

Part 7 The Blessings of Spiritual Restoration (2:18-27)

• **Judgement – a call to seek God**

The people of Israel were in a desperate situation. There was a locust plague, which was so bad that it was seen as a foretaste of the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord can come at any time. This means that we do not know when it will be. It also means that there can be a foretaste of it. This locust-plague was a foretaste of the end of the world.

In such a time of judgement the thing to do is to seek the Lord. God's warning judgements are His way of calling us to seek Him. This is what the people did in Joel's time.

• **A turning point – God's response when the people turned to Him**

Now in verse 18 we read of the result. We read of what God did as His people turned to seek Him. It is a turning point in the book. The best translation is: 'The Lord became jealous...'. By the time Joel was written the story was over. The book is narrating what happened when the people turned to God as Joel had asked. The Revised Standard Version rightly translates 'Then the Lord became jealous for His land...'. It is a narrative of what happened.

'The LORD became jealous for His land, and He had pity on His people.' (2:18)

• **God's jealousy for his people**

When it says God 'became jealous' it refers to God's determined love for His people – a love that will not allow a rival, a love that will protect and not allow anything to interfere with that love. We see here what happens when God restores His people.

1. God reverses the crisis or the calamity that He had sent before

1. God reverses the crisis or the calamity that He had sent before.

'The LORD answered and said "I am sending you grain, and wine, and oil, enough to satisfy you fully;..." (2:19)

These are the very things that they had lost in the locust - plague. The chastenings of God do not go on for ever. God may discipline you. After the people had sought the Lord the crisis ended.

2. God will not send that particular crisis again

2. God will not send that particular crisis again. Joel continues:

"...never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations." (2:19)

This particular plague of locust would not come back again. He never repeated this particular plague. God does not send the same crisis once you have passed the test and have learned your lesson. That particular calamity need not be feared.

3. He totally undoes what had happened when He was chastening

3. He totally undoes what had happened when He was chastening. God says:

"I will drive the northerner far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land, with its front columns going into the eastern sea and those in the rear into the western sea

*and its stench shall go up,
its smell will rise.”* (2:20)

The ‘northerner’ refers to the locusts who came from the north. God got rid of them altogether. One lot were driven into the desert, another into the Dead Sea, another into the Mediterranean. He is totally undoing what had happened before.

God will do that for you. If He puts you through a time of chastening, after you have learnt your lesson He will undo the chastening.

4. He leads His people into the joy of restoration

4. He leads His people into the joy of restoration. They say:

‘Surely he has done great things.’ (2:20)

• Free from fear

He calls upon them to be free from fear. God will not go on holding their sinful ways against them. He totally restores the country that He had judged:

*‘Be not afraid, O land;
be glad and rejoice.
Surely the LORD has done great things.’*(2:21)

• The countryside

*He restores the animals:
‘Be not afraid O wild animals,...’* (2:22)

Before in the locust plague even the animals had suffered. He restores the countryside:

‘for the open pastures are becoming green....’ (2:22)

• The trees

He restores the trees:

*‘The trees are bearing their fruit;
the fig-tree and the vine yield their riches.’* (2:22)

• The people

He restores the people:

*‘Be glad, O people of Zion,
rejoice in the LORD your God,...’* (2:23)

God is undoing all of the calamities He had brought before. He brings the rains back:

‘...for He has given you the autumn rain¹ in righteousness.

*He will cause the rain to come down for you,
the autumn rains and the spring rains as before.’* (2:23)

• The crops

He restores all the crops:

*‘The threshing-floors will be filled with grain;
the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.’* (2:24)

• He makes up for the lost years

He makes up for the lost years:

*“I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten,
the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust swarm,
my great army that I sent among you.”* (2:25)

This is a wonderful promise. God blesses them so much that the blessing makes up for the lost years. Joel refers to a literal plague but the principle applies in any way in which we have lost years because of our sins. Maybe God allows something that drives us to prayer. When He restores He makes up for everything we have lost. The promise is fulfilled in modern ways also, as we seek the Lord. He is able to make up for lost years. Maybe you have wasted years. If you will turn to the Lord He will start to compensate for the years you lost.

• **Abundance**

He abundantly provides:

“You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,...”(2:26)

• **Worship**

This leads to worship:

“...and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed.” (2:26)

• **Deeper knowledge of God**

It leads to a deepened knowledge of God:

“Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will My people be shamed.” (2:27)

Three things they will see in a greater way:

- (i) God’s indwelling (‘...you will know that I am in Israel...’);
- (ii) God’s name (‘the LORD’ – the One who saves and keeps by the blood of the lamb’);
- (iii) His uniqueness (‘...there is no other...’).

These are the things that happen when God restores you and makes up for the years that you have lost.

Footnote

¹ Some translations have ‘teacher’ but I think ‘rain’ is the better translation. It is ‘in righteousness’ because the Law promised that when His people were obedient He would give them rain.

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