

How God Pulls Us Into the Future

July 12, 2020 | Joel 2:28-3:21



What makes a story have a happy ending? The good guys win? The bad guys get the punishment they deserve? Joel tells us that God's great story of salvation for His people and His coming judgment will include dramatic signs on earth and in heaven.

He Will Pour Out His Spirit

Read Joel 2:28-29.

[Q] How is Joel's prophecy concerning God's Spirit fulfilled in Acts 2:1-21? What wording changes did Peter make at the start of his quote in Acts 2:17? What is the significance of this change?

[Q] What difference does the indwelling Holy Spirit make to the believer according to the following passages:

Ezekiel 36:26-27

Romans 5:5

[Q] How have you seen the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Here are some examples. The Spirit empowers me to:

- ☐ see the beauty of Jesus, to love Him
- ☐ obey His Word based on faith
- ☐ love even when I'm not loved in return
- ☐ have patience with teenagers, toddlers, and the elderly
- ☐ have peace in the middle of a storm
- ☐ be filled with gratitude and contentment
- ☐ trust when everyone thinks I should be afraid
- ☐ have hope amid hopelessness
- ☐ serve the Body of Christ with my gifts
- ☐ be bold in speaking the truth in love
- ☐ other – please explain

He Will Return

Read Joel 2:30-32; Acts 2:22 and Matthew 24:29-31.

[Q] Compare the signs and wonders of Joel 2:30-32 with Peter's account in Acts 2:22 and Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:29-31. What is disturbing to you? What is comforting to you?

"Like so many Old Testament promises, this passage bursts its original wrappings and leaps into the New Testament with wider and deeper significance."

Leslie Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*

He Will Judge Evil

Read Joel 3:1-16.

[Q] What does God have against the nations in verses 3:1-6? What does this tell us about God's priorities and concerns?*

[Q] Why is God's judgment good news?

[Q] How will He judge the nations according to 3:7-16?

But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. Joel 3:16b

A Glorious City

As he closes his prophecy, Joel takes us beyond the Day of the Lord to give us a glimpse of life in God's eternal city, set apart for His holy people.

Read Joel 3:17-21 and Revelation 21:1-4.

[Q] What will the city be like? What will not be in the city? What is the future for other nations and other lands?

APPLY

Joel has been speaking of God's salvation, now secured in Christ, and God's judgment, still to come.**

[Q] What difference has his prophecy made to:

- your view of God?
- your outlook on the future?
- your reaction to hard things in your life?
- your witness to those around you?

PRAY

Thank God for the sobering lessons in Joel about God's coming judgment. Pray that you would live in the light of that—fearing God rightly and pointing others to His great salvation in Jesus.

Give thanks for this amazing vision of the future that God has in store for His people. Pray that you would delight in this prospect, especially in times of difficulty and discouragement.

***Take it further:** Read more about The Underground and ending sex trafficking and sexual exploitation in Connecticut: theundergroundct.org

Next week: "Foundations of the New Normal" ...when we understand our identity, we are prepared to respond no matter what this new normal sends our way!

**Some questions adapted from Explore devotional, *Joel*, by Jonathan Griffiths, The Good Book Company