

Joel Lesson 24

Here again is my proposed plan for our study of the final five verses of Joel 2: Let's first study of Joel 2:28-32 from the perspective of **Joel's** listeners in Joel 2. And then, after we have done that, let's flip over to Acts 2, and study those same verses from Joel 2 from the perspective of **Peter's** listeners in Acts 2. In short, we want to know what Joel 2 tells us about Acts 2, and we want to know what Acts 2 tells us about Joel 2.

Joel 2:28-29, Continued

Joel 2:28-29 – “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Whether or not we are seeing a chapter break here, we are definitely seeing a section break.

So far in Joel 2, the text has been describing this terrible second invasion that is coming and that is near, the text has called upon the people

to repent, and the text has been describing what would happen if they did repent.

But, now, in verse 28, the text is beginning to describe something else – something that would come to pass **afterward**.

We are seeing something here that God was going to do later whether or not these people repented. And perhaps this glimpse of the wonderful things that God was planning would provide an additional incentive for Joel's listeners to repent and return to God.

After what?

Our first question is this: "And it shall come to pass **afterward**" – **after what?**

Peter will help us answer that question later, but for now I think Joel 1:15 also helps us answer that question.

Joel 1:15 – Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD** is **near**, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

And Joel 2 has been telling us about that coming day of the Lord that was near.

But I think that, starting here in verse 28, we are going to hear about something else that is coming, but that is **not** near – or, at least, not necessarily near. I think the word “afterward” in verse 28 just means “later.” (Peter may tell us a bit more about this in Acts 2.)

In short, here is what I think God is telling them:

Yes, the enemy from the north will come soon if you do not repent. And, yes, I will remove that northern enemy far from you if you do repent. But whether you repent or do not repent, let me tell you now about something that I am going to do after all of this.

Some of the promises in Joel 2 have been conditional. For example, God would remove the northerner from them **if** they repented. And we know that promise was conditional because we looked back to Deuteronomy 28 to find its source, and we looked forward to the exile to find its likely termination.

But here I don't think we have a condition – either stated or unstated. “And it shall come to pass afterward.”

I think God is telling the people here what he is going to do later without regard to what the people are doing now. God might use these people to accomplish his will, but God would just use

someone else if these people remained disobedient and rebellious.

God had earlier made an unconditional promise to Abraham to bless the world through his seed, and God had earlier made an unconditional promise to King David that one of his descendants would reign forever. And I think we are seeing a promise here that is related to those two promises and that is likewise unconditional.

And maybe we today can know all of this by reading ahead in the Bible, but how could the people of Joel's day have known this?

I think they could have known it by reading the prophecy itself, which starts in verse 28 and continues at least into verse 32. In a word, these verses are **Messianic** – something the Jews were already accustomed to hearing from the prophets – and I think Joel's listeners would have seen these promises as Messianic promises even before Peter confirmed that for us all in Acts 2.

I will pour out my Spirit

So what is it that was going to happen later?

These verses give us a list of things, and the very first thing on that list is a wonderful promise from God: "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."

What does that promise mean? We will eventually get to that question, but for now let's start with a slightly narrower question: what would that promise have likely meant to the people who first heard it but who did not have Acts 2?

"I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."

I think the first thing the people might have thought when they heard that great promise was that they had already heard it before.

Joel is not the only book in the Bible that contains that great promise. There are plenty of parallel "pour" prophecies & promises in the Bible (as shown on the Handout for Lesson 24)!

Isaiah 32:14-18 – For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; **until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high**, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will

abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Isaiah 44:3-5 – For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; **I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.** They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’ another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.”

Ezekiel 39:28-29 – Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. **And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel,** declares the Lord GOD.”

Zechariah 12:8-10 – On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. **And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace** and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns

for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

Would Joel's listeners have been familiar with these other prophecies? Yes and no. If we date Joel during the pre-exile period (as now seems likely), then they would have been familiar with Isaiah, but not with Ezekiel or Zechariah because those books had not been written yet.

But slicing and dicing the Old Testament that way is not helpful or necessary for our purposes. And given our uncertainty about the date of Joel, we can't even be sure about where we should slice and dice.

So, instead of focusing on people who lived during the days of Joel, let's focus instead going forward on people who lived between the Testaments – on people who had **all** of the Old Testament but **none** of the New Testament. What would this promise in Joel 2 have meant to them? (Later we will expand that question to include **both** Testaments when we look at Acts 2.)

Let's assume this person living between the Testaments knows all about the Old Testament – perhaps he is a scribe. And let's look at these verses from the perspective of that hypothetical Old Testament scholar.

And the first thing I think we can say about that person living between the Testaments and reading Joel 2 is that he would have also thought about Isaiah 32, Isaiah 44, Ezekiel 39, and Zechariah 10 because they contain the same promise.

And what would he have seen in all of those parallel prophecies? Look at the blue highlights on the Handout for Lesson 24.

- In Isaiah 32, he would have seen promises of fruitfulness, growth, justice, righteousness, peace, quiet, trust, and security.
- In Isaiah 44, he would have seen a people chosen by God, blessing, growth, and a people belonging to God.
- In Ezekiel 39, he would have seen restoration, mercy, God's jealousy, security, a people brought back by God, a people gathered by God, a people showing God's holiness, a people who know God, God leaving no one behind, and God not hiding his face from the people.
- In Zechariah 12, he would have seen salvation, protection, strength, godliness, judgment, grace, mercy, and sorrow over a first-born.

Now, as we today look back at those lists from the perspective of the New Testament, I suspect we can all think of something established by God that satisfies every single one of those descriptions!

But what about our Old Testament scholar who does not yet have the New Testament. What would he have been thinking about?

Let's look at the list again – peace, security, justice, mercy, salvation, strength, and on and on? I think that, without a doubt, he would have been thinking about the promised Messiah.

He would have seen these great promises as what they are: Messianic promises. He would have recognized that these promises of peace, security, justice, mercy, salvation, and strength are, all throughout the Old Testament, applied to the coming Messianic age. He would have understood that the focus here is on the Messiah who was coming and on the Messiah's kingdom that was coming.

And our verses here in Joel 2 would have confirmed his view: all flesh, prophecy, dreams, visions, wonders, a great and awesome day, salvation, escape, survivors, and the call of God.

I think any Jew reading these prophecies would have been left thinking both that **someone** wonderful was coming and that **something** wonderful was coming.

And that **whoever** it was and **whatever** it was, when these promises were fulfilled it would be a great and awesome day for the people of God!

That is what I think we can learn when we compare this prophecy in Joel 2 with these parallel prophecies, but let's focus now on the key phrase itself: "I will pour out my Spirit." What would our Old Testament scholar have thought about that specific language?

The Spirit in the Old Testament

Let's start with the word "Spirit." What would someone, knowing only the Old Testament, have known about the Spirit of God?

Two of our previous handouts are very helpful in answering that question. We can look at the Handout for Lesson 14 to quickly review all of the verses in the Old Testament that directly refer to the Spirit of God, and we can look at the Handout for Lesson 16 to quickly determine the specific language that is used to describe the Spirit in the Old Testament.

After we do that, we should be able to say what our Old Testament scholar would have known about the Holy Spirit.

But why is it important that we look at all of that? Why is it important for us to know what someone in the Old Testament would have known about the Spirit of God?

It is important for us to know that because Joel 2 is a **prophecy** about the Spirit, and it is very unlikely that this prophecy is describing only those activities of the Spirit that were already known and were already happening. As with *most*¹ prophecies, I think we can assume that this prophecy was telling us something new about the Spirit of God that would either occur or otherwise be revealed when this prophecy was fulfilled.

But for us to determine the new thing that is prophesied here about the Spirit, we need to know what the old things were. What did the people already know about the Spirit? What were they already experiencing when it came to the Spirit of God?

So, here then is our question: what would our Old Testament scholar have already known about the Holy Spirit?

- He would have known that sometimes the Holy Spirit is described in terms of its **location** – the Spirit is here, but not there. For example, in Genesis 1:2, we find the Spirit

¹See a rare exception in Genesis 8:22.

hovering over the face of the waters. In 1 Samuel 16:14, we find the Spirit departing from King Saul.

- But our Old Testament scholar would also have known that sometimes the Holy Spirit is described as being omnipresent – here, there, and everywhere. “Where shall I go from your Spirit,” the Psalmist asks in Psalm 139:7.
- Our Old Testament scholar would have known that there are many different ways to describe the interaction of the Holy Spirit with man. The Spirit **abides** in man (Genesis 6:3); he **fills** man (Exodus 31:3); he is **put** on man (Numbers 11:17); he **rests** on man (Numbers 11:26); he **comes upon** man (Numbers 24:2); he is **in** man (Numbers 27:18); he **clothes** man (Judges 6:34); he **stirs** man (Judges 13:25); he **rushes upon** man (Judges 14:6); he **departs** from man (1 Samuel 16:14); he has **made** man (Job 33:4); he can be **taken** from man (Psalm 51:11); he **leads** man (Psalm 143:10); he can be **grieved** by man (Isaiah 63:10); he is put in the **midst** of man (Isaiah 63:11); he gives **rest** to man (Isaiah 63:14); he **enters into** man (Ezekiel 2:2); he **falls upon** man (Ezekiel 11:5); and he is put **within** man (Ezekiel 36:27).
- Our Old Testament scholar would have associated the Spirit of God with the word of God.

The Spirit **speaks** by man (2 Samuel 23:2); he **instructs** man (Nehemiah 9:20); he **warns** man through prophets (Nehemiah 9:30); he gives **visions** to man (Ezekiel 8:3); and God had sent his **law** and his **words** by the Spirit through the prophets (Zechariah 7:12).

- Our Old Testament scholar would have known of, but been less familiar with, the title “Holy Spirit” because that phrase occurs in only two Old Testament passages: Psalm 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10–11. He would likely have referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit or as the Spirit of the Lord.
- Our Old Testament scholar would have known that the Hebrew word “ruah” translated “Spirit” can also just mean “wind” or “breath” depending on the context. For example, we find both of those usages in the description of the great flood: “Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the **breath** of life died.” (Genesis 7:22) “And God made a **wind** blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.” (Genesis 8:1) And so, when he thought about the Spirit of God, he might be thinking about the Spirit in terms of the breath of God or a wind sent from God (perhaps even a mighty rushing wind!).

What is new about the Spirit in this promise?

So now, with that all on the table, here is our question: what's new? What new thing about the Spirit was God going to do afterward?

Let's read verses 28–29 again.

Joel 2:28–29 – And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

What's new in those verses? I think the text gives us four big clues in answering that question.

The **first clue** is the word “pour” that is used twice in those verses.

That is not a word that is used in the Old Testament to describe something that was already true about the Spirit. Instead, that word “pour” is used in the Old Testament to describe something that God would later do with the Spirit, as shown on the Handout for Lesson 24.

The **second clue** is the list of the various activities that would occur.

The Holy Spirit would cause some to prophesy, would cause some to dream dreams, and would cause some to see visions.

Now those activities, of course, are not new; we see them all in the Old Testament, with two of them (prophesy and visions) being directly attributed to the Spirit (Ezekiel 8:3; Zechariah 7:12). And, although there is no passage that directly links the Holy Spirit with dreams, we do see God speaking to people through dreams in the Old Testament. But here in a single verse we find all three of them together.

Maybe the clue is less about **what** is being done, and more about **how often** it is being done, which may take us back to our first clue and the phrase “poured out.”

Or perhaps this second clue is less about **what** is being done, and more about **who** is doing it, and that takes us to our third clue.

The **third clue** are the various people described in those verses.

Yes, we see prophecy and visions and dreams elsewhere in the Old Testament – but most of the time, those activities are performed by only a select few, such as Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

But that is not what we see here in verses 28–29. Instead, we see sons, we see daughters, we see old men, we see young men, we see male servants, and we see female servants.

And note the word that is used in verse 29 when we get to those servants – the word “even.” “**Even** on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” God is with that word stressing the **tremendous breadth** of this promise. It will be enjoyed **even** by servants!

Our Old Testament scholar is very much accustomed to finding people such as Isaiah prophesying and to find people such as Ezekiel seeing visions. He is not surprised to find people such as Daniel dreaming dreams.

But his female servants? Is our Old Testament scholar accustomed to asking for his dinner and getting a prophecy from God instead? No. I think we can safely say that that would be a new experience for him!

Let’s think again about that key word – “pour.”

Perhaps when only the big-name prophets received the Spirit, we might have said that God was **dripping** out his Spirit to a select few – a drop here and a drop there while being careful not to spill any on anyone else.

But that is **not** the promise here. God is not promising to **drip** out his Spirit – instead God is promising to **pour** out his Spirit! And, again, with that word “pour” I think God is stressing the **tremendous breadth** of this promise. I think this **pouring** is what is new here.

When it comes to the Spirit, God is promising here to open the faucet as wide as it will go! God is promising to open the floodgates! God is not going to hold back.

God is not going to barely tip the pitcher so that we get a drip here on one person and drip there on another person. Instead, God is going to turn that pitcher over so that its contents will pour out on everyone. “I will **pour out** my Spirit on all flesh.”

And I think we find confirmation of that view with our fourth big clue from verses 28–29: the phrase “all flesh.” “I will pour out my Spirit on **all flesh.**”

Once again, I think God is stressing the **tremendous breadth** of this promise. I think that is what is new here.

- God is not **dripping** the Spirit, but is **pouring** the Spirit.

- And not just on **some** flesh, but on **all** flesh.
- And not just on the famous and important people, but **even** on the male and female **servants**.

But is that all? Is there anything else that might have been new in these prophecies about the Holy Spirit?

All Flesh?

We haven't looked closely at the phrase "all flesh" yet, but what if that phrase includes Gentiles? Wouldn't that have been something new about the Spirit?

And the answer is no, that would not have been new. God's Spirit coming upon Gentiles is not something that we find only in the New Testament.

It was certainly an incredibly rare occurrence in the Old Testament, but it did happen at least once. And it happened to an Aramean² who is mentioned by name in eight books of the Bible, including three books in the New Testament that all condemn him. Have you guessed who it is yet?

²Numbers 23:7

Numbers 24:2 – And **Balaam** lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe.
And the Spirit of God came upon him.

Balaam was a Gentile who is condemned in 2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11, and Revelation 2:14 – and yet we are told in Numbers 24:2 that the Spirit of God came upon him.

Do you mean that Balaam was lost, and yet Balaam was filled with God's Spirit in some way? Yes, that is what the Bible tells us.

And, for us today who have the New Testament, we know that was not the last time such a thing happened. It happened again in Acts 10:44 when the Holy Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius **before** they were baptized and **before** they had even heard the message by which they would be saved (Acts 11:14–15).

Why did that happen to Balaam? Why did that happen to Cornelius? I think that the answer is the same in each case.

The Holy Spirit fell on each of them to teach the people of God a lesson (Micah 6:5 and Acts 10:47) even though the people on whom the Spirit fell were not themselves among the people of God. Balaam was never numbered among the people of God, but Cornelius, of course, was saved shortly afterward (Acts 10:48).

God's Spirit coming upon a Gentile? God's Spirit coming upon someone who was not among the people of God? None of that was new. We can find both things in the Old Testament, although they were very rare.

So, perhaps, once again we can say that the new thing is that this would no longer be rare.

I think we will find that such is true about one of those events (God's Spirit coming upon a Gentile) but that it is not true about the other event (God's Spirit coming upon someone who was not among the people of God). That latter event was extremely rare in the Old Testament and is also extremely rare in the New Testament – and each time we see it, God is doing it to teach someone else a lesson.

So how would our Old Testament scholar have viewed the phrase “all flesh”?

I know we like to sometimes say that in the Bible “all means all,” but that is not always true. The Apostle Paul is very clear that “all” does not always mean “all” in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 15:27 – For “God has put **all** things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “**all** things are put in subjection,” it is **plain** that **he is excepted** who put all things in subjection under him.

In other words, “all” does not always mean “all” in the Bible. Sometimes there are **plain unstated exceptions** to the word “all.”

But what about here? Does “all” mean “all,” or is there a plain unstated exception? Who is included in “**all** flesh”?

Let’s cut to the chase on this question: does “all flesh” really just mean “all **Jewish** flesh”?

I suspect that our Jewish Old Testament scholar would have answered “yes” to that question. I suspect he would have viewed this promise as limited to the Jews.

I don’t think that is the correct view, and I think we will see that later when we turn to the book of Acts, but I still think our Old Testament scholar would have likely reached that wrong conclusion. Why?

After all, from one perspective, it does seem odd that our scholar would limit this promise to the Jews. He would certainly have known about God’s promise to Abraham to bless the entire world. And he would have been familiar with prophecies such as Isaiah 19:24, which says that “Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth.”

Doesn't that all mean it would have been natural for him to interpret this great promise so that "all flesh" means both Jew and Gentile?

Maybe, but I still doubt he would have seen it that way. Why? Because we have an example of someone who didn't see it that way – Peter.

I know we haven't gotten to Acts 2 yet in our study of these verses, but we all know what happened. Peter quoted this very prophecy – including the phrase "all flesh" – but only later in Acts 10-11 did Peter seem to understand that "all flesh" actually meant "all flesh." (And we'll talk more about that later.)

But if even Peter saw Joel 2:28 that way at first, then I suspect our Old Testament scholar likely would have seen it that way as well.

And, he might have argued, he has some evidence for that view in the text itself. After all, his sons and his daughters are Jewish. The old men and the young men in his village were Jewish, at least the ones he talked to! And maybe even his servants are all Jewish, although maybe they were not (Leviticus 25:44).

And so where are we? I think that, based on those four clues, our Old Testament scholar would have seen this promise broadly – including even his

female servants – but I’m not as sure that he would have seen it as broadly as God intended for us to see it – including both Jews and Gentiles.

Why these activities?

Now let’s ask a different question: why these particular activities?

We see prophecies, we see visions, and we see dreams. Why those particular activities? And is this intended to be an exhaustive list? Is God saying that these three things will happen – or is God saying that **only** these three things will happen?

Well, I think that latter question is easy – the text does not use the word “only,” and I don’t see any reason to read that word in to the text. And later, when we turn to Acts, we may find some other activities occurring, but let’s not get ahead of ourselves.

That then leaves us with only the first question: why these three? Why does God focus here on prophecy, visions, and dreams?

If you read a lot of Pentecostal charismatic literature, you will be told that this prophecy in Joel is all about the miraculous gifts of the Spirit

that we see in the New Testament and that they claim we are still seeing today.

But is that what we see here? Healing the sick? Raising the dead? Giving sight to the blind? Making the lame walk? Calming a storm? Walking on water? Changing water to wine? Feeding the 5000? Casting out demons? Surviving a snake bite?

No, it is not. We see prophecy; we see visions; and we see dreams. And that's all we see here.

But why? Why just these three?

Well, what do those three things all have in common? They were all ways by which God conveyed his word to man. He did that through prophecy, through visions, and through dreams.

But, we should note, those were not the only ways that God spoke to man. For example, God also sometimes spoke to people through angels and sometimes spoke to people directly.

Exodus 33:11 – Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses **face to face**, as a man speaks to his friend.

That example from Exodus 33 reminds us of a promise that we saw in one of our parallel “pour” prophecies from the Handout for Lesson 24.

Ezekiel 39:29 – And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.”

So where are we? We are looking at the question of why we see only these particular activities: prophecy, dreams, and visions. And we have seen that they all relate to how God speaks to man. And we have seen that our list gets a bit longer when we include the parallel prophecy from Ezekiel 39. “I will not hide my face anymore from them.”

And, yes, I think we are seeing miracles here, depending on how broadly we define that term. But we are seeing a narrow range of miracles – much narrower than we see, for example, in 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul discusses the “varieties of gifts.”

What are we to make of that? Let’s come back to that question when get to Acts 2. But for now, let’s just make note that the focus here is on how God communicates his word to mankind. And perhaps Joel is just using a synecdoche here in which a part is used to represent the whole, but let’s hold off on that question for now.

Let’s instead ask another question: when the text says that the Spirit will be poured out on “all flesh,” does that mean that “all flesh” will prophecy, dream dreams, and have visions?

I think the answer is no, unless we decide to read more into the text than what is written. Literally, here is what verses 28–29 say:

- God will pour out his Spirit on **all** flesh, even on servants.
- **Your sons and your daughters** shall prophesy.
- **Your old men** shall dream dreams.
- **Your young men** shall see visions.

Is that a promise that “all flesh” will prophesy or that “your sons and daughters” will do that? Is that a promise that “all flesh” will dream dreams or that “your old men” will do that? Is that a promise that “all flesh” will see visions or that “your young men” will do that? In each case, it is the latter.

But does it *mean* the former? Perhaps we are seeing another synecdoche in which these categories are used to represent a larger group, but I think we should at least consider the possibility that this great promise is not a promise that **everyone** will do **everything**. That is certainly not what the verses say on the their face.

Perhaps the promise here is that God would pour out his Spirit on “all flesh,” and that, as a result, here are some of the miraculous ways by

which you will receive God's word, and here is the extremely broad range of people from whom you will miraculously receive God's word – the children, the young men, the old men, and even the servants.

That is what those verses *say*. Is that also what those verses *mean*? (Any time we make that distinction we should be very careful how we proceed!) Let's hold off on that issue until we get to Acts 2. Maybe Peter will clarify some of this for us (and maybe he will not!).

For now, let's just make this point: we should not be surprised if this promise about the pouring out of God's Spirit seems to be focused on the word of God and particularly on how the word of God is conveyed to man.

Even today, if I told you that I was going to pour out my spirit to you, wouldn't you expect me to start **talking**? And doesn't that view of pouring out my spirit agree with other verses in the Bible?

Proverbs 1:23 – If you turn at my reproof, behold, **I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.**

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 – These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? **So also no one**

comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. **And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit,** interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

Yes, we know that the Spirit of God is not the same as the Word of God – but we also know that the two are very closely related. They are intricately intertwined. And we know that the same is true about the Son of God, who is the word made flesh.

Sometimes we hear comments about the Holy Spirit dwelling in someone **separate and apart** from the word of God. But, whatever we conclude about the indwelling of the Spirit, I think we should immediately reject any notion that the Spirit does that or anything else in a way that is **separate and apart** from God's word. I don't see such a thing anywhere in the Bible.

In fact, if, in our study of the Spirit, we ever move the discussion away from the word of God, then I think we have moved our discussion too far! And that would certainly be too far for verses 28–29, which seem to be entirely focused on various way in which God conveys his words to mankind.