

THE BOOK OF JOEL
Lesson 6, Chapter 3

We concluded Joel chapter 2 in our previous lesson and so begin chapter 3 today. I want to remind you that only some English Bible versions have Joel divided into 4 chapters (like the CJB); in others it is only 3 chapters. It doesn't really matter; all the same content is there. What does matter, however, is the very first words of chapter 3. They may seem straightforward; they are anything but that. Therefore, we're going to explore this first verse in depth. Much definition of terms will be involved so that we can best discern God's oracle to Judah...and that because so much of it may very well affect us. So, let's read the very brief Joel chapter 3 together.

READ JOEL CHAPTER 3 all

The 1st verse reads this way in the CJB:

CJB Joel 3:1 *"After this, I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions;*

To properly dissect this verse, and thereby properly understand all that comes after it, we're going to have to determine what the term "spirit" means, what this spirit does, and who, exactly this affects and why it must be that way. So, in regards to the outpouring of the Spirit, and who it is meant to affect other Bible versions will use something different than "on all humanity". Here is the same verse in the NASB.

NAS Joel 2:28 *"And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.*

And now, in the KJV and the predominance of English Bibles.

^{KJV} **Joel 2:28** *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:*

So, these 3 choices in English speak of **who** it is that will have the Spirit poured out upon them. It's on all humanity, or it's on all mankind, or it's on all flesh. Humanity and mankind are essentially synonyms...so close in meaning... that there's no need to quibble. But, flesh means something different. All of these words are attempting to translate the Hebrew word **basar**. Technically, **basar** literally means all living creatures in general (that is, all living creatures that are not plants). A cat, a donkey, a fish, an elephant...I suppose even an insect... and a human all fall into the category of **basar**....flesh. On the other hand, as with all words and within all literature or human communication of any kind, context must be added to understand the cultural intent of the word at the time it was spoken. So, part of that needed context is to do determine what "Spirit" is prophesied to be poured out? Let's see how we can come to a rational conclusion on that.

Clearly, God does NOT pour out His Holy Spirit on irrational creatures like insects, cats, donkeys, fish, or elephants. That is, He does not pour out His Holy Spirit on living creatures that have no ability to know of the concept of the divine or the infinite, or to obey God's direction to them in any kind of conscious way, or to operate with a sense of choice within a moral code of right and wrong. But there is another kind of Spirit the Bible describes. It is God putting the necessary spirit of life...the breath of life... into living creatures in order that they have life. The attribute of life...despite what Darwinism and other sciences tries to convince us is the case... comes not from random accidents of nature, but rather its source is from outside the sphere of the physical and natural. Dead things cannot make something else or itself to come alive. So, intelligent and advanced human beings can mix all the individual chemicals, and elements, and strings of energy that we find that living creatures are indeed physically made of, but that alone cannot give that concoction the attribute of life. In this context, then, life simply means animation along with some level of consciousness caused by God that gives that blob of otherwise lifeless protoplasm a spirit of life. While all living creatures have the same level of animation (the ability to move and function as a living entity versus an inanimate and dead entity like a stone or a lump of clay),

on the other hand living creatures are created by God with various levels of consciousness and self-awareness. A fish has less consciousness than an elephant, for instance, an insect less than a fish, and no physical being has as great a level of consciousness and of full self-awareness as a human being.

So, the **Holy** Spirit of God is another matter altogether separate and distinct from the Spirit of life. The Holy Spirit is unique to God, it is a manifestation **of** God, and is given (perhaps loaned) only to certain living human beings under certain conditions due to its inherent holy nature. I wish to give credit to the eminent German Bible scholar Hans Walter Wolff for what I am about to explain in that regard.

God's Holy Spirit, then, is NOT primarily about animation or cognition...it's not mostly about knowledge or intelligence or simple consciousness the way a typical human mind and body normally operates. Nor is it about our soul, which can be defined as the source and repository of our desires, hopes, and the essence of self; that is, it is the epicenter of that which makes each of us who we uniquely are. Further, the Holy Spirit is NOT at our disposal as human beings. That is, we are **basar**, flesh, and have no ability to will God's Holy Spirit upon ourselves nor to change it or diminish it in any way. Rather, it has to be given freely and wholly to us by God, as His decision alone, on a case-by-case basis. Humanity and all creatures can be alive and have animation and consciousness, and some with a level of self-awareness, without the Holy Spirit being given to us. In fact, I think it is fair to say that God's Holy Spirit is the virtual opposite of **basar**... flesh. Thus, we read in the Bible of God choosing to give His Holy Spirit selectively, and only to some very few humans, as the vital divine power for the purpose of achieving mighty deeds that are otherwise improbable if not impossible, or for doing something of great and important historical purpose to move the ball of God's redemption plan forward towards its ultimate goal. The Holy Spirit is invincible, it is eternal, and it comes from the infinite (it comes from outside the sphere of humanity) and is always eager to put the Father's purpose into action. Yet, the flesh (the **basar**) is weak and changeable, and can be rather easily overcome as says the famous proverb given by Yeshua.

CJB Matthew 26:41 *Stay awake, and pray that you will not be put to the test- the spirit indeed is eager, but human nature is weak."*

This means that while God's Holy Spirit and purpose is placed within those of us whom He has selected to give it to, and it is a strong and immovable force, on the other hand even when we are in possession of that Holy Spirit by no means can we be assured that we'll carry out God's will because the vessel it is contained in (our human bodies and minds) remain as but flesh...*basar*. Complex?

Confusing...if not confounding? Paul, who I think we can all agree was gifted with the Holy Spirit, said this about that mysterious paradox that leaves us all in a conundrum .

CJB Romans 7: 14-24 ***¹⁴ For we know that the Torah is of the Spirit; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave. ¹⁵ I don't understand my own behavior- I don't do what I want to do; instead, I do the very thing I hate! ¹⁶ Now if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am agreeing that the Torah is good. ¹⁷ But now it is no longer "the real me" doing it, but the sin housed inside me. ¹⁸ For I know that there is nothing good housed inside me- that is, inside my old nature. I can want what is good, but I can't do it! ¹⁹ For I don't do the good I want; instead, the evil that I don't want is what I do! ²⁰ But if I am doing what "the real me" doesn't want, it is no longer "the real me" doing it but the sin housed inside me. ²¹ So I find it to be the rule, a kind of perverse "torah," that although I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me! ²² For in my inner self I completely agree with God's Torah; ²³ but in my various parts, I see a different "torah," one that battles with the Torah in my mind and makes me a prisoner of sin's "torah," which is operating in my various parts. ²⁴ What a miserable creature I am! Who will rescue me from this body bound for death?***

There is more to this passage of course, but what part I have read to you makes my point that the Holy Spirit is indeed in natural opposition to the flesh, and only some people will ever be given it. Even so, when the Holy Spirit becomes present in us, it sets off an uncomfortable dynamic that we'll fight until the day we die.

Therefore, in summation Joel 3:1 explains that "after this"... meaning after all the things prophesied to happen in the first 2 chapters have happened, THEN what God is saying here will occur. We're not given a calendar date; we only know it speaks of sometime later. And, what will happen is that the "Spirit" that is being poured out on humans can only mean God's Holy Spirit (and certainly not the

spirit of physical life...animation... that all creatures currently enjoy or they (we) wouldn't be alive in the first place.

Now. As we continue unpack the depths of that first verse of chapter 3, the explanation of what was meant by the term Spirit is relatively easy to grasp as compared to what comes next. All your mental focus is needed. And it is this: according to Joel's prophecy, to whom is the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon? As we have already seen, most of the time in our Bibles it is translated to English as being poured out upon all mankind, and sometimes as upon "all flesh". It has been taken by a slim majority of scholars to mean **all** human beings, worldwide, in general. That is, on everybody Jew and gentile. To this I say: I agree with slightly smaller minority segment of Bible scholars who think otherwise. I contend that saying that the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh can by no means be intended to indicate **all** human beings will receive it. In fact, I don't think this necessary includes gentiles in the way we normally think about the term gentiles. This is a very important and challenging matter to discuss; and, it is why we have spent some time talking about spirit, soul, flesh, and Holy Spirit. Normally this such a discussion happens only in the hallowed halls of Theological institutions, but it need not be that way. All of you can understand this if you'll try. Even so, there is certain knowledge needed to explain why we ought to accept that Joel's prophecy does not, and cannot, refer to all human beings receiving the Holy Spirit, and I contend it also cannot refer to gentiles (as we typically think about that term). So, I'm necessarily going to lay out my case by revisiting some things that I've spoken about in earlier lessons and at times from other of the Bible books I've taught on; and in some cases, from several years ago. So...here we go.

First...although the reason for might not be apparent immediately... let's begin with what the term "Israel" means. Until we understand this, we won't be able to grasp what the process of Redemption History is about nor where it will end up, and Joel's prophecy is knee-deep in that matter. Israel is a term that must be understood on at least two levels: the spiritual and the physical. Without getting into the various nuances on that term, when dealing with the spiritual level, Israel embodies what is essentially a divine ideal. Israel is the totality of the ideal of what God created human beings to be, and how human beings were meant to relate to God and to one another. The ideal is of humans who are totally faithful

to God, giving our entire allegiance to Him, without ever wavering. This ideal defines people who think sinlessly, behave sinlessly and at all times do so righteously. They serve God in the sense of being fully submitted to His will. Israel is God's ideal vision or thought about what He will (one way or another) eventually bring about among and within humans on a physical and metaphysical level.

To be clear, however, I don't mean to imply that somewhere buried in the Bible we find this ideal in Heaven given the label of Israel per se. What we do find, however, is that Yeshua is held up as the "true Israel"...the physical model of the ideal Israel. This was proved because the rules of thought and behavior that define God's ideal called Israel, which are contained in the Torah as given to Moses, are explicitly said in the New Testament to have been lived-out in perfection by Jesus. Paul also attempts to explain this mystery of Israel in Romans 9 by saying:

CJB Romans 9:6 ***6 But the present condition of Isra'el does not mean that the Word of God has failed. For not everyone from Isra'el is truly part of Isra'el;***

So, true Israel is that divine ideal as formulated by God that I have been speaking about. This ideal existed long before the people God intended to carry it out existed. That is because just as with humans, when we only take physical action after our minds have developed the thought to do it, so it logically follows that before something is actually and finally created by God or it comes about at His direction, first He has thought of it. Thus, what God would eventually bring into being on earth in living physical form called Israel was FIRST but an organized thought...an ideal... that He had in Heaven. I call this body of thought, ideal Israel or true Israel... just to give it a name or a label so we can discuss it.

Israel on a physical level, however, must be thought of as a political, religious, and geographical entity. That is, Israel are physical people, belonging to physical tribes, who in time unified into a physical nation based upon their common worship of a certain God...Yehoveh. They are a separate and identifiable people group. At one point in history, they were given an earthly territory as their own to occupy; the former Land of Canaan. Thus, in ancient times as now, Israel is seen as a typical political entity...people as part of a government system living in

a particular land with defined boundaries and borders, along with a set of unique cultural traits.

So, I think we can say that Israel as the divine ideal (that at first had no physical attribute to it), at the right time was assigned by God to a group of people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Technically, the physical attribute of Israel came about...that is, the first step of God transforming the Heavenly ideal called Israel into an earthly, physical reality... began at a moment in time when Jacob won a wrestling contest with the Angel of the Lord, and then God gave Jacob a new name...a name never before bestowed upon a human: Israel. In fact, to this day, even among Jewish Bible and language scholars there is no consensus on what the name actually means or where it came from. It just seems to have happened all at once. It seems to me that when God first gave Jacob that name, it was more prophecy than immediate reality. It was but the beginning of a process. Thus, it was Jacob and his descendants that were chosen by God to be the group of people... physical, living, breathing manifestations of the heavenly ideal of Israel...that was brought to earth. What good is an ideal if it never achieves any more than being only an ideal...a notion... an invisible but unrealized thought? We actually ought not be thrown by such a thing. Such ideals on earth are called philosophies. Any philosopher will tell you that those thoughts, no matter how extensive or profound, are just a vapor unless humans bring it to life by adopting them and acting them out. Thoughts and ideals must be given animation to be any more than just a vapor; and the vehicle of this animation of God's ideal of Israel was Jacob and the offspring born to him; a people group that were called Israel. To get to where we need to be, let's explore that even a bit further.

Jacob's new name was (as I said) more a prophecy than a reality. If God's ideal was to be brought into action of any significance, it had to occur within a pretty large group of people. When Jacob was re-named Israel, he was but a single person...not a group of people or a nation. When he had 12 sons, even he together with those sons and their families...probably numbering no more than 200 total family members...were by no means regarded as a distinct people group, let alone as a nation. So, God took that family to Egypt where they would grow into a large enough group of people to be used. Even when in Egypt, they weren't yet anointed as an official nation, set-apart and dedicated to

realizing God's ideal. This would happen only after 400 years of growth, and then leaving Egypt as an enormous band of refugees. The actual anointing of them as a nation devoted to bringing about Yehoveh's Heavenly ideal happened upon their arrival at Mt. Sinai.

At Mt. Sinai, this people group officially became God's manifestation of the Heavenly ideal on earth. The vehicle of this official anointing was the making of a new covenant with Moses and the 13 tribes that He led out of Egypt (yes, there were 13 when they left Egypt, not 12). I say "new" covenant because every covenant God makes is new when it happens. The covenant God made with Abraham was a new covenant, and it was the preliminary step in bringing the Heavenly ideal of Israel into existence, and for explaining its purpose. All Abraham really knew was that this God that approached Him, told him to leave his family and his country and to go somewhere God would show Him. And if he did that, from Abraham's family line the entire world be blessed. How would the entire world be blessed? Abraham didn't know. But, what necessarily had to happen was that one particular line of Abraham had to be the only ones to carry on that covenant promise; if those possible lines God selected Abraham's son Isaac. From Isaac's twin sons, God selected Jacob. And from Jacob grew the 12 (13 really) tribes. And, upon the Covenant of Moses... a covenant made by and between God and those tribes... the Heavenly ideal of Israel was put into action. Listen to Deuteronomy 29:9 -12.

CJB Deuteronomy 29:9-12 ⁹ *'Today you are standing, all of you, before ADONAI your God- your heads, your tribes, your leaders and your officers- all the men of Isra'el,* ¹⁰ *along with your little ones, your wives and your foreigners here with you in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water.* ¹¹ *The purpose is that you should enter into the covenant of ADONAI your God and into his oath which ADONAI your God is making with you today,* ¹² *so that he can establish you today for himself as a people, and so that for you he will be God- as he said to you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov.*

But, we're not done yet, because the fullest extent of God's ideal had by no means been brought into fruition. Therefore, the Prophet Jeremiah reveals the next covenant that was to come. By now we've learned that a new covenant

never replaces a previously given (and older) one. Each new one is but additive to the previous ones, and they all work together towards a common goal. The key to understanding the significance of what I'm telling you is this: all of God's working to bring about His Heavenly ideal...transforming it from merely a thought or vapor into actual being happens through His covenants. And the only covenants He has made after the time of Noah are with Hebrews. But wait; if that's true, how about the so-called New Covenant that the Church typically says has not only abolished all previous covenants, but in fact is a covenant made with gentiles? Let's easily dispel what that false Church doctrine claims.

CJB Jeremiah 31:30-32 ³⁰ *"Here, the days are coming," says ADONAI, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah. ³¹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them," says ADONAI. ³² "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says ADONAI: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

The New Covenant claimed by The Church was made with whom? Israel and Judah, which historically together form the whole house of Israel... all of Israel. No mention of gentiles, nor of any other nation or people group, nor of some new religion. So, the Heavenly ideal was to be pushed forward yet further, and again through Israel. With that knowledge, let's return to Joel 3:1.

So, who is it that God's Spirit is going to be poured out upon? The verse says all **basar**... all flesh. But, can this possibly intend for us to understand as all human beings? Christianity has long said that the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy happened 7 or 8 hundred years later at the event the Church calls Pentecost. And, by the way, they are correct. Let's read about this.

CJB Acts 2:1-18 *The festival of Shavu'ot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place. ² Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to*

talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak. ⁵ Now there were staying in Yerushalayim religious Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered; they were confused, because each one heard the believers speaking in his own language. ⁷ Totally amazed, they asked, "How is this possible? Aren't all these people who are speaking from the Galil? ⁸ How is it that we hear them speaking in our native languages? ⁹ We are Parthians, Medes, Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Y'hudah, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome;

¹¹ Jews by birth and proselytes; Jews from Crete and from Arabia...! How is it that we hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things God has done?" ¹² Amazed and confused, they all went on asking each other, "What can this mean?" ¹³ But others made fun of them and said, "They've just had too much wine!" ¹⁴ Then Kefa stood up with the Eleven and raised his voice to address them: "You Judeans, and all of you staying here in Yerushalayim! Let me tell you what this means! Listen carefully to me! ¹⁵ "These people aren't drunk, as you suppose- it's only nine in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken about through the prophet Yo'el: ¹⁷ 'ADONAI says: "In the Last Days, I will pour out from my Spirit upon everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my slaves, both men and women, will I pour out from my Spirit in those days; and they will prophesy.

Peter said more about this astonishing fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, but this much suffices to make the point. It was ONLY upon Jews who were in the Holy Land...those who resided there as well as those that were scattered over many other nations but had come to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the biblical feast of Shavuot (it certainly wasn't gentiles who came!)... and this passage in Acts says as much. The bulk of these Jew were Jewish by birth, but others were Jewish by conversion. That is, they were born as gentiles but by conscious decision left their gentile heritage and instead joined with the Jewish people (just as did many of the mixed multitude that followed Moses and the Hebrew tribes out of Egypt). There is no discrepancy that I'm aware of within the many branches of Christianity that this action of Pentecost as depicted in the Book of Acts was Joel's prophecy being fulfilled (for one reason, the Apostle Peter explicitly says it was and recites word-for-word Joel's prophecy). There is also no discrepancy

that I'm aware of that at that time the Holy Spirit fell only upon Jews (Israel) because that's all that were present in Jerusalem for the festival (no pagan gentiles except perhaps for some gawkers or local gentile merchants).

But, let's take that one step further. |Since we know when this part of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled (at Pentecost), did all of humanity...all human beings living on planet earth... suddenly have the Holy Spirit of God placed within them? Did gentiles who worshipped Baal receive the Holy Spirit of God? Because if all humans on the planet received the Holy Spirit at that moment, what use was there for Christ? Yeshua came and went, He said, so that the Holy Spirit would come. But also, that only those who trusted in Him would ever receive the Holy Spirit. So, it is illogical that what we read in Joel chapter 1 means that every human being...gentiles and all living Jews... received God's Holy Spirit. In fact, it was but those who trusted Yehoveh and His Son Yeshua who received it, and at that time that was only members of Israel... a certain segment of Jews. Joel's prophecy did NOT mean that the whole world would receive the Holy Spirit, and as with all of Joel's prophecy, it actually had only to do with Israel. In fact, when we get to chapter 4, we're going to see that as opposed to the Holy Spirit being intended for Israel as part of their restoration, God speaks of the terrible fate of gentiles. That fate is to be gathered together in Israel as army opposed to Israel, so that God can destroy them all.

That first half of Joel 3:1 could only be said to speak of gentiles if it were lifted out and away from all the rest of Joel and stood by itself, especially because the next words are: ***Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions; (Joel 3:1 CJB)***. Since Joel is speaking only to Israel (mainly Judah at the moment), then of course common sense says that "**your** sons and daughters" are speaking of Israel's sons and daughters and not of their gentile neighbors' sons and daughters. Now. As much as I'd like to, I don't think we can move on because of the elephant that has just entered into the room. If all of this is ONLY for Israel, what of us gentiles? Are we doomed only for destruction, and all Jews are fated only for redemption? The Constantinian Church (the Church as we've known it for 16 centuries) solved that problem simply and swiftly. They changed the meaning of Israel to Church. Everywhere in the Scriptures Israel was to be blessed and restored, now it was gentiles instead. So, let's address this.

Prior to Yeshua it was always possible for gentiles (foreigners, strangers) to become part of Israel. They did that though removing their allegiance to their former gods and worshipping, instead, Israel's god; and through disavowing their allegiance to their gentile nation, and instead giving that allegiance to the nation of Israel. In ancient times, gods and nations were organically connected. To worship a certain god was completely tied to what nation that god represented. Thus, it is fair to speak of a gentile converting meant when he or she changed their allegiance to Israel. At that moment they ceased being a gentile, and instead became a Jew... a member of national, political Israel. By Christ's day, this had evolved a bit. Converted gentiles of course gave up their gods and religious system to adopt Yehoveh and the Hebrew faith. But... they often tended to stay allied with whatever nation they lived in, or formed a kind of dual allegiance between the nation where they resided and Israel. Let's remember that in the 1st century, only about 5% of living Israelites resided in the Holy Land; the 95% lived elsewhere. Thus, a gentile converting indeed meant becoming a Jew mostly in the religious sense... that is, adopting what we might call Judaism...but at the same holding certain rights as a member of national Israel.

But what about now... today? In fact, Paul battled against this idea of gentiles converting to Jews in order to worship Yeshua and His Father Yehoveh, and thus obtaining those spiritual benefits. Paul taught that while a gentile was indeed to give up his or her formal religious practices and gods in favor of Yeshua and Yehoveh, this was ONLY a spiritual transaction. This transaction did NOT mean they had to become Jews in the sense of adopting Judaism or (especially in the political sense of it) as renouncing citizenship of the nation where they resided, and instead becoming a citizen of Judah or the Galilee or whatever remained of the Holy Land at the time. Those Jews (Believers in Yeshua, mainly) who demanded full conversion by gentiles, were given the name of Judaizers.

So, what is the process that God ordained for a gentile to be able to partake of these covenant blessings... including the New Covenant... that were given ONLY to Israel? The hands-down best place in the New Testament to go to understand the process is in the Book of Romans. I'm only going to quote and speak about a small section of it today; you can go to my study on the Book of Romans in the

Torah Class app or on Torah Class.com to get a much more extensive explanation. But, here we have the core of it:

CJB Romans 11:13-18 ¹³ *However, to those of you who are Gentiles I say this: since I myself am an emissary sent to the Gentiles, I make known the importance of my work* ¹⁴ *in the hope that somehow I may provoke some of my own people to jealousy and save some of them!* ¹⁵ *For if their casting Yeshua aside means reconciliation for the world, what will their accepting him mean? It will be life from the dead!* ¹⁶ *Now if the hallah offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole loaf. And if the root is holy, so are the branches.* ¹⁷ *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you- a wild olive- were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree,* ¹⁸ *then don't boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you.*

Two points: first, what does Paul say a gentile MUST do to partake of the salvation offered by Christ? We must be grafted into... made part of... the Olive Tree. The Olive Tree was the standard symbol of the nation of Israel. Therefore, Paul says a gentile must become part of Israel. Second, and perhaps most important, what makes Israel, Israel... what is it, precisely, that a gentile must be grafted into... and what is the rich root of the Olive Tree (Israel)? What makes Israel, Israel are the covenants God made with them. Nothing else. This is a biblical and historical fact, and not a speculation. No covenants, no Israel. So, when one becomes part of Israel, by default one comes under the covenants of Israel... all of them. Only then do we get the benefit of what those covenants offer to us. The rich root of Israel Paul speaks about (a metaphor, of course) are necessarily those covenants, beginning with Abraham's Covenant, then the Covenant of Moses, and then finally the New Covenant. How are gentiles grafted in... what is the mechanism of grafting... how can we gentiles be included in those covenants? Through trust in the Jewish Savior, Yeshua. Prior to the advent of Jesus, a gentile could convert and become part of the Jewish religion and even the physical nation of Israel by trusting in Yehoveh the God of Israel. **After** the advent of Yeshua, a gentile could become part of Israel on the spiritual level...that is, adopting and becoming part of the ideal of Israel... without becoming part of national physical Israel. A gentile could remain a gentile (no conversion necessary) and even remain completely politically loyal to whatever

nation he or she might reside in... by trusting in Yehoveh **as well as** the newest revelation of the Godhead, Yeshua. Any way one wants to look at it, we have to be part of Israel to be saved since salvation is contained only within the provision of the covenants God made with Israel, with Yeshua as the goal of those covenants. Again: since the time of Jesus, gentile Believers are not joined to political, national Israel or to any tribe of Israel. Rather, we are joined to ideal Israel in the Heavenly sense of it. There is no option B for Jew or gentile.

A lot to digest, I know. So, let's call it a day and give you a few days to ponder this before we continue in Joel chapter 3.