

*Friends, don't get me wrong. By no means do I count myself as an expert in all of this, but I've got my eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.*

Philippians 3:13-14 MESSAGE BIBLE

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First Love Ministries, Inc.

Prayer Study #225

## **THE BOOK OF JOEL: CHAPTER TWO, VERSES 12-2 (from the Hebrew-English Tanakh)**

### **A CALL TO REPENTANCE**

**12. "Yet even now"-says the LORD-"Turn back to Me with all our hearts, and with fasting, weeping, and lamenting."**

**13. Rend your hearts rather than your garments, and turn back to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and renouncing punishment.**

**14. Who knows but He may turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind for meal offering and drink offering to the LORD your God?**

**15. Blow a horn in Zion, solemnize a fast, proclaim an assembly!**

**16. Gather the people, bid the congregation purify themselves. Bring together the old, gather the babes and the sucklings at the breast. Let the bridegroom come out of his chamber, the bride from her canopied couch.**

**17. Between the portico and the altar, let the priests, the LORD's ministers, weep and say: "Oh, spare Your people, LORD! Let not Your possessions become a mockery, to be taunted by nations! Let not the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"**

Earlier in the beginning of Chapter 2, Joel indicates that the only faint ray of hope against this invincible army is the watchmen on the wall blowing the shofar of warning. In these verses, Joel gives a more sure hope in averting disaster: REPENTANCE. There are three emphases of this repentance:

1. The emphasis on God's perspective: He gives His people a personal invitation to repent. Peter Craigie in *Twelve Prophets* reminds us that this is the same God who send this apocalyptic army in the first place. He writes, "*It is God's very nature to be gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and full of love towards His people. Judgment is a consequence of the stubborn resistance of people persistently refusing to return to God; in a sense, it is always self-induced. The will of the Judging God is always that his wrath be turned aside; it may be*

*turned aside when those who have turned away from God return to the path of faith. And where there is true repentance, God himself will "repent;" that is, he will turn back the tide of judgment and reveal again the face of his mercy. When that happened, the normal blessings of life would be restored, sufficient in quantity that the traditional offerings of thanksgiving could be resumed once again."*

2. The emphasis on the act of repentance itself. The people are to see the urgency of the situation, blow the shofar to call all the people to a solemn and public assembly, and to ask the people to fast. All the people from the elders to the infants were to come, and they were to come ceremonially clean to symbolize a desire for inward purity.
3. The emphasis on the prayer of repentance. The people were first of all to ask for the Lord's mercy. Secondly, they were to remind God that they were His chosen people. They were not just asking Him to not let them be humiliated. The people knew and believed that they were a chosen people through whom God was to be revealed to other nations. If they were overwhelmed by this army, then other nations would think that the God of Israel either did not really exist or that He was weak.

#### **THE ANSWER TO PRAYER**

**18. Then the Lord was roused on behalf of His land and had compassion upon His people.**

**19. In response to His people the LORD declared: "I will grant you the new grain, the new wine, and the new oil, and you shall have them in abundance. Nevermore will I let you be a mockery among the nations.**

**20. I will drive the northerner far from you. I will thrust it into a parched and desolate land-its van to the Eastern Sea! [the Dead Sea] And its rear to the Western Sea [the Mediterranean Sea]. And the stench of it shall go up, and the foul smell rise." For [the LORD] shall work great deeds.**

**21. Fear not, O soil, rejoice and be glad; for the LORD has wrought great deeds.**

**22. Fear not, O beast of the field, for the pastures in the wilderness are clothed with grass. The trees have borne their fruit; fig tree and vine have yielded their strength.**

**23. O children of Zion, be glad, rejoice in the LORD your God, for He has given you the early rain in [His] kindness, now He makes the rain fall [as] formerly-the early rain and the late-**

**24. And threshing floors shall be piled with grain, and vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.**

**25. I will repay you for the years consumed by swarms and hoppers, by grubs and locusts, the great army I let loose against you.**

**26. And you shall eat your fill and praise the name of the LORD your God who dealt so wondrously with you-My people shall be shamed no more.**

**27. And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: That I the LORD am your God and there is no other. And My people shall be shamed no more.**

We don't know how much time passed between the first section and this section of the chapter, but we assume from this section that the people truly did repent and God heard their cries. This is reminiscent of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14: *When my people, who bear My name, humble themselves, pray, and seek My favor and turn from their evil ways, I will hear in My heavenly abode and forgive their sins and heal their land.*

Prayer is very relational and involves us communicating with God and His divine response. God answers the prayer that obviously took place at the end of section one, where the people fasted and gathered in a solemn assembly to seek the Lord. The spiritual symbolism in this section is powerful. Basically the grain represents spiritual truth, wine represents joy, and oil represents the anointing.

In the original language the restoration or repayment from the Lord for the destruction of the enemy means He will double what was lost. The early rain is the rain of sowing, and the late rain is the rain of harvest.

#### **VERSES 2:28-32 FROM THE KING JAMES**

**28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall see visions.**

**29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days I will pour out my spirit.**

**30. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.**

**31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.**

**32. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.**

“Afterwards” speaks of a future time. When the Lord says all flesh, this does not mean every person in the world. It refers clearly to the chosen

people. Since today's believers, although Gentile, have been grafted into the vine, this refers to us. Notice that societal barriers have been broken down. This outpouring of the spirit does not discriminate between men and women, servants or free men, young or old. Notice also that spirit in this context is clearly connected to prophecy.

This is one of the greatest promises concerning the Last Days or end of the age right before the Day of the Lord. This was partially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. It will be fully fulfilled before Jesus comes again. As Leonard Ravenhill put it, it will be a Pentecost that out-Pentecost Pentecost.

This passage is one of many in the Bible that clearly says that prophesy, (which in this sense is not preaching), visions, signs in the heavens and the earth, deliverance, etc., is for today. The sun has not yet turned to darkness and the moon into blood, and we are not yet in the day of the Lord most likely, but close! Thus, prophecy is still around until the end times.

Note that there will be a remnant in the Last Days. This is a group that every believer, who truly loves the Lord and is passionate about the things of God, should aspire to be in.

I've Never Been out of His Care  
Dallas Holmes

The eyes of God are upon me.  
He sees everything I do  
The arms of God are around me.  
They keep me safe and secure.

This changing world alarms me,  
With war, with sin, with strife.  
But my loving Father charms me  
With joy, with peace and with life.

#### CHORUS

And He knows where I am  
Every hour of every day.  
He knows such thoughts I think.  
He knows each word that I might say.  
And although there've been times  
I've been out of His will,  
I've never been out of His care.