

The prophet Joel prophesied in the southern kingdom of Judah, possibly around 835-830 B.C. His name means “Jehovah is God.” He preached the word of the Lord to the people when Judah was devastated by a vast horde of locusts that destroyed everything and was followed by severe famine. This was God’s just judgment against the nation for her sins. In *Joel 2* we see a further account of God’s judgment (*2:1-11*). All this is a testimony that we are all sinners and cannot be saved by our works, that the Jews who sought righteousness by their works failed miserably (*Rom. 9:31–10:3*). In *Joel 2:12-20*, the people are called to repentance urged from the goodness of God. Again, we see that there were times of national repentance and obedience, but they did not last very long. This shows that no matter how hard we try, we cannot make ourselves right with God. We are in need of a righteousness we cannot produce (*John 6:44; Rom. 3:10-20; 1 Cor. 2:14*).

*(Joel 2:21)* - “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.” Joel begins to prophesy of good things to come, mainly pointing to the time of the Messiah, which is the ultimate day of the Lord, the day of Christ. How could people not be fearful and even “be glad and rejoice” given their current circumstances under God’s judgment? The answer is they must look to the Lord and consider the promise of God to keep them in tact for the purpose of bringing the Messiah into the world to save all of God’s chosen people, Jew and Gentile. They must look to Him for salvation, righteousness, and eternal life (*Rom. 10:4*). Salvation is of the Lord, and their current situation did not reflect the spiritual state of those who trusted in Christ as the Lord their righteousness. “For the LORD will do great things,” mainly, in sending His Son into the world to save His people from their sins by His death as their Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. This day of the Lord would be a great day of judgment of all the sins of all of God’s people as their sins had been imputed to Christ and His righteousness imputed to them.

*(Joel 2:22)* - As the “beasts of the field” and the trees and vines suffered from the effects of God’s judgment upon the earth, in times of God prospering Israel, these animals too would have no reason to be afraid. John Gill makes a spiritual application of this showing how the “beasts” can bring to mind the Gentiles who would also prosper because of Israel’s prosperity, and this could certainly apply to God’s elect among the Gentiles spiritually who prospered by the work of Christ which came first to the elect of the Jews - “the fig tree and the vine” (*cf. John 15:1-7*). So, this can remind us of the great fruitfulness produced in the wilderness of the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel in the times of Christ and the New Covenant, which are more clearly described in the next verse.

*(Joel 2:23)* - “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God” - The blessing of joy and gladness is for those who rejoice in the LORD (*Rom. 14:17; 15:13; Php. 3:3; 4:4; Psa. 32:11*). This refers both to elect Jews and Gentiles who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. “For He hath given you the former rain moderately” - This is an interesting expression and is appropriately translated by some as “the early rain for your vindication,” and “He has given you a teacher for righteousness.” Now certainly the Lord God took care of physical Israel in the land when they prospered by giving them both the early and latter rains to quench their thirst and water their fields. But the expression here points to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as the teacher of righteousness both in His first and second coming. He

is the one who worked righteousness for His people whereby God justifies them, and He is the water of life for them. He is also the one who will return to vindicate Himself and His people before the world.

**(Joel 2:24-27)** - This describes much more than physical blessings and prosperity which at times fell temporarily upon the physical nation Israel. This is the abundance of all spiritual blessings secured by Christ and given to His people because of His death on the cross to save them and provide all the blessings and benefits of grace and glory.

**(Joel 2:28-29)** - This speaks of the future outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter quoted this to show the fulfillment of this at Pentecost (*Acts 2:14-21*). The Holy Spirit has always been active as the powerful applier of spiritual life, knowledge, faith, and all spiritual graces in the new birth and His indwelling of God's people. He did not begin His work at Pentecost. But at Pentecost He was poured out in a more special and wider way in the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham - "*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*" (*Gen. 12:3*). And here we see a prophecy of the many ways God would communicate the Gospel to His people until the revelation would be complete and the written Word be sealed (*Rev. 22:18-19*). This was the inauguration of the New Covenant church age.

**(Joel 2:30-31)** - These are cosmic events that will mark the New Covenant Age. Some claim this refers to events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70, which was at the beginning of the New Covenant Age. Others claim this refers to events leading up to the second coming of Christ, which is the final end of the New Covenant Age. It could be both, but the main point of this prophecy is the certain destruction of all who reject the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Savior of His people and the only righteousness whereby sinners can stand before God and be accepted and blessed. The Day of the Lord will truly be "*a terrible day*" for all who are without Christ. We must be washed in His blood, clothed in His righteousness, and brought to faith in Christ! This is salvation for sinners.

**(Joel 2:32)** - The only way of deliverance from this destruction and of salvation from sin and death is the Lord Jesus Christ. And this salvation is for "*whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD.*" What is it to call on the NAME of the LORD. It is the fruit of Holy Spirit conviction under the preaching of the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace wherein the LORD is identified and distinguished as the God Who justifies the ungodly by His grace through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to call out of our sinfulness upon the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Word as God manifest in the flesh upon all of our salvation was conditioned and Who fulfilled those conditions as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer, thus, securing our complete salvation and eternal life. "*Mount Zion*" and "*Jerusalem*" are the true church of Christ and the spiritual city of God, His kingdom and family, whereunto all who call upon His name are brought by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Rom. 1:16-17; 10:13-17*). And all this is true and certain for two reasons: (1) "*The LORD hath said*" - This is God's Word, and He is always faithful to His promises which are sure and certain in Christ (*2 Cor. 1:20*); and (2) It is for "*the remnant whom the LORD shall call*" - As people by nature will NOT call upon the name of the Lord and will NOT come to Christ for salvation, God has a remnant according to the election of grace whom He, by His power and grace, will call and bring into His kingdom without fail (*John 6:37-45; 10:11-16; 1 Cor. 1:18-24; 2 Pet. 3:9*).