

Message #4

Joel 2:21-32

There have been some powerful men of God who have been greatly used by God to communicate God's Word with the result that many people believed in Jesus Christ and were saved. In the 1500's there was Martin Luther. In the early 1700's there was Jonathan Edwards. In the mid-1700's there was George Whitefield. In the mid 1800's there was Charles Spurgeon. In the late 1800's there was D. L. Moody. In the early 1900's there was Billy Sunday, and in the late 1900's there was Billy Graham. These men were mighty communicators of the truth of God.

But as far as I know, not one of those men was Jewish. You would naturally think that the leading communicators of the truth of God would be Jewish because God did so much with and for that nation. Logically, we would think that the greatest communicators of God's Word and grace would be those who are Jewish, because they have seen God do things for Israel that He has never done for any other nation in the world.

There are several texts of Scripture that predict that one day Israel will be the nation of God and people will long to go there to hear the truth of God. This text in Joel says there is a day coming when this will happen.

Clear back in the book of Genesis, God made a promise to Abraham that one day He would give him and his descendants a specific land and He would bless them in that land. He also predicted that one day Israel would be a blessing to all nations of the world (Gen. 12:2). She would be the bastion of the truth of God and the blessings of God.

Now to this day that has not happened. When you look at Israel, it certainly does not appear as if this is a happy, Shangri-La la-la-land filled with the blessings of God. Nevertheless, God made the promise and in this part of Joel, it is clear God intends to fulfill that promise.

GOD PROMISES THAT ONE DAY HE WILL COMPLETELY BLESS ISRAEL IN HER LAND TO THE POINT THAT SHE WILL BE THE PRIMARY COMMUNICATOR OF THE TRUTH OF GOD AND THE GRACE OF GOD.

Now when we read these verses, we cannot help but see that these are very specific predictions. These are not generic predictions but very precise predictions. Joel is the prophet of the Day of the Lord. This "day of the Lord" is a time that features horrible judgments against Israel and ultimately amazing blessings for Israel. In view of this, Joel proclaims that Israel needs to return to the Lord (2:12).

There are five promised realities given in these verses:

PROMISED REALITY #1 – There will come a day when Israel’s land will be happy.

2:21

Now the first charge to the Promised Land is not to fear. The truth is terrible and fearful things have happened in Israel’s land and there is plenty to fear. Israel’s land is always under some threat of something. We know from these judgments of God that the land of Israel is not producing like it should or could. In fact, because of God’s punishments, Israel’s land isn’t even completely her land.

A while back I talked with someone who had recently been in Israel and she said that it was odd going to sacred places and looking around and seeing uniformed soldiers standing around with automatic weapons. There is much fear in the land of Israel today. But God promised that there is a day coming when He will change that.

God says there will come a day when He will make Israel’s land a land of rejoicing and gladness. It will be a happy time and a happy land because God will have done great things in the Promised Land.

PROMISED REALITY #2 – There will come a day when Israel’s animals will be happy.

2:22

The reason why the animals will be happy animals and no longer need to be afraid is because they will have plenty of food to eat. The desert wilderness will be transformed by God into becoming a plush pasture. The trees will be fruit-bearing and the fig trees and the vines will grow plush, so that there will be plenty for all.

Everything will have a yield that yields to the “full.” What a time when this land blossoms like a rose.

PROMISED REALITY #3 – There will come a day when Israel’s people will be happy.

2:23-27

To this point in the book of Joel, the people have been challenged to mourn and to weep over their sin. If people are willing to humble themselves and do this, God invites them to be happy. **Sadness and happiness are determined by a relationship with God.** There is coming a day in the aftermath of the sadness when God’s people, Israel, will be called to rejoice. Why? Because there will be wonderful blessings given specifically to Israel specifically while she is in her land.

Reason #1 - God will cause the rain to abundantly fall on Israel’s land. **2:23**

This is an odd expression; God gives early rain for vindication. Actually the Hebrew suggests that God will give early rain for righteousness (tsadiq). What this means is that God is once again favoring Israel and has vindicated her because she is righteous and this early rain shows He is giving her all of the land blessings He promised her.

Reason #2 - God will cause the harvest of grain and wine to overflow. **2:24**

This will be a time when the people do not need to scrimp just to survive; the land will overflow with God's blessings.

Let us remember it was God's judgment that caused the land to mourn. It was God's judgment that ruined the grain and dried up the wine (Joel 1:10). It will be God's blessings that will fill up the grain floors and overflow the wine vats.

The teaching of the O.T. and N.T. is to repent of sin that disturbs our relationship with the Lord. When sin persists it always gets worse. It is critical that we deal with things. But if we deal with things and make them right, His blessings follow.

There is a tremendous principle to see here. **The same God who has judged something because of anger can bless something because of grace.** God can judge an economy and make it collapse; but He also can bless an economy and make it prosper. God can judge a field so that it does not produce; but He also can bless a field so that it produces a great harvest.

God can turn your world completely around. He can take you from your lowest and lift you to your highest. When people turn to Him and humble themselves, He can dramatically transform someone parched into someone fruitful. He can cause the very same person who was experiencing His chastisements, to experience His full blessings.

Reason #3 - God will cause the land production to be a reversal of the locust destruction. **2:25**

Notice all of the things that happen to men, even horrible things are there by determination of God. God says that locust plague was "My army" which I sent to get you to turn to Me. God sends bad things to us to accomplish good things in us. God is sovereign over the positive and the negative. The providence of God is involved in everything connected to our life.

God sent the judgments against Israel to get Israel to turn to Him and when she does turn to Him, He will more than make it up to them.

Reason #4 - God will cause His people to be totally and completely satisfied. **2:26a**

This is such a critical principle for a nation and for an individual; fulfilling satisfaction is found in a relationship with the God of the Bible. This is the only place this is found.

Reason #5 - God will see to it that His people will never be put to shame again. **2:26b**

Notice God will have worked "wonders" for Israel. That Hebrew word means God will have done such miraculous things for Israel that it will astonish the whole world. The world will stand in awe and in honor of Israel.

What a day of rejoicing it will be when the people of God are reigning supreme. They will never again be humiliated or put to shame. Their love for the Word of God and their defense of Jesus Christ will reap rich dividends.

Reason #6 - God will cause His people to know that He is Israel's Personal God. **2:27**

Every nation in the world and every individual in the world would be wise to carefully consider what is stated here in verse 27, God is the God of Israel. There will come a day when Israel will know this and so will the rest of the world.

PROMISED REALITY #4 – There will come a day when all people will have an unusual relationship with God's Spirit. **2:28-29**

Now when God has done these things for the land and for Israel, He is going to do something very special for all the people who are His people. **God is going to pour out a special supernatural dispensation of His Spirit on all people in the world and it will have a specific connection to Israel (Zechariah 12:10; Ezekiel 35:22, 26-38).** This will be a very special and very unusual grace Spirit pouring in regard to Israel. God promises that He will pour out His Spirit on everyone in the world; all flesh but when God does this, there will be some very unusual revelatory things that will happen with Israel. **The pronouns “your” in Joel 2:28 are in both the Hebrew and the Septuagint and they specifically refer to Israel.** This is a critical point that is overlooked by the delusional charismatics who claim to have dreams and visions. In fact, Peter uses the very same Greek construction as the Septuagint in Acts 2:17, referring to Israel.

Result #1 - Israel's sons and daughters will prophesy. **2:28a**

Young people will receive special revelatory messages directly from God. God will actually give special prophetic messages to sons and daughters.

Result #2 - Israel's old men will receive revelatory dreams. **2:28b**

Result #3 - Israel's young men will receive revelatory visions. **2:28c**

Result #4 - Israel's male and female servants will also have the Spirit poured out on them. **2:29**

God will specifically demonstrate to the entire world that His unique work is once again with the nation Israel.

What is revealed here is that when God puts Israel in her land, it will feature a new era in which the Israelites are the predominant communicators of God's Word. Israel will finally be the leading preachers of the truth of God's Word to the entire world.

Now Peter cited this text in Acts 2:17-21. Peter said, “This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel.” Something happened in Jerusalem at Pentecost that made Peter think of this prophecy in Joel. What does Peter mean?

- 1) Some say everything Joel said is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. But Peter refers to this years later in II Pet. 3:10-13 and says the “day of the Lord” is still futuristic. Furthermore, the signs predicted in Joel did not take place in Acts 2.
- 2) Some say it was not really fulfilled at all because Peter did not say this is that which is written, but this was what was spoken. Actually one could translate the Greek in Acts 2:16–“the character and quality of this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” In other words, this is kind of like that but is not really that.
- 3) Some say that Peter meant what happened at Pentecost continues throughout the entire Church Age. In other words, this was the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. There are several problems with this interpretation. **First**, God’s Spirit has not been poured out on all flesh and that is obvious. **Second**, this must interpret “the Day of the Lord” as the Church Age (**Joel 2:31**). Paul said the church will not experience the Day of the Lord (I Thess. 5:1-8; II Thess. 2:2-9). **Third**, Israel is not presently known worldwide as the primary communicator of God’s Word.
- 4) Some say it was a time when the Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem as an invitation to Israel to repent and call on Jesus Christ. Had Israel repented, she could have received all of the blessings Joel predicted. In fact, it is obvious that Peter is specifically addressing Israel (Acts 2:22, 36, 38). Peter saw this as a great moment when Israel could respond and receive God’s blessings, but she didn’t and therefore she hasn’t.

PROMISED REALITY #5 – The time of the fulfillment of all of these things will be preceded by specific signs. **2:30-32**

Now the events that will happen that will leave Israel and the land and all people in the world happy will be preceded by **specific signs that will take place in the sky and on the earth**.

Now many of these signs will signal eternal doom to those who are the enemies of God. But those same signs will signal the future blessings about to come for the people of God. Now these signs are predicted in multiple passages specifically before Jesus Christ returns (Matt. 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28). Just before Jesus Christ returns, there will be a series of signs. **These are judgment signs that will be a prelude to the second coming of Jesus Christ.**

Sign #1 - There will be blood. **2:30a**

Sign #2 - There will be fire. **2:30b**

Sign #3 - There will be smoke. **2:30c**

Sign #4 - There will be a dark sun. **2:31a**

Sign #5 - There will be a bloody moon. **2:31b**

Now we may observe from **verse 31** it is again called the “day of the Lord.”

Sign #6 - There will be a national and individual salvation for Israel. **2:32**

When these signs are happening, “anyone” or “whoever” calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Even those who are in Jerusalem, even those who are standing on Mt. Zion will be saved and will escape.

Now who will escape and be the survivors? Notice the ones who escape are those “whom the LORD calls.” In II Chronicles 7:14, God calls people to return to Him. God wants a national repentance to take place in the Temple area. He wants the entire nation to call out to Him for forgiveness.

The Apostle Paul quotes **Joel 2:32** in regard to spiritual salvation. Any sinner who will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. That one will avoid horrible judgment and experience satisfying blessings.

Now God invites people who have been idolatrous and immoral and sinful to call on Him for salvation. If you will do that—God will turn your world completely around.