

Week 15 | Joel 2:18-27 “Good Crops, Brimming Vats & Full Stomachs”

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In recent message’s we heard God’s plea for His family to return to Him with all their hearts (**Joel 2:12-14**). But that call was followed up with the specifics of HOW they were to respond (**Joel 2:15-17**). Because everyone was affected by the locust invasion, and everyone would be affected by this military invasion, God called for EVERYONE to join together in His house, to seek His face.
- B. If we recreated the scene, we’d have the priests, the farmers, the bridegroom and bride, the nursing infant and mother, the aged among them, the drunkard, and the adolescent asking that God not give this glorious, long-term heritage into reproach.
- C. And just as the last two weeks have marked a radical shift in the book, so also does today’s message bring about another significant shift. Based upon the response of God’s people, the Lord is now going to answer them and reinforce His commitment to return to the land, restore Israel’s position among the nations, and God’s role of dwelling in the center of Israel.
- D. In a dramatic reversal, the God who, “*...does relent from doing harm...*” is going to give back to Israel the very things He had given to them already but had taken away in their disobedience.
- E. Beloved, repentance is always God’s pathway to revival. When God’s family returns to Christ Jesus, we can look on the horizon for restoration, refreshing and revival.

II. RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS (JOEL 2:18-27)

- A. **Joel 2:18-19** *“Then the Lord will be zealous for His land and pity His people. The Lord will answer and say to His people. Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.”*
 - 1. The “*Then...*” that opens up the second half of this book is a mixture of events that happened in their day, while still holding out prophetic fulfillment for the future. The near day of the Lord touched them directly, but within God’s activity and promises, it also holds prophetic significance for the future.
 - 2. It’s clear, Israel has responded to God in prayer, fasting, repentance, and humility. Though the Day of the Lord has primarily been judgment for Israel, it’s now also the reversal of that judgment.
 - 3. The jealous (zealous) God, who had sent their land into turmoil, is now present to restore it, and put it back to its rightful order, but it’s come on the heels of their returning to Him, their obeying Him, their following Him and His commands.
 - a. In our great need for deliverance, we can be confident that God will appear, as His jealousy for His wife, and children are stirred into action (**Luke 15:11-32; Revelation 6:9-11**).
 - 4. God is now answering His people, and giving them the things they desire (*grain, wine, oil*) but it’s in direct response to their prayers. They’ve prayed, and God answered.
 - a. I think part of the reason we struggle in prayer is that deep down, we don’t really believe that God cares, or that He will actually answer us.

- B. **Joel 2:20** *“I will remove them far from you the northern army. And will drive him away into a barren land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea. His stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things. Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done marvelous things!”*
1. This army covers the whole of Canaan, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea.
 2. Gods defeat of the Northern Army is a prominent theme of end-time prophecy (**Ezek. 38:15-16; 39:2**). The Antichrist’s army will be made up of a coalition of nations. All nations will stand against Israel (**Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Zeph. 3:8; Ezek. 38:4; Rev. 17:12-18; 19:19**). The largest army in history, with the best weapons, the most money will come against Israel. There will be no chance of her deliverance and salvation from a natural point of view (*this is where Israel has always been*).
 3. But suddenly, Jesus alone will deliver Israel, driving her enemies off the face of the planet (**Romans 11:25-27**). In a great reversal, God will do marvelous things for Israel, for the monstrous things that have been done against her.
- C. **Joel 2:22-24** *“Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears it’s fruit; the fig tree bears it’s fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has give you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.*
1. The land, the animals and the people are not to fear, but to be glad. They are to rejoice without fear because God would release rain on land and pour out His Spirit on His people (**Isa. 44:2-3**). Joel exhorted Israel to rejoice in the Lord and to not fear, even before the victory was experienced (*even while the hostile nations still surrounded them*)
 2. When we respond rightly to God, we can move into rejoicing regardless if our circumstances have changed in the natural or not. The are to rejoice in crisis, because as they respond in a way that honors God, He will fulfill His word among them/us.
 3. But even as their way of life is restored (*the beasts, the open pastures, the trees, the fruits, the former rain—Fall rains, latter rains—spring, the wheat, the wine and the oil*) they aren’t to rejoice in those things, they are to rejoice in the Lord.
 - a. This is a caution to us today. We also, like Israel have a tendency to rejoice in the things that God gives, while often forgetting to acknowledge God as the giver of all good things.
 - b. Even as Americans we can end up fighting for the blessings of God, more than we fight for the truth of God or God Himself. We have to always remember; God’s blessings aren’t God; they are things that come *from* Him.
- D. **Joel 2:25-26** *“I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army that I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame.”*
1. It’s interesting that God speaks to the years of devastation that have followed the locust invasion, God’s great army that He sent among them. The years doesn’t speak to the time that the locust were in the land, but what followed after their departure.

2. The physical, financial, and emotional scars that the locust brought about, is what God is committing to restore. God assures us, that restoration is possible, when we respond rightly to Him, when we repent, and return to the Lord our God.
 - a. What's been lost in your life? What's been squandered? What's been dropped? Where have your sins devastated your life, or the lives of others? Or what have others sins against your life devastated? God is a God of restoration, restoring to us what's been lost.
 3. Four things happen when God restores our lives and our land;
 - a. We are satisfied in Him...and what He provides.
 - b. We sing the high praises of God.
 - c. We have an intimate knowledge of God;
 - (1) Some of us struggle to experience this because in the middle of our crisis we don't respond rightly to God, and allow Him to see us through, further connecting our hearts with His.
 - (2) Jacob gained precious, intimate knowledge of God and His ways, when he fell asleep on a rock (*a hard place*) and awoke to God's nearness (**Genesis 28:10-22**).
 - d. We aren't put to shame again.
- E. **Joel 2:27** *"Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel; I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."*
1. There was two primary things that Israel's disobedience had blinded them to; having God in their midst, and having no other God's before the Lord their God.
 2. As they returned to God, God was returning to them. God would once again, be at the center of Israel, and Israel's life would once again center around God. No longer would the locust, or the Babylonians, or even Satan be in the center, but instead, God!
 3. This is the greatest thing that's restored to Israel; God. The great hope for Israel is beyond the land, beyond their crops, beyond their military intelligence; its' God.
 - a. *"The best kept secret in the Church, is God Himself."* -Mike Bickle
- F. Beloved, good crops, brimming vats, and full stomachs aren't an end in themselves, God Himself is the means, and the end. Until God is at the center of your life, your life simply won't work.