

Joel 2 v 28-32: The Prophet's Promise

Scholars cannot pinpoint an accurate date for the prophet Joel but he may have ministered as early as 800+ years before Christ. That is *after* Kings David and Solomon when the kingdom had divided between north and south but *before* either had been conquered or their people taken prisoner into exile.

While Amos sounded God's alarm up north, Joel preached down south in Judah and Jerusalem. He too issued solemn warnings that while the Lord is 'slow to anger and abounding in love', He is no fool and people need to repent of sin or face calamity in His righteous judgement. In ch 1 the prophet uses a locust swarm as a graphic illustration of future sweeping conquest by warlike enemies, greedy for territory.

But probably Joel is most famous for this passage, quoted by the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament Acts 2. The prophet was given to promise a time of profound spiritual restoration.

In the midst of human conflicts and divine judgements there is also grace, God powerfully working to provide salvation and generous provision for all who trust and 'call on the name of the Lord'. He will '*pour out*' His Spirit widely so that not just a few individuals like Amos and Joel may speak God's message but *many* ordinary folk like us can be assured of our eternal security in God's love, granted new vision and enabled with power from beyond ourselves to serve God.

In his Pentecost sermon, Peter quotes this passage and declares it has begun to be fulfilled, in the life, ministry, atoning death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and in the dramatic equipping of His followers to share His message. From being frightened victims they suddenly become courageous preachers!

We should note here the *balance* of Biblical prophecy - warning and promise, holiness and love, judgement and grace. This balance should be present in our preaching in church, in all teaching of the Bible and in the life of every follower of Jesus!