



"You will observe with concern how long a useful truth is known and exists, before it is generally received and practiced on."  
—Benjamin Franklin

**10-Sep-21**

## **Seeds and Seasons (Part Two)**

In Part One, we learned that [God](#) teaches His children important lessons through the seasons of the year, particularly in the harvest seasons during which He has placed His appointed times, [the holy days](#). God uses the process of sowing, cultivating, and reaping to instruct us about the steps He takes to grow and gather a harvest of children from among humanity. We saw that the primary aim of His method is to produce [faith](#) in the One He sent, [Jesus Christ](#) ([John 6:29](#)).

The holy days illustrate that God will not produce one harvest but three, which will come to fruition at different times. He oversees several variables to control the various harvests. One of the most important is the watering—the application of His Spirit so that the truth can take root and grow. Unlike a human farmer, however, God has been scattering seed throughout *all* of human history!

God has had preachers such as Noah, the prophets, the apostles, and even His own Son. Since the founding of the New Covenant church, there have *always* been ministers of truth, preaching true belief in Jesus Christ and the path humanity should follow. But we do not see an enormous 6,000-year

harvest because God has not been watering that seed universally. He waters a little here and a little there, working closely with a small number of plants. But most of the seeds of truth that have been planted in the minds of men are lying dormant.

Archeologists have found seeds in Egypt that are over 3,000 years old. One would think that they would be beyond use at such a great age. However, when they are planted and watered, these seeds still begin to grow! The same thing will happen with the spiritual seeds that have been planted over the millennia but never watered.

[The Berean](#) newsletter provides a fitting illustration. It goes out to thousands and thousands of people every day. Also every day, we lose a few subscribers for various reasons. There have even been a few days when we have lost more subscribers than we have gained, usually when we cover controversial topics. But those days are few and far between, which is fascinating because The Berean contains the same information—the same undiluted truth—provided to the church. It is surprising that we do not lose *more* subscribers on a regular basis.

Even though it does not appear that God is calling many people currently, He is still planting seeds of truth. He still prepares the soil by breaking it up and then allows or causes seeds of truth to be deposited. Perhaps God will water these seeds during the Tribulation, and they will sprout in the minds of those who live into the Millennium. Maybe these seeds will not germinate until after the Millennium, during the Great White Throne Judgment. We have no way of knowing at this point. It is mind-boggling, though, to consider how and when these seeds of truth might begin to grow. But we must maintain the long-range view of time rather than focusing on short-term results and quick crop yields.

Nearly all the seeds that God has scattered throughout the ages have never been watered, never allowed to grow. But in the future, that will all change:

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit  
on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men

shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ([Joel 2:28-29](#))

Peter recognized that this prophecy began to be fulfilled in the church (see [Acts 2:17-18](#)), but it actually speaks about a period during which the Holy Spirit will be readily available to everyone (see Habakkuk 2:14). All the seeds of truth, dormant for thousands of years, will begin to awaken as they come in contact with the Holy Spirit, and they will finally start to grow. At this point, anyone who thirsts—anyone who desires this life-giving water of the Holy Spirit—will be able to have it, and the final crop of God's spiritual harvest will begin to grow.

Consider the church's responsibility within this picture. It must publish the truth and encourage belief. The ministry is ordained to teach and expound on the Word of God. Christ sent out His followers to [make disciples](#) of all men through a process of education. Paul told Timothy to "preach the word—in season and out of season." He exclaimed, "Woe is me if I do not preach [the gospel](#)!" ([I Corinthians 9:16](#)).

However, Paul also spoke of preaching the gospel to those who were already converted in Rome ([Romans 1:15](#)). He comments that the care of the churches was always on his mind. We see, then, that the church's first responsibility is to publish the truth and encourage belief among those whom God is already watering with His Spirit! Despite all her efforts to [the world](#), the church cannot open the mind of a single individual! But once God has opened that mind, then the church can assist the individual in growing "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" ([Ephesians 4:13](#)). But the church should focus on where she can make the most significant difference: with those God has already given to her.

The responsibility to preach the gospel to the world remains—to scatter the seed that will begin to grow during the Great Tribulation, the Millennium, or the Great White Throne Judgment. But the church's effectiveness in doing this is directly tied to how well she accomplishes her first responsibility. How easily can God work through individuals who are not in tune with Him or cannot see Him? Will God call people into a body of believers making a witness *against* His way of life, which would end up defiling the faith and

the belief that saves? Will God bless the efforts of "priests who rule by their own power" ([Jeremiah 5:31](#)) or prophets whom God "did not send or command" ([Jeremiah 14:14](#))? Individual and corporate efforts are *meaningless* if God is not leading them, and He will not be leading them if the church is not looking at Him!

The key to success in publishing truth—whether to the church or to the world—is to have the closest possible relationship with the Source of that truth. Everything else is, at best, putting the cart before the horse, and at worst, making a witness against God rather than for Him. Given that God scattered the corporate church because of [sin](#), everything points to the fact that the church is not currently in a spiritual condition to make an effective witness of Him to the world. The church must first be strengthened and revived through turning back to God and seeing Him clearly. The church must have its faith restored—faith that comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God ([Romans 10:17](#)). The church must be built up through the teaching of truth found in the Word of God and by being ready to receive the watering of God's Spirit.

Recall that Jesus said the work of God is belief. Promoting belief and publishing truth are not just a corporate activity. God intends all His followers to preach the gospel—to scatter seed—by making a witness of the right way to live—and many times, that witness is essentially a silent one. Charles Spurgeon once observed, "Lamps do not talk—but they do shine."

Every time we encounter someone whom God has not called, we have the opportunity to plant seeds. Through our conduct, attitude, appearance, language, and regard for them as future brothers and sisters in the God Family, we can demonstrate that there is a way to live that transcends what this dying world has to offer. We need speak not a single word about religion. Our character can—and should—speak volumes. If our Source is God, and we are close enough to Him that He can work through us, we will plant seeds. We cannot know when God will decide to water them, but we will have done our part in promoting truth about how to live.

Just as importantly, we will have benefited tremendously from the process of becoming a servant that God can use. When the season is right, God will water those seeds, and His epic harvest will continue.

## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[The Book of Joel \(Part One\)](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

When the prophet Joel describes the devastating locust plagues, instead of promising a silver lining on a very black cloud, he affirmed that things were going to get intensely worse before they got better. Nevertheless, Joel, whose name means Yahweh is God, in the middle of his prophecy, promised a marvelous blessing which would satisfy His people. This prophesied blessing, which became Peter's first words of his Pentecost sermon on Pentecost in 31 AD, was that God would pour out His Spirit, prompting young men to prophesy and old men to dream before the awesome Day of the Lord. Only a type of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled in 31AD and much more is yet to be fulfilled. Joel described a gruesome locust infestation that totally ruined the economy of the nation, placing the citizenry in a state of hopeless, panicked despair. Because Judah had taken God's blessings for granted, He removed His hand of protection, something we see happening in our morally bankrupt culture today. God, in His sovereignty, is guiding His creation to its ultimate purpose, including the devastating plagues and afflictions, designed to motivate repentance and obedience. God represents both mercy and justice. When sin becomes a dominant condition of God's people, God's judgment is not far away, either in the form of political oppression or natural disaster. For a repentant people, there will be restored fellowship and tranquility. The 1915 AD locust plague in Palestine had all the biblical proportions, including the sky darkened with adult locusts, eating everything in their paths. The locust plague Joel described is only a foretaste, symbolic of a more devastating judgment to befall the earth in the future Day of the Lord. Both disaster and grace are tools God uses to motivate repentance, and the wise will act accordingly, turning to God in sincere, contrite,

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[What Is the Holy Spirit?](#)**

by David C. Grabbe

Every Christian understands what the Holy Spirit is, right? Wrong! Even long-time theologians admit in their commentaries that, in the end, the Spirit is an incomprehensible mystery to them. David Grabbe lays out some of the reasons for their confusion, showing that, if they would only believe the Bible, they could learn the truth about God's Spirit.

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