

Readings

Scripture

¹⁸ Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. ¹⁹ The Lord answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.

²⁰ "I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things.

²¹ "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things! ²² Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ "Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.

²⁴ "The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. ²⁵ I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, 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 again be put to shame. ²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again 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, 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 2:18-32 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

"...Joel's theology is intensely typological. He does not perceive any present act of Yahweh's judgment or salvation as being unique and unrelated thematically to a later, ultimate work of Yahweh. Nor does he perceive of any future work as being without contemporary precedents. The day of Yahweh may come many times, but each one moves closer to the final consummation."

- Duane A. Garrett, JETS 28/3 (September 1985), pp. 289-297

Sermon Outline

God's Great Restoration

Joel 2:18-32

Return With All Your Heart

Stephen Baldwin

The question Joel puts to his contemporaries and to us is, can we trust God to restore all that has been destroyed and broken—the years the locusts devoured?

God can be trusted to supernaturally restore and renew all things.

The supernatural restoration of God is a great grace. (Joel 2:18-27)

The supernatural renewal of God is an even greater grace. (Joel 2:28-32)

Reflection Questions

- Keep in mind what we've seen so far: when Joel chose the Israelites' recent experience of the locust swarm and devastation to be the picture of the coming Day of the Lord, what did Joel want them to remember?
- Joel uses the past literal devastation of the locust swarm as a theological illustration of his theme of the Day of the Lord. Read Joel 2:20. What can you discern from Joel's choice of words that indicates that this army is something different than another literal locust swarm?
- What do "lost years" look like for us?
- Have you experienced a season that was "eaten" or "lost" by locusts? Reflecting on verse 25, what hope and understanding do you find there?
- When God restores after a great loss, is the loss taken away, or does God restore in some other way?
- What ways can you name that the healing of the land described in verses 19, 22-25, 26-27, is a type or foretaste of the future restoration of all things?
- According to verse 27 what is the final aim of God's restoration?
- In verse 28 how is this Day of the Lord enacted in Jerusalem after Christ's ascension? What part of verses 30-32 has happened and what has not?