; when people are going hard after God together with wholeheartedness, they call on the name of the Lord. It's a lifestyle; it's what Jesus called watching and waiting before the Bridegroom. There will be deliverance; there will be salvation.

FIVE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF DIVINE DELIVERANCE

In paragraph A, I have five different dimensions of what it means to be saved or delivered. B. We're saved or delivered when we're born again and forgiven of our sin. Secondly, we're saved from physical death, disasters. That's what he's talking about, actually; he's talking about being saved from disasters in the hour of crisis in the city of Jerusalem. Paragraph D. We're saved in the sense that God supernaturally provides the necessities of life, food, water, etc. We're saved, we're sustained supernaturally; we have called on His name. Number four—this applies to all of us: We're saved in the sense that we enter our full destiny. We're delivered from spiritual barrenness and aimlessness. We enter into all that we were called to do; we enter into our calling by calling on Him. Our divine calling is related to calling on the Divine. We call on the name of the Lord; it prepares us to enter our calling. Number five, top of page 107, we're saved, delivered, from deception. There will be so many deceptive schemes of the enemy, but we can be saved if we call on His name. Again, Jesus really develops this fifth point in the Gospels, in Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21, those three key passages. He says, "If you watch and wait, you will overcome the snares of the evil one" (Mk. 13:37).

Amen.