

The Joy of Restoration

Joel 2:18-32

1. Begin by reviewing the main events of Joel's prophecy from 1:1-2:17. Briefly make note of them below along with the lessons you have learned thus far from Joel's book.

Open Your Heart: "Our Father, open our blind eyes to Your truth and Your glory. Let our deaf ears hear Your voice. Bring healing to our spirits as we study and make us whole people in You."

We left our passage last week with people young and old thronging to the temple and the priests passionately pleading with God to remove the ravages from the land for the sake of the LORD's Name (Joel 2:15-17). Verse 18 begins a new section and becomes a turning point in the book of Joel. But what happened between verses 17 and 18? Did the people heed Joel's warning and the commands of verses 12-17? Let's see what we can discover from the text.

Read aloud Joel 2:18-27. Pay close attention to references to time. Mark words like *then, now, never again, after, in those days and before*. Review the Guidelines for Interpreting Predictive Prophecy.

2. What are the implications of the word "Then" in Joel 2:18?
3. What do the LORD's promises in 2:18-20 tell you about the success of Joel's appeal in 2:12-17?
4. Upon reflection it becomes clear that *this particular* day of the LORD for Judah became a day of *restoration* rather than a day of *wrath* due to the people's _____ and God's immeasurable _____ for His chosen people.

The 40-year godly reign of King Joash in Judah began right after the time of Joel's prophecy. It was in this more positive spiritual environment that God used the voice of the prophet to call a nation to repentance—to call Judah back to God. Through God's promise in Joel 2:19 we have assurance that the prayers of the people did not go unanswered. The Lord did reply! Thus, the people became witnesses to God's mighty acts in their midst and their joy was restored!

It is enlightening to read God's response and note the manner in which His answer parallels the crisis from which the people sought deliverance.

5. To what recipients does God's graciousness and compassion get directed in verses 21-24? Note them in the space below. Locate and record the corresponding Scriptures from Joel chapter 1 that describe the damage that was inflicted.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Did you notice the emphasis on joy in the passages above? (**Reread** Joel 2:21-24 with that thought in mind.)

6. As children of God we are not only to enjoy God's blessings but also to give witness to them. Take time to share some of God's mighty acts in your life with your study group.

7. Tell about a time in your life when you have, in some sense, returned to the LORD.

The message of the book of Joel hinges on the faithfulness of God to restore that which has been wasted by sinning. Ponder the exceptional promises found in Joel 2:25-27. Note: The locust plague did not last for years, but the *results* of such a plague could last for years.

8. Carefully **reread** verse 25-27. In your own words tell how God *repaid* the people for the lost years the locusts had eaten. Discuss your wonder at such goodness from the LORD!

9. In verses 26 and 27 it says: “never again will my people be shamed.” Do you think this particular promise to Israel has been fulfilled, or will this promise find its fulfillment in the future? Explain your answer.

Heart Check: Have you had some experience that has left you with years of regret that still holds you back? Is there something in your life that robs you of God’s joy? Are you less fruitful in your Christian walk than you once were? If there are regrets, take heart! There is good news! Whether your problem is great or small is not an issue to God. Remember, He is God! *Commit your problem to Him—knowing that He can resolve it for you in a way that is right and in a way that will bring joy to you!* **Pause and let your thoughts bring you to your knees in adoration of our awesome God!**

In today’s study we have also seen how God graciously responds when we pray. Let us join the people of Joel’s time in prayer for spiritual renewal! As always, the rekindling of spiritual life begins with the individual.

10. When evaluating your own prayer life—is your praying:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| -An attempt to get God’s attention | -Talking with Him after He gets your attention |
| -Begging God | - Communion with God |
| -A monologue | -A dialogue |
| -Occasional | -Regular |
| -A requirement | -A privilege |
| -A formal religious act | -A vital relationship |
| -Getting God to do my will | -Seeing God’s will |

(For each of the lines in the above lists check the one that applies.)

For example: Monologue or Dialogue; Occasional or Regular.

11. What did God reveal to you about your personal prayer life through this exercise? How will you respond to God’s voice of correction or encouragement in the days ahead?

Having explored the material blessings that flow from God in 2:18-27, Joel now speaks of the extraordinary spiritual blessings that will bring true restoration to the hearts of God's people. God's promise through Joel is striking because it is the book's first mention of spiritual rather than material blessings. **Reread** Joel 2:28-32, then **reread** Joel 2:28-29.

12. There are many remarkable aspects to the prophecy in Joel 2:28-29—spoken by the prophet 800 years before it was fulfilled. As you observe the text note the following:
 - a. references to time
 - b. the Persons who make this promise a reality
 - c. the recipients of this historic and breath-taking prophecy

Only one other book in the Bible refers to Joel by name—the book of Acts. It is here that we find the fulfillment of this unique and special prophecy from God. Compare Joel 2:28-29 with Acts 2:1-21, 36-41. (Note Acts 2:16 especially.)

13.
 - a. To what event in history was Joel pointing in his prophecy? How would you describe the reality of what took place that day?
 - b. Can you see the application of the promise in Joel 2:28 in your own life? Explain.

The Day of Pentecost ushered in the last days—an era that began with the birth of the Church. And now history is moving toward the consummation of all things as outlined in Joel 2:30-32. (Compare Joel 2:30-32 with Matthew 24:26-31.)

14. What special promise is given to Israel in Joel 2:32? Who are the “survivors?” Consider Isaiah 10:20-23; 11:11-16 and Zephaniah 3:8-13.

Read the “Prophecy Perspective” handout that accompanies this lesson.

Conclude this session with a time of conversational prayer. Express your thankfulness to God for any new work of restoration He has begun in you—for the promised Holy Spirit who will enable you to obey the truth He has revealed. *Praise the name of the LORD our God for His tender heart of compassion that He extends to His wayward children!*

Prophecy Perspective

Lesson 16 – Joel 2:18-32

In the days of Joel the Jewish people had an exclusive, nationalistic view. They considered themselves “God’s chosen” but they failed to understand what they were chosen for. Their mission was to share God’s plan of salvation with the world. Unfortunately, they developed an exclusive attitude, thinking that God’s favor was for them only. As the Old Testament period progressed, the children of Israel became increasingly legalistic. They developed a growing disregard for women, slaves and the people of lowly occupations. However, they reserved their greatest disdain for Gentiles, the very persons to whom their mission was to have been directed.

In view of these prevailing Jewish attitudes the universal scope of Joel’s prophecy is especially remarkable: *“I will pour out my Spirit on all people” Joel 2:28.*

On the Day of Pentecost the apostle Peter stood to preach one of the greatest sermons ever uttered. He took as his text Joel 2:28-32. The words of Joel’s prophecy were familiar to the Jews who had gathered to celebrate Pentecost. For several centuries they had lived with the hope that one day that prophecy would be realized. *As Peter recited the words it was plain that the prophecy was being fulfilled right before their eyes.*

Not only that, the outpouring of the Spirit was an accompanying feature of the underlying promise given to Abraham and the patriarchs—that *all nations* would be blessed through Abraham and his descendents. This promise was ratified through King David and guaranteed in the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 17; 2 Samuel 7:22-29; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Acts 2:29-36.

Thus, at Pentecost, two threads of prophecy met and blended together: Christ’s prophetic promise to send the Holy Spirit was directly fulfilled (John 14:16-18). Joel’s prophecy in 2:28-29 was fulfilled in Acts 2 and the ultimate fulfillment of Joel 2:30-32 will be realized at history’s end.