

# “The Forgotten God”

## Sermon Reflection Questions January 17, 2010

### Joel 2:28-29, Unlocking the Old Testament

Frances Chan wrote a book called *The Forgotten God*. It is a book that illustrates how many mainline and evangelical Christians don't quite know what to do about the Holy Spirit. They know that the Spirit exists, but don't really understand how the Spirit operates and therefore often neglect the power of the Spirit in their lives. This can especially be true of the Presbyterian denominations. We have seen people get carried away with emotionalism or we have seen people get so caught up with signs and wonders that they forget to live out the work of God. We have seen people use the Spirit inappropriately to win arguments saying that “God told me...” The abuses and misunderstandings related to the Holy Spirit are numerous; however we tend to throw the baby out with the bath water, so to speak. We forget about the real work that the Holy Spirit does in our lives and in our world. The sad thing is that by forgetting about the Holy Spirit we miss out on so much.

In Joel, one of the Minor Prophets, God tells the people what will happen when He restores His people. What He promises is amazing and that the Spirit of God will be poured out on all flesh. The prophecy of Joel was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and since that time the Holy Spirit has operated very differently from how He has operated in the Old Testament.

1. The first point from the message on Sunday was that the Holy Spirit used to just come upon people for specific tasks and now the Holy Spirit will dwell *within* us.

a. Read the following Old Testament texts (Judges 3:9-10, Numbers 17:28, Deut 34:9). How do they compare with the activity of the Spirit in the New Testament texts (Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:9, I John 3:24)?

b. How could the Holy Spirit come upon someone in the Old Testament, but *within* someone in the New Testament? (2 Corinthians 3:3, Titus 3:4-7)

2. In Acts 2 (specifically verses 16-18) it says that on the day of Pentecost the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled. Read Acts 2 how does Pentecost fulfill the prophecy of Joel?

3. There is another difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament workings of the Spirit.

a. According to Joel 2:28-29 upon who will the Spirit operate?

b. How does this differ from whom the Spirit operated on in the Old Testament?

c. What are the implications that result from the Holy Spirit operating on all flesh?

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4. Read the passages below; in each passage identify what the Holy Spirit can do in our lives.

a. Gal 5:22-26

b. I Cor 12:11

c. Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16

d. Galatians 4:6

e. Romans 8:14

f. Acts 1:8

5. Eph 5:18 says “...instead be filled with the Spirit”. The way the passage is written in the Greek should really be translated “keep on being filled with the Spirit.” How can we keep on being filled with the Spirit?

6. What would happen if a majority of the Christians truly allowed the Spirit to work according to His desire in our lives? What would happen in your life if you allowed the Spirit to work more prominently?