

God Is On The Move

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[0:00] The prophets were trying to find out what the Spirit of Christ in them was speaking of. It was the Spirit of Christ that spoke in the prophets. and we're studying the words of our Savior as they're found in Joel's mouth.

We're in chapter 2, and tonight we'll just read from 28 to the end of the chapter. Joel 2, 28. And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[1:09] For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls.

The Messiah is still there. well in Joel chapter 3 which we're not getting to tonight but in Joel chapter 3 God gathers all the nations together it says multitudes multitudes in the valley of decision and they are not deciding what to do with God God is deciding what to do with them so the whole world is going there we're going to read that in a few weeks I hope the whole world is going there time is going there every history ends there your history ends in the valley of decision so there's a path at everyone's feet you can imagine that a path there at your feet and a path you must walk and a path that will lead down into the valley of decision where the Lord Jesus the judge is waiting for you well the end of the world is coming and according to the last verses of Joel chapter 2 it's already happening so to speak it's beginning to happen an avalanche begins with just one little pebble and it doesn't seem like very much at the time but that little pebble hits a bigger rock and that bigger rock hits more rocks until all of the rocks are sliding down into the valley and in the same way these are the days that you're living in the whole world is sliding down in an avalanche toward this valley and so the end of the world is coming but it's not just the world coming to God in Joel chapter 2 in these verses that I had read what you see here is God now is coming to this world

God is on the move he is on the move so for years and years and years centuries the world has been held in in sin's winter but now the spring winds are beginning to blow the sun is beginning to shine the shoots are popping out of the ground there's the snow and ice are melting they're still there but it's melting and so spring and summer are coming God is on the move and we need to see that because sometimes I think that we think that the great things are behind us or the great things are in front of us but the great things are not here that God isn't doing anything now and we can look around especially in the day and the age that we live in and we can look around and think where's God?

is he doing anything? are all the best things behind us? are all the best things in front of us? is this just sort of a lull? but what Joel chapter 2 verses 28-32 shows us that right now God is on the move he's doing something and you see it in three ways in this passage and it really does start with a bang it starts in a moment with the spirits coming on God's people that's verses 28-30 so what is the first sign that the end of the ages the end has begun that God is now on the move well God pours out his spirit on his people the way the Hebrew reads it it says and afterward God I will pour out my spirit on all flesh when Peter on the day of Pentecost quotes this passage he says in the last days God says

I will pour out my spirit this afterward is after the restoration of Israel in chapter 2 and now it's rushing forward in Joel's perspective to the very end and the strange thing is the very end is in our past our past and so we know from Acts exactly what happened the spirit came upon all of God's people at Pentecost Pentecost and that is full of theological significance and importance the

Pentecost was the celebration the festival of first fruits it was the very first things of the harvest were coming out and so it was part of the celebration it was the beginning of harvest Joel 3 what we haven't read is going to show us the end of the harvest and there's ripened grain and there's grapes and wine presses getting crushed the harvest is now all in but the coming of the spirit the coming of the Holy Spirit marks the beginning of the harvest and when a harvest begins there's no stopping it it was there when the combines and the harvesters leave the barn to go out and to get the grain or to get the corn they stay out there don't they they don't go back and park for a while and park for a few months no you see them out there when the harvest begins it keeps going all the way till the last bit of corn is taken off the ground and it's a busy busy time isn't it Scott when you gotta work and work and get it all in while you can but eventually you get the crops in but once you start you have to keep going well the spirit's coming marked the beginning of the harvest the beginning of the harvest of the nations the beginning of the end and so the spirit came with a great purpose though came with a great purpose and this is important for us to understand he came to equip

[7 : 29] God's people to go to those nations we have to understand that judgment now is coming Joel 3 is saying judgment is coming on all the nations but before the judgment comes on all the nations the spirit is going to come on God's people so in the words of Jesus he said you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth the coming of the Holy Spirit was in order that God's people might be witnesses to the very ends of the earth and so you have to see that in Joel the end is coming but before the end comes every nation must hear they must hear the gospel they must hear about the Savior and Jesus says and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come so before the judgment is the testimony is the witness and so the spirit comes on God's people has come upon us has come upon you in order that we as a group might fulfill this great mission that we might be witnesses to the nations the spirit isn't just our personal holiness helper isn't just a personal he is that he is the one who sanctifies us he's the one that makes us holy but he didn't come just to make us holy we can bend in his ministry so it's just all about us but Joel and Acts shows us that his ministry is not just purely about us it is about us going to the whole world and so he came at the very beginning of the end to get the world ready for final judgment and so there the nations are out there they're living in darkness they're living in ignorance they're living in sin they are not ready for what is about to happen to them they're not ready to face their judge and so before the end the Holy Spirit and grace comes

God doesn't want them just to perish without a witness without any light without a testimony and so he sends his spirit on his people so that we can be the light and the salt to the world so that we can go and bear witness to them to say get ready be reconciled to your God and so the end is coming and again we do need to think about this and I need to think about this too often our Christianity can be constrained and limited only to our pursuit of personal holiness as if I can if I can just get myself taken care of then that's the full extent of my Christianity but the Holy Spirit doesn't come just to make us holy he makes us holy in order so that we can be clear witnesses to the world so his mission is greater than that and you see that his mission is to equip us to speak his mission is to equip us to reach the world to be prophets to the nations one of the great things about the reformation was Martin

Luther's recovery of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers that you don't need just these special men called priests in order to pray to God and so he said no we're all priests aren't we we're a royal priesthood and so we're kings and we're priests but Joel is showing us in a certain sense we also need to believe in the prophethood of all believers not that we all have the gift of prophecy or anything like that but as a group as a people we have this gift of we know the word of the Lord and it's our responsibility to tell it so the prophethood of all believers your sons and daughters will prophesy your sons and daughters will know my will and tell it to others and Joel what God points to is that the spirit will come in a greater way than he has ever come before to do something that he has never done before and so this is a great task it's a hard task it's a long task but God sends us more than enough help he sends his very spirit the spirit of Jesus

Christ he pours it out pours him out and so earlier he said I will send abundant rain and now God says I'm not only going to pour out rain upon the dry ground I'm going to pour out my spirit upon these dry hearts and where there was nothing but dry and barrenness there's going to be life there's going to be fruitfulness there's going to be power and growth and extension and so the spirit will

come in a greater way than ever before so we need to talk about that for a moment about the spirit in the Old Testament the spirit in the Old Testament and see why now it is different and what's different about his rule in the Old Testament what we see is the spirit coming upon people to fulfill specific tasks mostly so in the Old Testament the spirit came upon certain people to equip them for certain callings or to give them power and ability and gifts in order that they might carry out what God has called them to to be judges several times in the book of judges it says the spirit of God rushed upon Samson and when the spirit of God rushed upon Samson that's when he became Hercules and he became incredibly strong because the gift of the spirit was to equip him to be a judge and a deliverer but the spirit of God came on the prophets he came on kings but he didn't come on everyone in that way to gift them to equip them there's an interesting incident in numbers 11 it doesn't start out very good Moses is not happy with God says he's exceedingly angry with God that's not good but maybe moms you can relate to this you know why he was exceedingly angry well he was over worked and he says to the Lord

[14:36] I cannot carry all these people by myself the burden is too heavy it's too much why did you call me why did you give me this job it's too much for me and God very graciously says bring me 70 Israelite elders and he says I will take the spirit that is on you and put that spirit on them and they will help you carry this burden and so the spirit came down on these 70 elders and they began to prophesy they began to speak for God and then then there's this interesting bit about there was two elders that for some reason weren't out at the tent of meeting they were back in the camp and for some reason they stayed back there and the spirit he came on them too and Joshua seeing this Joshua is Moses young protege Joshua sees it and says

Moses stop them stop them from doing this I don't know if he was talking about the 70 or if he was just talking about the two but Joshua is upset that they're doing their prophesying he says Moses stop them but Moses replied are you jealous for my sake I wish that all of the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them so the spirit in the Old Testament came on people for a specific purpose for leadership to speak for God to be judges to rule to have authority and his equipping work wasn't necessarily a saving work it was a work that got them ready to lead God's people it was an equipping work and so you remember even King Saul the Holy Spirit came upon him and he prophesied and I don't think King Saul was a believer and that's why David in Psalm 51 says don't take your spirit away from me he's saying don't take your help away from me don't take your calling away from me don't put me up on the shelf and not use me anymore don't let my sin disqualify me from being king and you taking your spirit away from me keep using me but that equipping that leadership that speaking and judging it wasn't all of

God's people and I'm not saying that Old Testament believers were not regenerate that the Holy Spirit didn't comfort them that he had no ministry he didn't help them to pray I'm not saying any of those things but not all of them had the spirit in the same way that the church now does has the Holy Spirit to be witnesses to the world to get ready for the end so the Holy Spirit has come upon all of God's people to equip us for this great task and so remember Moses wish oh I wish all of the Lord's people were prophets I wish they all would receive the Holy Spirit and Moses wish came true and all the Lord's people have the spirit and they are called as a group as a people to speak to the world on behalf of God so evangelism can be hard witnessing can be hard it can be hard for a group to maintain their light in a dark world but God hasn't left us alone he's poured out his spirit on sons and daughters on young men and old men servants or slaves and so are you an old Christian well you have the spirit are you a young Christian well God has poured out his spirit on you are you a nobody in the world a servant a slave well God has taken notice of you and given you you partake you've been given one spirit to drink and so we can be his witnesses and so we need to bring our fear to that truth to this truth I have God's spirit and so let's bring our doubts and our questions to this truth think what spirit dwells within me it's God's Holy Spirit the spirit of Christ within us and Peter stood up and he preached boldly we know that Peter wasn't naturally a bold man a few days earlier he had proven that 50 days earlier he had proven that but he was filled with the

Holy Spirit remember in Acts 4 after Peter and John faced the Sanhedrin and the Sanhedrin said don't you dare preach in that name anymore they went back to their people and they prayed and after they prayed it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit and he spoke the word of God boldly and we're going to find out pretty soon that after Stephen's death that there was a great persecution broke out and the

people were spread throughout the whole land everyone except the apostles so this is all the common people they are spread throughout the land they're scattered about and it says they preached they evangelized and if we have been reading Acts and how did they do that well what's Acts been teaching us well they did it by the Holy Spirit so is the Holy Spirit is he trapped back in Acts 8 no is the

[20 : 45] Holy Spirit just for then no he's been poured out on all of God's people men women young old that we together might be witnesses for Jesus Christ that we might have this outward focus that we might have this in time focus to say the nations must hear the nations must be at least witnessed to and so what keeps you from sharing with others a lot of times we say I don't know what to say the Holy Spirit is a spirit of wisdom and understanding of counsel and of power maybe you're afraid Isaiah 11 says he's the spirit of knowledge into the fear of the Lord it's not that we might not be a little bit afraid of them but we have a greater reverence for God our God is bigger than they are and the Holy Spirit is able to put things right where now it's not people are big and God is small now it's God is big and people are small maybe it's a lot better things to do well again I think we need to remember when did the Holy

Spirit come he came at the beginning of the last days we are rushing and an avalanche to the end the world is winding down the world is going to be destroyed and the Spirit has come so that we could at least warn them so God now is on the move he has done something in this world he has poured out his Spirit secondly we see that God is judging and bringing nations to nothing God is judging and bringing nations to nothing and we could even add in there he is saving his people out of the nations in verses 30 and 31 it says I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth blood and fire and billows of smoke the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the day before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord now Joel is borrowing language from the book of Exodus and the ten plagues there's blood remember

Moses turned the Nile to blood there was fire and smoke remember the pillar and the cloudy fire the the the the fiery pillar there there was darkness one author said and in the night when the Lord killed the firstborn under the moon there was howling there was blood on the moon I don't I'm not sure exactly what Joel is saying or what he means but you understand what he's drawing on the Lord is going to powerfully rescue his people and he's going to destroy nations even as he does it and then there's this phrase that Joel's already used once he'll use again the sun will be turned to darkness the moon to blood again that's apocalyptic language that's language of judgment and upheaval it's language consistently in the prophets connected to the downfall of nations in Jeremiah 4 the word those words are connected to the fall of Israel in Isaiah 34 it says the Lord is angry with all the nations his wrath is upon their armies and he will totally destroy them he will give them over to the slaughter all the stars of the heaven will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll and all the starry host will fall and then he goes on and talks about the destruction of Edom that enemy of Israel in Isaiah 13 it's Babylon the great that God goes to war against and in Isaiah 13 he says and the stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light the rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light when I go to destroy Babylon it's the signs in the heavens these things will happen and so what is Joel telling us he he's saying in these last days that we presently live in right now that we are in there are not only days where it's not only the age of the spirit where God has poured out his spirit on all people are on on his people it's the age for the rise and the fall of kingdoms and

God saving his people from the nations great kingdoms mighty powers that are like the tower of Babel that they almost go up to the sky in and whose power is connected to rulers and powers and authorities in heavenly places who have demons and princes and the God of this age behind them remember those very strange words in Daniel chapter 10 where Daniel prays and the Lord sends an angelic visitor to give him a message and it says the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece they resisted Daniel's angelic visitor for 21 days until Michael one of the chief princes of your people came to help we don't know what that means but it's at least showing us that there's more to the political powers than meets the eye there are heavenly beings princes rulers authorities and powers in high places and God says I will make them go dark and I will make them bleed so this is the age for God to begin to destroy the kingdoms of men see that in verse 31 it will happen before before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord that day will bring the final destruction nation but kingdoms are falling already and so what we see is

[26:56] God's judgment is circling the nations he's saving his people out of them but he is destroying these kingdoms and so it's coming closer and closer so now is a great time of fear and unease in our own nation isn't it and the greatest power of the world and if anyone had the right to be optimistic it sure should be us but the mood is not optimistic the mood is not hopeful our mighty armies and our great riches cannot keep our enemies away from us is that unusual well it might be unusual for us but God has been tearing down kingdoms for centuries and he's been making great lights go out for centuries and so as we hear wars and rumors of war and as we see nations fall and as we see our own nation apparently beginning to decline we have to see that nothing out of the ordinary is happening this is the age when God is already bringing down the kingdoms of men so he's on the march and when he marches kingdoms will not stand and in this climate we should cherish all the more of those words in

Hebrews therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken that can't fall apart that can't go out let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire if our kingdom stands if Christ's kingdom stands we should cherish that because when we see our God and consuming fire destroying other nations we should be thankful and so worship God acceptably well God is on the move he's poured out his spirit he's judging the nations and third he is saving he is saving that's our message as we go to the nations that was Peter's message at Pentecost everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved verse 32 everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved judgment is coming we each have an appointment each of our paths are leading to that place where we face Jesus the judge where we have an appointment with God who is a holy consuming fire so how do you survive well you call on the name of the Lord to be saved in the midst of all the turmoil of this world you look and you call out to him and the promise is for everyone it says everyone everyone there's no exceptions everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved and so what should you do you call out you call out to the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ you call out to the God who keeps his promises who is slow to anger and abounding in love but who will in no way let the guilty go unpunished you call on him don't over complicate it how how are you saved don't over complicate it it says call call cry out an earnest wholehearted call anyone can call anyone can call and you don't have to be smart you don't have to be holy you don't have to be good anyone can call no one is too old to call no one is too young to call it's not work it's not try it's not convince God it's call out for mercy but did you see there's more than that it says in the last phrase among the survivors whom the Lord calls so it's not just about us calling it's about God calling people out of this wreck and this ruin and this world it's about God calling everyone who calls will be saved and those whom the Lord calls will be saved so there's two calls they're both true and they're both good news for sinners because God isn't just standing back waiting for sinners to call he himself is calling sinners

God is calling sinners and it's not just a general call it's not just a hey everybody there is that hey everybody that's the first one of anyone who calls on the Lord can be saved it's for everyone but it's not a hey everybody but it's a powerful call it's an effectual call it's a hey you and he goes right into your heart and he convicts you of your sin and he opens your eyes and he sweetly seduces you to Jesus and so he calls and he woos you and so God calls and the man calls out and the man is saved and so what is today well today is the day of salvation judgment is coming but today is the day of salvation God is on the move he's saving sinners so we need to put this all together with just a few lessons the first don't don't be waiting around for the last days to happen innumerable Christians spend all their time working on prophecy reading the newspapers checking the and I know that's not most of you but we can also have a sort of a well it will happen when it happens and it really doesn't matter now

Peter again Peter quoted Joel 2 like this in the last days God says we are in the last days and you don't have to look at the newspaper to know that Joel tells us the spirit has come the nations are out there the judgment is coming things are winding down the church has a mission and we are members of that great missionary agency so while we all might not be missionaries sent to foreign lands we all work for this mission agency that has as its mission the ends of the earth and so instead of worrying about when the end is coming we should be worried about getting the nations ready for the end that's our role two don't live for the kingdoms of this earth don't mix up the American flag with the kingdom of Jesus the kingdoms of this earth will fall and so

[34 : 24] I just say that to you to save you from endless grief if you think God's kingdom stands or falls by what happens to us here and you put your hope in that political process or in the founding fathers or whatever you're going to be disappointed because the age when God is bringing down the Egypts of this world and saving his people out of them that's what's happening now so don't put your hope in what you see politically or what's going right or what's going wrong look to that kingdom which is forever and it will never fall three have you called on the name of the Lord is God calling you is he coming close and calling you well don't resist him because today is the day of salvation multitudes multitudes in the valley of decision your path goes down to that valley and from there from there it's heaven or it's hell it's forever it's eternity so make

Jesus your savior today call out to him because what good will it do you to know that you're in the last days and judgment is coming if you're not saved what good will it do you and church what good will it do us if we know that we're in the last days and judgment is coming and we just sit on our hands and do nothing when the Holy Spirit has come and has said now let's go be witnesses to that dying world let's pray our Lord Jesus you are our king thank you that you are leading the way thank you that you have poured out the spirit upon us Holy Spirit thank you for equipping us as your people to speak your word to a dying world thank you Holy Spirit for not leaving any of us bereft and poor and naked and with nothing to say and nothing to do but you've equipped each one of us and as a group together to be about the business and the mission you've given us help us to have that mindset that thought to be about the things that you want us to be about and not consumed with the dead ends and the trivial things of this world forgive us for tending to our gardens when you've told us you want us to be thinking about the fields that are white under harvest forgive us for just being consumed with our own little things and not what you are concerned with please help us change our minds give us repentance give us faith give us every grace that we need and thank you that you will and our great God in heaven the father of our

Lord Jesus Christ pray that you would call sinners to your son that you would even do it tonight that you would put forth that effectual and powerful call and put your finger on someone and bring them this very night to bow at the feet of Jesus and to now confess that he is their Lord pray this in Jesus name amen