

## A Sign of Deliverance

Joel 2:25-29

11/30/03

Intro

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Joel was probably one of the earliest of the minor prophets who served the Lord in the southern kingdom. He likely lived in Jerusalem itself.

There is some uncertainty as to when he lived and served, but most likely it was about **830 BC during the reign of Joash, king of Judah.**

Joel writes his prophecy just after Israel has come through a **great time of national frustration and devastation; locusts have come through the nation and destroyed all in their path.**

This is a picture that Joel uses to describe the coming judgment of God because their hearts had gone far from the Lord.

“Locust” means, “burner of the field,” and was an appropriate descriptor of how great was their destruction.

Illus – in 1915 there was another such attack of locusts in Palestine, and there was a similar attack in the mid-west of our country during the 1930’s.

**God, however, promises to restore the years that the locusts have eaten, and gives a great sign of deliverance.**

**These, then, are the principles of God’s deliverance.**

## I. Locusts Burn the Fields

A. There are many kinds of locusts

Verses 1:1-4; 2: 3-10

- Verses 4. There are **gnawing, swarming, creeping, and stripping locusts.**
- And there are many ways people can relate their lives to the loss from locusts:
- **Marriages on the rocks; families in despair, troubles at work, financial devastation.**

B. The Lord is trying to get our attention

- In their plenty, they had forgotten the Lord.
- Their hearts were turning from Him; they were becoming confident in themselves.

**Deuteronomy 8:11-20 – hearts become proud**

- **The locusts become a “wake up call” to the nation of Israel.**

C. But the Lord also promises to restore

- **Verse 2:25. I will make up you the years the locusts have eaten.**
- “The Lord has dealt wondrously with you,” Joel says.
- **You’re not just starting over, but God says that He will restore all that the locusts have eaten.**

## II. God Desires in Us Three Things

A. Return with all your heart

Vs 2:12-14

- Return your hearts, and not your garments.
- **An outward show of grief was not enough.**
- We rend our hearts when there is a true grieving over our sin.

**Ezekiel 9:4**, “The LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.’”

- God wants more than outward token expressions.

**Illus – President Johnson vs President Bush; token prayers vs sincere prayers.**

B. Proclaim a solemn assembly

Vs 2:15-16

- They had forgotten the importance of gathering together before God.
- This is important to God because it is so important to our spiritual lives.

**Hebrews 10:24-25**, “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together...”

**Illus – the family needs to be together at the dinner table.**

- **Don’t let the enemy isolate you, you’ll be much easier to attack.**

C. Walk in faith

Vs 2: 21-24

- Rejoicing in the Lord is done when there is faith in God.
- It comes from trusting in what God is going to do in our lives.

**Hebrews 11:6**, “**And without faith it is impossible to please Him.**”

- Faith is placing your hope in God.

**Philippians 4:4, 6**, “**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!**” “**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**”

## III. God Will Even Pour Out Himself

A. The Spirit is poured out on all

- Not just on a few as under the old covenant.
- **We have better promises.**

**Acts 2:16-21 – Pentecost was the fulfillment of the prophecy.**

B. Poured without measure

- Pouring is in contrast to a few drops.

**Illus – like pouring rain in Oregon**

- The Holy Spirit gives gifts to men for the **edification** of the church.
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit, then, is love.

**John 13:35, " By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

C. You will receive power

- The Holy Spirit given to the church will be with power.

**Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."**

- **We need power in our lives...**

**Illus – Paul Hackett and the song he wrote.**

- **But the Holy Spirit is only a down payment.**

**Ephesians 1:13-14 – The Spirit as a pledge.**

Conclusion

**If the locusts have taken much from you, put your hope in the Lord. He will restore all that the locusts have eaten.**