

THE SCRIPTURES PREDICTING THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It has already been noted that there are eight scriptures which predict the ultimate salvation of Israel by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. In addition, Joel 2:28 predicts a future outpouring of the Spirit. Concerning these nine references, the following may be said:

(a) These are predictions which point toward the future, relative to the time at which they were made. In addition, they were not fulfilled within the Old Testament period. The only exception to these assertions is the prediction of Haggai 2:5. Thus they cannot be said to specifically point to a reality already in existence during that period.

(b) However, the question of the meaning, the significance of these predictions to those who made them, as well as to those who heard and read them during the Old Testament period must be considered. Of course, it is admitted that this question of the understanding of these scriptures on the part of Old Testament believers could provide a broad base for speculation.

Some interpreters could say, "As regards the subjective understanding on the part of Old Testament believers, we know nothing." Others could say, "Undoubtedly the Holy Spirit guided them into the full and correct understanding of these scriptures, even those which are predictive." Perhaps, however, the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes, between no understanding and full understanding. Perhaps it is necessary to say, "We must see the contents and contexts of these scriptures. We must see what, if anything, they tell us concerning the kinds of action upon, or the nature of the relationships to, Old Testament individuals in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And we must see what effects, if any, resulted."

The first two replies as stated above, would seem to be not only speculative, but also exegetically sterile. The third reply would appear to have some promise, and therefore seems worthy of further exploration.