

Joel Sermon

Introduction:

As we continue our not so minor prophets series we come to Joel. Now one of the goals of this series and every series is that each one of us would leave here better equipped to read understand and apply the word of God on our own.

Now some genres within the Bible are easier to do this with. When we read the letters in the New Testament they are much more didactic which means they are pretty straight forward teaching. But just in the old testament there are many different genres there is historical narrative such as Geneses and judges there is poetry such as psalms there's wisdom literature like Proverbs and we cannot interpret every genre the same. A good example would be the popular verse in Proverbs 22 "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Now if we interpret this as a promise from God, or a universal truth, then much of our lived experience will prove this wrong. But if we interpret Proverbs with its genre in mind we will know that this is general wisdom.

Very often people will read the Minor Prophets and interpret the verses about destruction and judgment and point to the end times. They will look at a modern war or natural disaster and say point to a verse in Old Testament and make predictions or encourage people to stock up on food and weapons to prepare for the coming judgment. Now the majority of the time the prophets are talking about something relevant to their original audience. In Hosea he is predicting the invasion of Assyria in other places they are predicting the fall of Jerusalem God sends those prophets to that time in that place to tell

the people a message that is vitally important for the people of that time and in that place and then we can learn from what the prophets wrote and what happened to the people, but sometimes the prophets are talking about the last days or the end times.

Today as we look at Joel chapter 2 we are going to gain some practical tools to help us faithfully interpret the Old Testament Prophets and we are going to look at what Joel has to say for our relationships with God today and how we should live in a way that reflects the reality of our relationship with God to those around us.

So lets pray and then dive into the text.

Background:

- Author Joel son of Pethuel (YHWH is God)
- Time unknown
 - No king mentioned
 - Wide use in various situations
- Basic Structure
 - Reminds them of the locust
 - Block out the Sun (picture)
 - 200mil swarm in a square mile about a 80,000 everyday kilometer
 - change (pictures)
 - 2020
 - compares this locust swarm and the devastation it cause to a coming judgment if Israel does not turn from their sin.
 - Repentance
 - Restoration of what was lost
 - Future restoration
 - The day of the Lord =Duel meaning
 - Immediate partial fulfillment
 - Glimmer
 - Returns peace security and restoration
 - From a specific judgment
 - Distant final day of the Lord
 - The return of Christ
 - The final judgment
 - Final renewal
 - Causes a lot of confusion

Transition: Joel 2 is in the middle of Joel's description of the day of the Lord. So let's look at Joel chapter 2:28-32 see why it's still important to our lives today

- So let's read the whole passage and then come back and look for clues to help us interpret the passage
- Read 2:28-32

*“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,
and your young men shall see visions.
²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.*

³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

- Immediate Context
 - Do the verses surrounding this passage give us any clues about how to interpret these verses
 - Read Joel 2:12-14

*“Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
 “return to me with all your heart,
 with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments.”*

*Return to the LORD your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
 and he relents over disaster.*

*¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
 and leave a blessing behind him,
 a grain offering and a drink offering
 for the LORD your God?*

- Chapter two begins with the warning that an army vast and deadly like a swarm of locust is coming
 - But verses 2:12-14 say that if the people will return to God with repentant hearts the army and its devastation may be avoided.
- Joel goes on to say that if they will only give up their sin and return to God that they will experience peace, joy, and the presence of God
 - Verses 28-32 come and say that after the spirit of God will be poured out
 - More calamity

- Blood fire and columns of smoke the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.
- First part of chapter two is clearly an immediate warning of judgment and call to repentance and promise of restoration
 - Make no sense
 - Again promise the spirit and presence of God
 - Again speak of calamity
 - Chapter three then goes on to describe God gathering and judging all the nations of the earth which clearly did not happen during the time of the Old Testament

Transition: All of this points indicates that this part of Joel is not talking about an immediate partial fulfillment of the Day of the Lord but something that will happen in the last days. Now lets say we are still not sure we have a few other tools available. We already looked the immediate context but we also can look at the Canonical context.

- Canonical Context
 - How does the rest of the Bible interpret this passage?
 - Cross References

What are some other passages that we might look at to better understand Joel 2:28-32?

- Acts 2:17-21
 - Explains acts 2
 - Read it
 - Peter says Joel is talking about

Transition: So the immediate context points to a future day of the Lord where the Holy Spirit will be poured out in amazing ways and it points to this future day of the Lord when the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood and the Canonical Context says that the Holy Spirit has come that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit is available to all who believe in Jesus Christ and will empower them to proclaim the Gospel in amazing ways and it still points to a future Day of the Lord when we will see these wonders in the skies and on the earth that are mentioned.

Now its pretty clear already but there are some passages that are not so clear and in those cases we still have another tool.

- Ecclesiastical context
 - Fancy term to say how has this passage been used in church services and understood by Christians throughout history
 - Cantena Bible Commentary
 - 1st Corinthians 11 communion passage
 - In my research I every single early church source I could find said this passage pointed to two things the Holy Spirit empowering believers especially at Pentecost and the sun turning to darkness and the moon to blood in the very last days.

Transition: So now that we have some tools and we went through that process lets go back to our passage and see why its important to us today...

Joel 2:28-32

“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,
 and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

- Joel warns us that before the great and awesome day of the Lord before the judgment of all the nations
 - There are going to be these calamities these signs in the heaven and on the earth
 - Blood and fire and columns of smoke the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord
 - Same language as the locust and invading army
 - Devastation, famine, and destruction of people and cities
 - But he gives us this promise that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.
 - Does not mean we wont suffer from these disasters but that our salvation our eternal hope is founded on the on the Spirit and presence of God
- We know this because when Joel talks about what God will be doing among His people he doesn't say
 - They will have more than enough food
 - They will have weapons or bunkers to protect themselves with
 - He says “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 shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.”

- As Peter said in Acts 2 these are the last days these are the days of preparation these are the days when God has poured out His Holy Spirit on all those who believe in Jesus Christ.
 - The same spirit that was prophesied by Joel
 - The same spirit that was poured out at Pentecost is alive and active in the lives of Christ followers today.
 - He has empowered you and I in amazing ways to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ to a broken world in these last days.
 - And just like Joel talked about a variety of ways the Holy Spirit will empower people and we see a variety of gifts and manifestations in the New Testament the power and presence of the Holy Spirit will not look the same for everyone. But one thing is clear the promise of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is for every single follower of Christ
- The temptation when we read about the devastation of the last days is to turn inward but the Holy Spirit has empowered us to bring the name of Jesus the only hope of the world to those around us.

- Every single one of us who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior has been given the mission bring the saving message of the Gospel to those who are lost.
- And every single one of us has been given the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Prophets promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured out. Jesus promised he would send the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost and is still alive and active today.
- The mission to bring the Gospel and make disciples is intimidating but we do not go in our own power but as witnesses of Christ and as people who are empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - And if your sitting here today and your thinking “I love Jesus but I don’t sense the Holy Spirit I don’t see His empowerment or His presence in my life.” I invite you to pray that God would fill you with the Holy Spirit and empower you and make you aware of His presence. Because the mission is not done. People still need to hear the Gospel. People still need to see the Love of Jesus. And until Christ comes again we are River Rock Church and we as followers of Christ are called to Know God, Love God, and serve others as we empowered by the Holy Spirit boldly proclaim Jesus Christ by word and deed to a fallen world.