

Gleanings of Grace

Joel 2

Lesson 35

The prophet Joel seized the opportunity to challenge the people of the southern kingdom of Israel at a time of national disaster. Locusts had invaded the land in droves and every living green thing had been stripped bare. Although this plague was a terrible consequence of their sin, Joel warned them that the *day of the LORD* would be much worse, challenging them to repent and return to the LORD. Joel 2 ends with the glorious promise of the *pouring out of the Holy Spirit*. May we learn from the warnings and live in the promises of Joel 2.

OBSERVATION: Joel 2

1. Read Joel 2 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns/titles that refer to *LORD*.
Key Words: *LORD, Holy Spirit, and day*
3. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, is used in Joel 2:12. Mark the word and record what the conclusion is based upon.
4. The contrasting word *but* is used in Joel 2:20. Mark the word and record what is being contrasted.

Background:

1. It is believed that the book of Joel was written about 835 B.C. during the reign of King Joash. Joash ruled over the southern kingdom of Judah. Joash became king at the age of seven years old. This warranted supervision by Jehoida the priest. What does 2 Chronicles 24:2 reveal?

a. What happened after Jehoida's death? 2 Chronicles 24:17-20

1.) The choices of King Joash seemed to be determined by those who had access to him. What are some lessons we can learn from his lack of discernment?

2. Joel called together the people of Judah. How serious was the damage of the *swarming locusts*? Joel 1:2,4

3. According to Joel 1:10,12,17, and 18, what was the damage?

4. Joel was not predicting a future event; he was describing their current state. Scan Joel 1 and list just some of the words Joel used to describe how they should be reacting to what was happening?

Read Joel 2:1-11 - The Day of the LORD

1. In Joel 1, the prophet spoke of the judgment that had arrived in Judah (a plague of locusts and drought). In Joel 2, he begins by describing judgment that will come - a mighty army set against Judah. Since this is all part of "God's day," not "man's day," it is described as *the day of the LORD*. Scan through the first eleven verses of Joel 2 and list what is written about *the day of the LORD*.

2. Now that he had their attention, Joel told the people to stop fretting about the locusts and to start looking ahead to what the locust plague symbolized. List three instances of the prophesied destruction that are worse than that of the swarming locusts.
3. Park on verse 11, as Joel reminds the people of the source of the affliction of *the day of the LORD*. List three things mentioned about the LORD and explain what each means in your own words.

4. Write the last phrase of Joel 2:11.
 - a. Add to the intensity of this question by recording the words of:
Malachi 3:2

Nahum 1:6

Revelation 6:17
 - b. Bask in the promise of Nahum 1:7. Compare the idea of a stronghold to vulnerability to the enemy.
5. The words of Joel 2:11 can be frightening words. Consider these same words in the positive sense as they describe God as your protector. What do you see?

Read Joel 2:12-17 – A Call to Repentance

1. We see the heart behind God's intentions to warn the people in these verses. His conclusion is the conclusion He desires for His people. What does He tell them to do in order to avoid the impending doom? verses 12,13
 - a. Using these verses, describe the components of true repentance.

2. Joel 2:13 gives great assurance to that one who is being called to repent and *return to the LORD*. He does not need to fear judgment. Rather, what characteristics will he discover about the LORD?
 - a. ...and He relents from doing harm. Define the word *relent*.
 - b. How does this phrase counter the belief of so many who view God as a God who is harsh and vengeful?
3. Beginning with verse 15 Joel declared, *Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people...* According to verse 17, what was he calling them to pray?
 - a. One concern was that other nations would have a dim viewpoint of God because He allowed His people to be plundered; to ask the question, *Where is their God?* What heart attitudes might indicate that a person really cared about the nations asking that question?

Read Joel 2:18-27 - The Land Restored

1. God's response to the repentance of His people is that He turns towards them. Using Joel 2:18-24, list some of the things He will do for them.
2. Ponder the often quoted words of verse 25. God promised to restore the losses due to chastisement. Our chastisements may not include *years that the swarming locust has eaten*. Yet, we each have experienced times of loss. God's restoration may not be in like kind. What do you think He is promising to His people?
3. As a result of their repentance and God's grace, what does verse 27 say will happen *then*?
 - a. Share a personal experience when you arrived at a deeper place of *knowing the LORD*.

Read Joel 2:28-32 - God's Spirit Poured Out

1. *It shall come to pass afterward*: After the restoration Joel spoke of previously in the chapter, there will come a time of ultimate restoration and blessing. This time, from beginning to its culmination, is described in Joel 2:28-32. According to verses 28, 29, what will God do?

2. Jesus, before He ascended to heaven, gave the apostles a command. What was it? Acts 1:4,5
 - a. What did Jesus say would happen *when the Holy Spirit came upon them*? Acts 1:8

3. In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit came upon certain men for certain works. After the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit would not be so specific. This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. What happened on that day?
 - a. The people of the city who witnessed the believers *speaking in tongues were amazed and perplexed*. According to Acts 2:12,13, what did they say to *one another*?
 - 1.) Seeing others *speak in tongues* can still result in people being *amazed and perplexed*. What are some of the things about this gift that can be *perplexing*?

 - 2.) The behavior of some of the believers in the church in Corinth, as they *spoke in tongues, perplexed* many. What clarifications did Paul make about this gift?
1 Corinthians 14:2

1 Corinthians 14:4

1 Corinthians 14:14

1 Corinthians 14:18,19

4. Using Acts 2:14-17, record Peter's response to the accusations of the *people in the city*.
 - a. Considering Peter's response, what is the importance of this day?

5. This time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God will culminate with cataclysmic signs in the heavens and *the great and awesome day of the LORD*. Joel 2:30,31 records some of those events. What will happen?

6. Another promise that would be new to Israel can be found in the first part of verse 32. What is it?
 - a. This is another glorious promise associated with the time Joel said *and it shall come to pass*. In this time of the poured-out Spirit of God, salvation will no longer be a matter of association with national Israel. Instead, *whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved* – no matter what nation they come from. Delight in the words of Romans 10:11-13. What are your thoughts when you consider yourself among those who have called upon Him?

REVIEW: Joel 2

1. Joel began with addressing the devastation of a current event. He then warned of the day of the LORD, a time that would minimize, in comparison, the days of swarming locusts. God's goal is not judgment. Joel continued to call the people together to repent and return to the LORD, promising restoration if they did. This restoration too would be minimized in light of the promises made in the last verses of Joel 2. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit was a day that provoked a rejoicing far beyond that of when *threshing floors are full of wheat, and the vats overflow with new wine and oil*. How has this lesson challenged you to consider your perspective of losses and gains?

2. Make a list of what have you gleaned about the character of God from this lesson.

*The LORD knows the days of the upright,
and their inheritance shall be forever.
They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*
- Psalm 37:18,19

Observation Worksheet

Joel 2

Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand: ² A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations. ³ A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them. ⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. ⁵ With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array. ⁶ Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color. ⁷ They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. ⁸ They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. ⁹ They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief. ¹⁰ The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. ¹¹ The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it? ¹² "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." ¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. ¹⁴ Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? ¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; ¹⁶ gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. ¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' ¹⁸ Then the LORD will be

zealous for His land, and pity His people. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate 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." ²¹ Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things! ²² Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. ²³ Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you – the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. ²⁴ The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. ²⁵ "So 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 which I sent among you. ²⁶ 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. 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. ²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰ And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. ³² And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.