

AM Joel 1:1-13 & Acts 2:14-41 Jesus: Lord and Christ

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[0 : 00] Joel chapter 1. You'll find this on page 919 of your pew Bible. Joel chapter 1. This is the word of God. The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Bethuel.

Hear this, you elders. Give ear all inhabitants of the land. Has such a thing happened in your days or in the days of your fathers?

Tell your children of it and let your children tell their children and their children to another generation. What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten.

And what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. Awake, you drunkards, and weep. And wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine.

For it is cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come against my land, powerful and beyond number. Its teeth are lion's teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness.

[1 : 15] It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it down. Their branches are made white.

Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord. The fields are destroyed, and the ground mourns, because the grain is destroyed. The wine dries up, the oil languishes. Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil.

Wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine dries up, the fig tree languishes.

Pomegranate, palm and apple, all the trees of the field are dried up. And gladness dries up from the children of man. This is the word of God.

[2 : 16] Let's now pray. We're going to read again in God's word in Acts chapter 2, the Acts of the Apostles chapter 2. You'll find this on page 1096 of your pew Bible.

Acts chapter 2, this will be our sermon text this morning. And we are going to be looking at Jesus, who is both Christ and Lord.

So we're going to be focusing on Peter's sermon at Pentecost. So let's now read God's word together. Acts chapter 2, we'll read from verses 14 to 41.

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them. Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words.

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

[3 : 21] And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your young men shall see visions. And your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants in those days.

I will pour out my spirit. And they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and vapour 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, loosening the pangs of death.

[4 : 25] Because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me. For he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades. Or let your Holy One see corruption.

You have made known to me the paths of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence. 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 upon his throne.

He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ. That he was not abandoned to Hades. Nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up.

[5 : 30] And of that we are all witnesses. 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.

For David did not ascend into the heavens. But he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain.

That God has made him both Lord and Christ. This Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this, They were cut to the heart. And said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. For the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is for you. And for your children. And for all who are afar off. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words he bore witness.

[6 : 33] And continued to exhort them saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. So those who received his word were baptized. And there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

So before we dive into this sermon that Peter delivers to the crowd at Jerusalem, We should consider where we are in the book of Acts.

And what the book of Acts is. The book of Acts is a companion to the gospel of Luke. Luke is both the author of his gospel and the book of Acts.

It's not just a continuation of the gospel narrative of Luke. But rather it acts as a bridge between the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the church.

And that's why it's separated in our Bibles from the gospels. And also from the later epistles. And so if you look at Acts chapter 1.

[7 : 36] You'll see that this begins with the resurrected Jesus giving his final teaching and instruction to his disciples. And that is obviously how the end of Luke's gospel ended. Where Jesus is speaking to the two on the road to Emmaus.

He opens up the Old Testament to them. And that starting from Moses to the prophets. He interpreted them concerning himself. And sometimes I think we do wonder what were the texts that Jesus did teach to the two on the road.

Or to the disciples on those days. And we will never really know. We can make a guess. And we might be able to see some of them here in this chapter 2. But we'll only find out when we get to heaven.

The things that were not clear about the ministry of what the Messiah would look like. Were becoming more clear now here in the beginning of Acts.

There were wrong expectations which the disciples had. Which we see in the gospels. And these were swept away for the clarity of the mission of the glorious king.

[8 : 42] Who was crucified and who was resurrected from the dead. The failures that the apostle Peter who denied him. And of Thomas who doubted him.

These men were transformed. And became powerful ambassadors of a gospel of grace. So we have Jesus at the beginning of Acts. Giving his final instruction.

And he tells them that they are to remain in Jerusalem for now. And that the promise was that the Holy Spirit would come. And he would empower the church. And that would allow them to go from

Jerusalem.

And take the gospel to the ends of the earth. And so in Acts chapter 2. We have a fulfillment of the promises that Jesus made.

And so the apostles and the followers of Jesus. They came together for a prayer meeting. Obeying Jesus' instruction to stay in Jerusalem. And then the Holy Spirit came and filled the place.

[9 : 43] And this is compared to a mighty rushing wind. Or of fire. And the fire is to kind of bring to your remembrance. The Old Testament. How the wilderness years. The children of Israel.

You know you think of things like the burning bush. As God appeared to Moses. Or if you think about Mount Sinai. How God descended in fire. So it's a symbol of God's presence.

And so let's set the scene. It's Pentecost. Which means it's 50 days since the Passover has begun. In Jerusalem.

Well. So you'll find that in Jewish tradition. All men were expected to be in Jerusalem three times per year. For Passover. Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles.

And because of the Diaspora and the Jews going to different nations. That made it more difficult. But you still had many who would travel from all of these nations in the Roman Empire.

[10 : 41] And they would come to Jerusalem for one of these feasts. Which meant that the population of Jerusalem at these feasts would swell to significant numbers. And so there are Jews who have come from all over the Roman Empire to gather in Jerusalem.

And they had come to offer the first fruits at the temple. And then where we find ourselves is that there is this divine act. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

And it causes an uproar in Jerusalem. And people from all over the city were drawn to this event. Because people were hearing in their own language the wonderful works that God had done.

And they heard it in a language that they understood. And so this was something which was amazing. Something which astonished them. Because of course this was a miracle.

There were others who mocked as you expect. There are always the cynics among us. And they accused them of being drunk. But by and large it seems that people were astonished.

[11 : 42] And this is the scene in which we have the Apostle Peter enter. And he perceives this opportunity to make new disciples. Spirred on by the whole teaching ministry of Jesus.

And now he has received the Holy Spirit. He identifies these events in Acts chapter 2 of the coming of the Holy Spirit. As being a fulfillment of the scripture.

And in particular he looks at the prophet Joel. He also looks at Psalm 16 and Psalm 110. We've already sung Psalm 110 together. We'll sing Psalm 116 at the end of the service.

And if you wonder what Jesus had spoken to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Perhaps we could say quite confidently that some of these scriptures would have been among those that he spoke about concerning himself.

Now Peter goes on even further to say that what happened to Jesus was not thwarting his mission. That the mission of Jesus was not a failure.

[12 : 44] That everything in the weeks prior to this that had taken place was according to the plan and purposes of God. And that's what we're going to look at this morning. We're going to look at the plan that God had.

The purpose of that plan. And the product or the outcome. Product rhymes. So that gives me three Ps. So product. The outcome of the plan. Plan, purpose and product.

So firstly the plan. So what was the plan? It's very easy to look at the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus. And to think well everything just went according to plan didn't it?

Just worked out exactly how we would expect. And we do that looking back 2,000 years later because we have the privilege of hindsight. And to state the obvious this was not true to the crowd that Peter was speaking.

From their perspective what happened? We had this travelling rabbi who had gathered a large following for himself. And had gotten to the wrong side of the Jewish leaders and the Roman authorities.

[13 : 48] And he was a great teacher. But he couldn't really be this Messiah who we are expecting. Because we still have the Roman authorities over us.

And now this Jesus guy is dead. And some may have even been in the crowds at various times. Who heard the teaching ministry of Jesus.

Some of them may have been the ones who cried out saying blasphemy when he made claims for himself. And so if these people were in the crowd they would perhaps feel vindicated that Jesus was now dead.

Because that just demonstrates that he couldn't have been the Messiah. Because you can't kill the Messiah, right? But now there are rumours that Jesus has in fact been raised from the dead. And now you have all these Jesus followers proclaiming the works of God in languages of all the Roman world. And so what does Peter do?

[14 : 45] What does he do to this crowd of sceptics, of cynics, of people who are curious and who don't know quite what's going on? He goes to the authority of God's word.

And he goes first to Joel chapter 2. In Joel we find that he is telling Judah, which was the southern tribe, that they were to return to the Lord.

We read Joel chapter 1 earlier just to kind of set the scene as to where this text comes from. And you'll find that what is happening is that there has been a plague of locusts which have brought famine to the land.

And so where the grapes have been destroyed so there is no more wine. The very earth mourns and the ground that is being worked by the people is no longer bringing forth a harvest.

And commentators describe this as de-creation language. And we see this in Acts where it says, The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon shall not give its light.

[15 : 52] It's like the creation story that we have in Genesis chapter 1 is being undone. Instead of fruitfulness we have famine. Instead of light being created we have darkness.

And this is a sign that God's judgment has come to his people because they had abandoned him. And so Joel calls the people to return to God. He calls them to repentance.

And he says that there's going to be a day of the Lord. Where the presence of God will come. And it will be a time of blessing for those who know him. And it will be a time of judgment for those who do not know him.

And then there is a promise given by Joel that God will pour out his spirit. And it's described almost like the rain coming and giving moisture to this dry, parched land.

And that's where God is pouring out his spirit. And Peter says, Look, here is a fulfillment of what Joel the prophet says.

[17 : 01] This is exactly what the scriptures were speaking about in these events of these past days. This is exactly how God planned it out to be. God's wrath was on all mankind.

The whole world was going its own way, doing its own thing. And all along, God had a plan to prepare a specific nation through which the whole world was to receive the Messiah.

There was to be a royal bloodline in the form of King David. And there were types and shadows in the Old Testament about a Messiah who would come. And the whole history of Israel, who is God's special nation, was one of rejection and rebellion.

And it seems to come to a climax, not just with an exile, but with the murder of the Messiah. He was sent to his own and his own did not receive him.

Verse 23 says, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

[18 : 06] And so though it appeared that man could thwart God's plans by doing this evil thing, and not just any evil thing, the most evil thing that you could do, which is to kill the only innocent man who ever lived.

And yet, at the same time, God's plan was concrete. It was established. It was definite. And it was agreed upon in eternity by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that the Son would willingly take on a human body, perform mighty works of power, miracles among God's people.

And they were especially prepared to receive him. And yet he would be tortured, crucified, and killed. But verse 24, God raised him up, loosening the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

God raised him up. God gave life to a corpse. And not only was it not possible, it was impossible for death to hold this innocent man.

We've all been to funerals. Death is powerful. Our mortal bodies are frail. And although we may try and avoid it, once death has a hold of us, it will not let go.

[19 : 30] It's locked in. Your body withers and decays. Yet with Jesus, yes, he died. His heart stopped beating. His living cells and tissues lost circulation and began to break down.

But God restored life to his body. And he walked out of the tomb. Just as Jesus said that he would. He predicted this in his earthly ministry. Remember earlier in his ministry, he says, destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up. Just as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

And not only did Jesus predict this about himself, David, hundreds of years before in the Psalms, prophesied that this would take place. Verses 25 to 33, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will dwell in hope, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

[20 : 39] You have made known to me the paths of life. And the resurrection of Jesus was the vindication of this plan. It showed that God the Father accepted the sacrifice of Jesus' death.

And it demonstrates that the events of the life of Jesus were all part of the eternal plan and purposes of God. Even this evil act.

Not that God forced the crowds who were shouting, crucify him to do this. He didn't need to force the crowds to do it against their will. They did it willingly, knowing for their own reasons.

Yet God used their evil act to bring about the salvation of the whole human race. In the Romans it says, For as one man's disobedience, there were many made sinners.

So by one man's obedience, there were many made righteous. The life and death and resurrection of Jesus were all part of God's plan.

[21 : 39] And then also the Holy Spirit descending at Pentecost was also part of this plan. It was a sign of a new messianic age which had begun with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit where the kingdom of God was established by a king who reigns from heaven, who brings salvation to his people, and who invites all men to return to the Lord.

So that is the plan. To suffer, to live, to suffer, to die, and to be raised from the dead. What was the purpose of this plan? What was the need for a Messiah to come in the first place?

What is the need for the death of Jesus? And these are questions which are not uncommon, uncommonly asked outside these walls. And I think the best place to start is actually to stick with our friend Joel.

When we saw this decreation language at the start, where you have this perfect creation being undone by God's judgment, by sin, and then judgment that comes, the earth that doesn't bring forth fruit, that there is suffering and there is pain.

Now I think, someone was saying this to me the other day who wasn't a Christian, he was saying, you know, most people, the majority of people want the same thing, to keep to themselves, to make an honest living, to love their families, and to be happy.

[22 : 58] Right? And I think, you know, I think that's probably by and large true. Your neighbor next door, the citizen of another country, the refugee fleeing persecution. People want to go back to a perfect creation.

People want Eden, right? It's actually Eden that they're looking for. They want a world that doesn't have pain, that doesn't have suffering, that doesn't have death, that doesn't have famine, or hard toil.

A world that doesn't have oppressors or tyrants. And if they can, they also want to live by their own rules. Which gives you these two opposing ideas, because how can you have a world in which you have perfection, and then human beings doing whatever they want?

These things are incompatible. You're always going to end up with oppressors, because some people are just going to want to do those things. You're always going to end up with sin, because that's what some people want to do. You can't have them both.

You remember it was in Eden, where Eve was challenged by the serpent. Did God actually say? He challenged the authority of God's word. And our first parents did what was right in their own eyes, yet they had everything.

[24 : 06] They had a world free from the curse of sin. They had perfect harmony with God, and they were held personally accountable for their actions, just like we are held personally accountable for our sin, and we are in debt.

And Joel says, look at the world around you. Look at the ground. Cry out and mourn. See the work that you do with your hands being undone. See the suffering and pain that exists, because we all live in a world which isn't right.

It's broken. And yet God comes, and his plan is one of renewal, of a new kingdom, where we have a king who reigns from heaven, who has all authority, but he came not to be served, but to serve. And so we don't want to just get back to Eden. We actually want something more. We want to bring justice to lawlessness, order to chaos. We want to bring life where death reigns.

We want a new kingdom. But for this kingdom, the king has to die. Not for his own sins, but for the sins of his people.

[25 : 22] Jesus is the one who will be held accountable, and he does this willingly. And he knows each of us intimately. He knows us better than our parents know us.

He knows us better than our spouse knows us. He knows us through and through, and yet he willingly goes to the cross to die for us. And the coronation of this king is one in which he is raised from the dead, and he ascends into heaven to be seated on a heavenly throne.

That was the purpose. It was to make a way for us back to God. To make a way of repentance. To make known the paths of life, as Psalm 16 says. To know that Jesus took the punishment in your place.

That Jesus paid the fine for the crime that you committed. To be able to invite you and me to participate in this kingdom of God.

We who were strangers to God are being conformed to his likeness so that we can obey him in every way in our lives. So that we know how to love our families.

[26 : 30] How to make an honest living. How to be happy. How to experience joy. Particularly the joy of knowing God personally and in community and fellowship together.

And then we have what Peter perhaps makes as his most important point. He gives us this primary purpose which isn't so much focused upon man nor focused on us but it's actually focused on the Lord Jesus himself.

And Peter tells us the purpose of this plan in verse 34 where he says David did not ascend into the heavens but he himself says the Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified for David did not ascend to the heavens.

And so he quotes this psalm and he explains it. So the purpose of this plan was to glorify Jesus.

Peter points us again to the scriptures.

[27 : 41] He quotes Psalm 110 where we have this picture in heaven of God the Father saying to the Son you have Yahweh saying to my Lord sit at my right hand.

So after completing this work of redemption after he does this after he dies after he's raised from the dead the Father says to the Son sit at my right hand.

Jesus is enthroned in heaven as king over all and he's not just a king over a remnant not just king over his church Jesus is king over all because God is the one who makes all of his enemies his footstool.

All the opposition that has been against Jesus is brought into subjection and is brought under his feet under the throne of the glorified Jesus.

And this is a key text in the New Testament you'll find it's actually quoted again and again by the apostles. They don't just say come to Jesus and he'll make your life better.

[28 : 45] They actually just say come to Jesus Jesus is Lord. They say look at the one who has died for you he is exalted in the heavens and we are commanded to repent and to believe the gospel.

The plan and the purpose of God is his own glory and his invitation is to participate and to fulfil the reason for which we were made.

You were created not to devote ourselves to ourselves or to devote ourselves to idols or worthless things. We were made to devote ourselves to God and to enjoy him forever.

Apostolic teaching is a Christ centred plan not a man centred plan. The purpose of the Holy Spirit coming is to point us to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit comes to the followers of Jesus and it's a catalyst to fulfil the great commission to go and to make disciples of all nations. He says look at Jesus who was crucified for you he is Lord over all now go and make disciples for all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to you.

[30 : 02] And this is hard work disciple making it's going to be done with opposition against us and if it was easy maybe a bit boring but otherwise if it was easy we could also take the glory for

ourselves because this is something which is it's a multi generational work it's generation after generation of faithfulness which yields results.

2,000 years thus far we don't know how long before the Lord returns and this is something it's about discipling new disciples of Jesus but it's also about discipling our children so that they can disciple their children and they can disciple their grandchildren and each generation will owe their faithfulness to God's work not to our own work because God is the one who works his plans in unexpected ways.

God is the one who comes in at last minute when all seems lost and he rescues his people and there have been periods in church history since the Holy Spirit was given in Acts chapter 2 when things were a lot darker even than things are now and we now live in a world where our greatest challenge is the challenge of secularism where all around us it exists and it takes away our humanity our image bearing nature that we are made in the image of God that we have human dignity because we are all made in God's image all people of all nations it's what separates us from the animals or the dirt of the ground and if secularism is overcome it won't be because of us it will be because of God and so we should be praying fervently that we are the people who act faithfully keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and teaching others how to also follow Jesus so that brings us to our final point the outcome the product how did the crowd respond to Peter here in Acts chapter 2 will they be the first fruits of Pentecost of the Pentecost of this new

Christian era this was a sermon where Peter didn't hold back he attributes personal responsibility to them for crucifying Jesus and he declares to them that they did this despite the clear signs and miracles given by God during the ministry of Jesus and he declares that Jesus is the Messiah that he is Lord and that he reigns glorified in heaven and how did they respond they were cut to the heart which is quite amazing you have expected the way that Jesus was treated by the crowds that perhaps they would have tried to stone Peter and we'll see later on in Acts if you read through this yourself that the proclamation of the gospel can provoke that kind of response but in this particular instance they were cut to the heart they felt the burden and the weight of sin on their own shoulders and we have crucified the one God sent to us and he sent this Messiah as a gift to them not only has the spirit of God been given and poured out to his people at Pentecost in this prayer meeting but Jesus from his position and authority in heaven pours out his spirit on this crowd who witnessed the outpouring at Pentecost repent and be baptized is the response what shall we do repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins the response was clear all they could do was cast themselves before the mercy of God to turn from their sin and to respond in faith to Jesus and that's the only response we can have as a sinner who is awakened to the reality of our own sinfulness before God and they were roused to this because they saw the glory of this exalted

Jesus so you have this exalted Jesus and you have the filthiness of their own sin they have this contrast between this slavery to sin and to death and to the life of Jesus the Messiah and the question is have you seen the glory of this exalted Jesus who is both Lord and Christ Christ so what a day this was and what a way to begin the book of Acts 3,000 souls were added to the church in one day 3,000 individual lives transformed people who see the world differently who have their own stories to tell they all come together as one body and they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship and to the breaking of bread and prayers and they had all things in common it says later on so after the heights of the glory of Jesus being proclaimed we have this simple life of Christian fellowship of giving hospitality of sharing the Lord's supper together of listening and devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and that's what we are called to today to turn to Jesus to devote ourselves to the word of God to meet together to break bread together as one family in Jesus

[35 : 39] Christ the one who gave himself for his own sheep the one who is the king who is enthroned in heaven Jesus is Christ and Jesus is Lord Amen now let's of August who is