

The Books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos

Lesson 7: I Will Pour Out My Spirit on All Flesh -- Joel 2:18–3:21

The first half of Joel left us standing in a darkened field with a torn heart, the trumpet still ringing, the priests still weeping between the porch and the altar, everything waiting on God. And then, in a single verse, the weather changes. Then the Lord became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. The God who sent the locusts as a summons does not despise the broken heart that answers. The moment His people return, He turns toward them, and the whole tone of the book floods with light.

What follows is one of the most beautiful reversals in the prophets. God promises to send grain and wine and oil again. He promises to drive the northern army far away. He promises rain, early and late, threshing floors full of grain, vats overflowing with wine and oil. And then He says something that has echoed for three thousand years: I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten. There is no sweeter sentence for a person who has watched something precious devoured. God can make the lost years count again.

But the promise climbs higher than full barns. And it shall come to pass afterward, God says, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men see visions. Even on the menservants and maidservants God will pour out His Spirit. This is the verse Peter stood up and preached on the day the church was born. On Pentecost, with the sound of a rushing wind still in the air, Peter pointed to the bewildered crowd and said, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. Joel was looking down the centuries at the church.

So this lesson carries us from the ruined field to the upper room, from torn hearts to the outpoured Spirit, and on to the final word of the book, where God promises to dwell with His people and water their lives from His own house. It asks each of us a question that Joel's whole prophecy has been building toward. When God says whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, have we truly called on Him, in the way Peter said we must, or are we still standing in the valley of decision? Let us follow Joel all the way home, to the God who pours out, restores, and dwells with His people forever.

Group Discussion: On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted Joel 2:28–32 and said, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. Why is it so important to let the New Testament tell us how an Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled, and how does Peter's interpretation protect us from misreading Joel as a future event still waiting to happen?

Personal Reflection: Joel 2:32 promises that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, and Peter applies it in Acts 2 to repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. Looking honestly at your own life, have you called on the name of the Lord in the obedient way Peter

described, and if so, does the way you live now reflect the gratitude of someone whose lost years God has restored?

Read Joel 2:18–3:21

Study Questions

1. In Joel 2:18–27 God reverses the judgment and promises restoration, climaxing in the words, I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten (2:25). What does this passage reveal about the character of God toward those who genuinely repent, and why is this restoration a work of grace rather than something earned?
2. God promises that His people shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and shall never again be put to shame (Joel 2:26–27). Where have you been living in shame or scarcity of soul, and what would it mean to trust the God who satisfies and restores?
3. Joel 2:28–29 promises, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. According to Acts 2:16–21, when and how was this promise fulfilled, and why must we say it was fulfilled at Pentecost rather than reserved for a future age?
4. Joel says the outpouring would reach sons and daughters, old and young, menservants and maidservants (Joel 2:28–29). How does the breadth of this promise, reaching every kind of person, shape the way you view your own place and the place of others in the body of Christ?
5. Joel 2:30–31 speaks of wonders in the heavens, the sun turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome Day of the Lord. How does Peter's use of this

language in Acts 2 help us understand such apocalyptic imagery in the prophets, and guard us from reading it as a literal end-times timetable?

6. Joel 2:32 says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, and that in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, among the survivors whom the Lord calls. Have you taken your place among those the Lord calls, and what assurance does this verse offer you in an uncertain world?
7. Joel 3:1–16 describes God gathering the nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment, with multitudes in the valley of decision. How should we understand this judgment of the nations, and why is it better read as God's final vindication of His people than as a literal geopolitical battle in a single earthly valley?
8. Joel 3:14 speaks of multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, where the Day of the Lord is near. Where in your own life are you lingering in the valley of decision, and what is keeping you from a settled, obedient commitment to the Lord?
9. Acts 2 applies Joel's promise that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) and climaxes in Peter's answer to the convicted crowd, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Drawing Joel, Acts 2, and Romans 10:13 together, what does it actually mean to call on the name of the Lord, and why is this obedient faith rather than a mere sinner's prayer or a charismatic sign-gift movement?

10. Look back across Joel 2:18–3:21 as a whole, from the restored years to the outpoured Spirit to the God who dwells in Zion and waters His people from His house. Name one specific way the Lord Jesus is using this passage to form you right now, one way He is calling you to call on His name and live as one whose years He has restored.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Acts 2:14–21, 38–39, Peter declares Joel fulfilled at Pentecost and calls the crowd to repentance and baptism; Romans 10:9–13, calling on the name of the Lord as obedient, confessing faith; Ezekiel 47:1–12, the river flowing from God's house, paralleling Joel 3:18; Zechariah 14:8, living waters going out from Jerusalem; Revelation 22:1–5, the river of life from the throne in the city of God

More studies available on ChurchOfChristBibleStudies.com