

## JOEL

# “REPENT”

## SERMON ON JOEL

Joel 2:12-14

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. JOEL THE AUTHOR

A. Nothing but what is known about him in this book can be discovered

1. Name means literally, Jehovah is God, which is providentially according to his message

a. The name Joel is a common one among O. T. people, cf. I Sam. 8:2; Neh. 11:9

B. His style

1. A literary master

a. Carefully polishes and beautifies his work as no other O. T. writer

b. Everything is set before us vividly as though we ourselves were witnessing it

c. He adds detail to detail; parallelism to para.; each clear, brief, distinct, a picture in itself, yet adding to the effect of the whole

C. His character

1. The tenderness of his soul is evidenced by his lingering over the desolation which he foresees

2. He was, evidenced by his description of repentance, a man of deep religious feelings, heartfelt experience and warm sympathy

3. He threatens, warns and penetrates into the very recesses of the soul with his figures of speech

4. He is a poetic man, yet one of strength, tenderness, insight and dignity

5. He was a man of moral integrity, undoubtedly a native of Judah being familiar with the Temple and the ministry of the priesthood

#### II. BACKGROUND OF THE TIMES

A. Disasterous locust plague and drought has devastated the land

1. So severe that there is not enough even to present cereal or drink offerings at the Temple

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2. So severe that it is a "Day of Jehovah"
- B. Prior to Joel's time Athaliah (wicked woman) ruled
  1. But Jehoiada, high priest, led a revolt which deposed her and put Joash, boy king, upon the throne
  2. It was really Jehoiada, the high priest who was the voice behind the throne . . . the priesthood was in the ascendancy in Joel's day . . . they were the leaders of the people . . . to them Joel appeals for repentance.
  3. Jehoiada started a revolt but it was short-lived and the people had returned to formalism
  4. So God sent these calamitous calls to repent . . . and sent Joel to interpret the events
  5. Already the people were on their way to moral downfall

### III. PURPOSE AND TEACHING OF JOEL

- A. Joel has been sent to call the covenant people to repentance and holiness
  1. God desires a sanctified people through whom He may fulfill His covenant promises
- B. To bring this people to repentance and holiness of life, the great day of Jehovah's chastening judgment has come upon the land in locust and drought
  1. Thus the ever-recurring method of God in saving the world is chastening judgment causing repentance, followed by redemption as He purifies a people fit for communion with Him
  2. This method reached its perfection in the Messiah and His spiritual kingdom
    - a. Even the first coming of the Messiah is spoken of as a day of Jehovah's judgment cf. Mal. 3:1-4; Jn. 9:39; 16:11
    - b. So combined in the Messiah and His kingdom is the method of God's salvation—judgment and redemption
  3. Each judgment/redemption experience of national Israel foreshadowed and predicted that final and complete judgment/redemption experience realized in Jesus' 1st advent and the consumation awaits only His second advent
    - a. This is the message of Joel
- C. And his message was primarily directed to his contemporaries
  1. Judah was soon to come under the oppression of successive world empires
  2. The cruelty and corruption of these pagan oppressors would

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cause many of God's elect to think God had forgotten His covenant promises

3. Joel was commissioned to preach the ultimate act of God's conquest over the powers of the world darkness. God brought them to the valley of Jehoshaphat in Christ (Col. 2:15)

THE DWELLING OF JESUS AMONG HIS PEOPLE—THE RESTORATION OF THE COMMUNION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, IS THE FINAL GOAL OF JOEL'S PROPHECY . . . THIS IMPLIES, OF COURSE, THAT GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FITTED FOR GOD'S PRESENCE AMONG THEM . . . JOEL CALLS THE COVENANT PEOPLE TO REPENTANCE AND HOLINESS SO THAT GOD CAN FULFILL THESE COVENANT PROMISES

## DISCUSSION

### I. PLEA FOR REPENTANCE, Ch. 1 & 2

#### A. The Exclaimer—God's spokesman, the prophet

1. The prophet Joel is commissioned to put his message in the form of an exclamation
2. So unprecedented were the calamities which had come to Judah that for generations and generations back no one could recall such a thing
3. So unprecedented were they, they were to serve as a reminder for generations to come
4. When God does such a thing there is no doubt about it . . . He has done it again and again but men deceived by their own pride have not learned what God wants them to learn

#### B. The extent of God's call to repent: IT IS VIVID, ARRESTING, FORCEFUL, UNMISTAKABLE

1. The crops, vineyards, fig trees were stripped of their bark, splintered, chewed up, burned up
  - a. Something like no man's land in the battle zone or like the woods around an ammunition plant when it blows up
2. Joel represented even the beasts of the field and the ground itself mourning
3. v. 1:11 represents the farmers as unable to comprehend . . . completely dumbfounded
4. The food vanished . . . there was nothing whatsoever to joke about nothing to make one glad
5. Barns and graneries falling into disuse and ruin . . .
6. The beasts perplexed and dismayed, crying unto God for water

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7. IT WAS A DAY OF GLOOM (like declaration of war) A DAY OF DARKNESS . . . THICK DARKNESS . . . PEOPLE WERE LIKE THOSE OF DUST BOWL DAYS . . . EARTHQUAKES

### C. The Executor of the plea—GOD, using natural agents

1. The locusts are called "a nation"
2. What has come is a day of the Lord . . . destruction from the hand of the Almighty
3. God used the drought to burn up the crops and pastures v. 19-20
4. The terrible nature of the locusts is described in 2:4-10
5. In v. 11 they are called God's army . . . Hs is their general . . . He commands them

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, GOD COMMANDS ALL OF NATURE AND USES IT TO SERVE HIS PURPOSES OF CALLING MEN TO REPENTANCE THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE FORM OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH EXCEPT GOD HAS ORDAINED IT TO BE SO . . . HE ESTABLISHES THE BOUNDARIES OF NATIONS . . . HE SITS UPON THE THRONE OF THE UNIVERSE . . . ALL NATURE AT HIS COMMAND

## II. THE PLAN FOR REPENTANCE, Ch. 1-2

A. What we have done here is go through the two chapters selecting the words Joel uses to signify THE MANNER REPENTANCE IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

### B. The People

1. Awake, like the prodigal who came to himself
  - a. Repentance involves the powers of reason as well as emotions
  - b. PEOPLE NEED TO WAKE UP TO WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THIS AGE OF GRACE AND MERCY IN THE GOSPEL CALL TO REPENT!
  - c. THEY NEED TO WAKE UP TO THE FACT THAT IN CHRIST THE WORLD HAS BEEN JUDGED AND CONDEMNED
2. Wail, lament, weep, like Peter
  - a. There needs to be sorrow for sin . . .
  - b. There needs to be wounded hearts, pricked consciences, shame
3. Be confounded, men need to be humiliated before God . . . to feel the futility of their own righteousness and wisdom
  - a. They need to be brought to the very point of death so that they will learn to depend on God! II Cor. 1:8-9
4. Blow the trumpet in Zion—repentance must be proclaimed
  - a. Few people ever hear sermons on repentance today

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- b. There are two kinds of promises in God's book . . . one equally as emphatic as the other: Curses and Blessings; warnings and blessings
  - 5. Tremble, again, that which God does in nature and through His revelation in Christ should cause men to fear and reverence God . . . THIS IS WHY THERE IS A LACK OF REPENTANCE . . . THERE IS A LACK OF FEAR
    - a. When Jesus demonstrated His deity, Peter cried, Depart from me for I am a sinful man
    - b. Men trembled when in the presence of angels
    - c. We had better tremble when we read His word which is just as penetrating, discerning and Holy in nature? THERE JUST ISN'T ANY EXCUSE FOR IRREVERANCE WHEN THE WORD IS BEING READ OR PREACHED . . . FOR THIS IS THE GOD BEFORE WHOM WE TREMBLE SPEAKING!
  - 6. Fast, mourn . . . GIVE YOURSELF TO CONCENTRATION ON THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL . . . SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE
  - 7. RETURN TO THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART
- C. The Priests
- 1. Gird on sackcloth, pass the night in penitent prayer
    - a. IF THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS CANNOT LIVE PENITENT LIVES HOW CAN ONE EXPECT THOSE OF THE FLOCK TO REPENT?
    - b. FOR SOME REASON OR ANOTHER SOME PREACHERS AND ELDERS AND DEACONS HAVE GOTTEN THE IDEA THAT WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH IN REPENTANCE DOES NOT APPLY TO THEM
    - c. These are the kind of shepherds of the flock of whom Ezekiel writes, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep . . .
  - 2. Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly
    - a. Religious leaders are to lead in CONCENTRATION ON SPIRITUAL THINGS
  - 3. Cry to the Lord
    - a. Prayers of intercession, supplication to the Lord
    - b. Prayers of dependency get men in the right frame of mind and attitude toward God in order that God may truly bless them

PRAYERS DO NOT CHANGE THE MIND OF GOD . . . GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE AND WITHOUT VARIATION . . . PRAYERS ARE MANIFESTATIONS

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THAT MEN ARE GETTING THEMSELVES INTO THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO GOD . . . MEN ARE SURRENDERING TO HIS WILL WHICH IS TO BLESS AND GIVE MAN ALL HE NEEDS FOR LIFE AND GODLINESS

4. And so the priests are charged to lament and wail . . .

### III. PURPOSE OF REPENTANCE, Ch. 2 & 3

#### A. Immediate blessings

1. Restoration of the crops, 2:18-19

a. THESE ARE THE MATERIAL BLESSINGS GOD GAVE TO JUDAH FOR HER REPENTANCE

b. THESE SAME PRINCIPLES HOLD TRUE FOR ANY NATION IN THE MATERIAL SENSE TODAY WHO WILL WALK HUMBLY IN THE PENITENCE BEFORE THE GOD OF ALL THE EARTH . . . THEY CAME TO GOD FEARING FATHERS OF AMERICA, BUT HOW LONG THEY WILL REMAIN IN VIEW OF AMERICA'S GROWING UNGODLINESS IS UNCERTAIN!

2. Removal of the Plague, v. 20

a. GOD HAS POWER TO TAKE AWAY THE SCOURGE OF HIS JUDGMENTS AND TO RENEW THE LAND AS IF IT HAD NEVER BEEN JUDGED

3. Remembrance by the Lord, v. 26-27

a. HERE JOEL BEGINS TO PASS FROM THE MATERIAL BLESSINGS INTO THE SPIRITUAL

b. The Lord will remember His people to protect them, guard them and guide them

#### B. Future blessings, spiritual blessings, 2:28—3:21

1. God will prepare a new people

a. He will pour out His spirit upon all flesh

b. THIS PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED, OF COURSE, IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH Acts 2. THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF THIS FUTURE EVENT IN DIFFERENT WAYS

2. God's victory over the enemies of His people

a. THIS WAS INTENDED TO BE FULFILLED AT THE COMING OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM ALSO

b. IT IS JUST THAT JOEL PUT IT IN THE VERNACULAR OF THE PEOPLE OF HIS TIME! OF COURSE THERE WERE JUDGMENTS UPON THE NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE O. T. PEOPLE BUT IT WAS ALL POINTING TO THE FINAL OVERTHROW OF ALL WORLDLY POWER IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH AND HIS KINGDOM

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3. God's presence among His people, v. 3:17-21
  - a. GOD DWELLS IN ZION, THE CHURCH . . . THE CHURCH IS A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT!
  - b. THE FOUNTAIN COMES FORTH FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LORD TO REFRESH THE COVENANT PEOPLE
  - c. ZION WILL BE A HOLY KINGDOM AND IT WILL NEVER AGAIN BE CONQUERED . . . STRANGERS WILL NEVER AGAIN OVERCOME GOD'S PEOPLE

## CONCLUSION

- I. THE LESSON THAT GOD'S WAY IS THE WAY OF DISCIPLINE
  - A. Paul writes to the Hebrews that the Israelites of old did not know God's way and fell through unbelief
- II. GOD DOES NOT CHANGE BUT MAN MUST IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE BLESSINGS OF GOD
- III. THE LESSON THAT GOD'S ULTIMATE PLANS WERE TO BE PERFECTED IN THE MESSIAH AND THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM
  - A. We are the sons of the covenant . . . heirs of the promise
  - B. We are to be a new people, victorious, with God's presence in our midst, protecting, sustaining, guiding