

# Joel 2:21

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] So, everybody fears something, don't they? People's lives are dominated by fear. Fear of the everyday things in life.

I've got an essay to do. I've got to go and see such and such. I don't have enough money. I've got no friends. I've got fear in our jobs. Is our work secure?

Fear about safety. Fear about health. As we grow old, we fear age. And the final fear of death. And I occasionally have to visit people who are very clearly dying, and yet their relations say to me, we're not telling them they're dying.

We're going to pretend that they're going to get better. Fear sells our newspapers, doesn't it? We've run out of money. Immigration. Children and the internet. Fear sells our news, people. We live in fear.

And what God promises in chapter 2 that was read, you see it in chapter 2 verse 21, he promises a land without fear. Fear not, O land. Be glad and rejoice.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] Oh, look at what he promises in verse 19 at the end. He says, I will no more make you our reproach among the nations. Or then in verse 26, my people will never again be put to shame.

Verse 27, my people shall never again be put to shame. God promises his people a land of no fear. And no shame. God promises his people a never, never land.

And never fear. And never be put to shame. And it's a land that is based on the great things that the Lord Jesus Christ has done. It's a land where God's people will never be mocked again.

It's a land where no one will ever deny that Jesus is the rightful king of his creation. It's a land where nobody will ever accuse Christians of being misguided or naive.

And try to thrust them to the edge of society. It's a land where Christians will never be ashamed of their Lord. No fear. Never again. That is the land promised in Joel chapter 2.

[ 2 : 2 2 ] A land of no fear. And a land of never again. A never, never land. Now we're about 900 BC. How do we know this passage is about Jesus Christ? 900 years before Jesus.

How do we know that this passage is about Jesus? Well it's to do with how Old Testament prophecy works. And as we look at the Old Testament. Those of us who live after the time of Jesus. We know that it is all about Jesus. Why? How do we know that? Because he tells us so. Luke 24 verse 44. Everything written about me Jesus says.

In the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. Must be fulfilled. It's basically the whole of the Old Testament. So as we read the Old Testament. We must be thinking. What does this teach me about Jesus?

And when we come to any passage in the Old Testament. Of a particular prophecy. There are three levels of fulfillment. So first of all. When we read the Old Testament. When we read Joel. We must think.

[ 3 : 2 1 ] What did the original readers understand? What did Joel understand by this? What was it in their historical situation? But it will also point us forward to Jesus' first coming.

How does this tell us about what Jesus did when he was born. And he lived. And he died. And he rose again. And he ascended into heaven. But there's also a third fulfillment.

That when all of God's promises. Are fulfilled. When Jesus returns to judge the world. So what does this passage teach us about when Jesus comes to judge the world?

So whenever we're reading a bit of the Bible. We're thinking. What does it mean to the people then? What does it tell us about Jesus' first coming? What does it tell us about Jesus' second coming? So this bit of the Bible.

Is written to the southern kingdom of God's people. Israel has been divided into two. Israel to the south. Huge to the north. And it's about the 9th century BC. And it's actually going to point you and I

forward.

[ 4 : 22 ] To what Jesus has done for us. When he came the first time. And when he comes the second time. Now the good thing about the second half of our passage. Is that the apostle Peter preached it in Acts chapter 2.

So you and I don't have to do much of the hard work there. We can see very obviously how it's applied. But what about the first half? So first of all. What about the promised land? Look at the verses 18 to 27.

Of chapter 2. What about the promised land? Now do you remember where we ended last week? We ended with the priests making a cry. On behalf of the people. 2.17 Spare your people oh Lord. And make not your heritage a reproach. I'm by word among the nations. Why should they say amongst the world. Where is their God? Do you remember the people have been infested by locusts? There's a huge plague of locusts.

There's no food anywhere for anyone to eat. And the priests cry out. Why should the people say where is their God? It's a cry based on God's name.

[ 5 : 21 ] We can paraphrase it like this. We could say God look. You are going to look ridiculous. Ridiculous. If you don't help your people. Not how blunt it is. You are going to look ridiculous.

If you don't help your people. And prayer centered on God's glory is always answered. It's a prayer that they can make with confidence. Because it is God's character to have compassion.

On what he's made. Look at verse 18. He says. Between the vestibule and the altar. Let the priests and ministers of the Lord weep. And say spare your people oh Lord.

And make not your heritage a reproach. And by word amongst the nations. Verse 18. Then the Lord became jealous for his land. And had pity on his people.

This isn't the jealousy of an insane lover. This is the jealousy of a tender creator. Who looks at what he has made.

[ 6 : 16 ] And if we can put it like this. He grieves the sin suffering. Both his land and his people. Never think God does not care. But the God who cares is powerful to act.

And a little bit like a loving parent. A mother might be speaking to a child who is ill. God tells his people. What he's going to do before it happens. And like a loving parent might say.

It'll soon be over my love. It'll soon be over. God tells his people. It will soon be over. Verse 19. Doesn't it? Then the Lord answered and said to his people. Said to his people.

Behold I'm sending to you grain, wine and oil. And you will be satisfied. And I will make you no more reproach. Among the nations. Verse 20.

I will remove the northerner far from you. And drive you into a parched and desolate land. His vanguard into the eastern sea. And his rear guard into the western sea.

[ 7 : 12 ] The stench and foul smell of him will rise. God says to him. He said I'm going to restore your crops. And you will be physically satisfied. I'm going to restore your honour.

And you are going to be emotionally satisfied. I'm going to restore your borders. I'm going to defeat your enemies. And you are going to be politically secure. Now these verses could just refer.

Couldn't they? To the locusts of chapter 1. Certainly. If the plague of locusts. That we read of in chapter 1. You know the munching locusts. And the swarming locusts. And the cutting locusts. And the hopping locusts. And the destroying locusts. If they were all to die. Well there would be a stench. Wouldn't there? Rotting arthropod. Is that a great phrase?

That would sting. Wouldn't it? Rotting arthropod. So maybe this is just referring to the land being free from locusts. But then as we look on in the Old Testament. This can also be a promise to restore God's people.

[ 8 : 11 ] After the invading nations come later from the north. If you know your Old Testament history. Later on in 722 BC. The Assyrians. The northerners. Sweep down from the north.

Won't they destroy Israel? And then later the Babylonians came. And they came from the north in 586 BC. And they destroyed the southern kingdom. And sure enough God promised didn't he? When Daniel was carted off. This won't last forever. And so 70 years later the people of Judah who've been taken into exile in Babylon. They are allowed to go back. It could be a promise of that. That I'm going to restore the land. But look again at the language of Joplin 2 verse 19. Can you see? In the middle of the verse. And I will no more make you.

A reproach. Among the nations. Or look at verse 26. The end of verse 26. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

[ 9 : 10 ] The Solomon's praises. You will eat plenty. And you will be satisfied. But praise the name of the Lord your God. Who's dealt wondrously with you. There's a time coming. When you will be fully satisfied.

When their enemies will be fully and completely destroyed. This is the time of never again. And as you read the Old Testament. The rest of the Old Testament. You don't find that there.

God's people never experience this. This is a time when the problems of the past will be just that.

They will be the problems of the past. And the future will be filled with verse 27.

Well you will know that I am in the midst of you. And that I am the Lord your God. The covenant promise. And there is none else. So my people will never again be put to shame. The future will be fulfilled with the knowledge of God.

And there will be no doubt in anybody's mind. That the Lord is their God. And there is no other God than the God of Israel. And you don't find that in the history of God's people in the Old Testament.

[ 10 : 15 ] You don't. This is a perfect promised land isn't it? Not just a new Israel. But a new creation. Where people can enjoy rest. Where they can enjoy a perfect relationship.

With their God. And they will enjoy being God's people. In God's place. Under God's rule perfectly. And look at how they respond. Verse 21. Fear not O land.

Be glad and rejoice. Be glad and rejoice. For the Lord has done great things. And in verse 22. The animals chip in. Don't they? Fear not you beasts of the field.

For the pasture of the wilderness are green. And the tree bears its fruit. And the fig tree and the vine give their full yield. The future will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. And there will never be any doubt in the minds of his people that the Lord is their God.

And there is no other God than their God. You don't find that in history. Of God's people in the Old Testament. This is a perfect promised land.

[ 11 : 18 ] Not just a new Israel. But a new creation. And the whole of creation is at peace. There's no foot and mouth. There's no bird flu. There's no famine. There's no drought.

There's no more regret. Look at verse 25. I'll 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. The years that I sent my punishment. Among you. The years that you lost through your disobedience.

I'm going to repay you. You'll get them back again. In God's perfect new land. You'll get your wilderness years back. When you've been there 10,000 years.

Bright shining as the sun. You've no less days to sing God's praise. Than when you first began. The regrets of your youth. You'll get them back. Don't you long?

[ 12 : 14 ] Don't you ache for a land like this? When you're not just physically satisfied. But the cravings for stuff. Has gone. You're not just emotionally secure.

But the fear of rejection. Has disappeared. And you're not just guilt free. But that shame before others. And before your God. Well it's a thing of the past. And not just that.

But you are spiritually complete. Because you know that the Lord your God. Is the only God. And he has worked wonders for you. He sent his one and only son. To rescue you.

And that is the life that God promises his people. And if you're not a Christian here tonight. You've got to understand that this is the life you're rejecting.

You are rejecting Jesus Christ who has come to bring life and life to its fullest. And you are rejecting it. Because you are rejecting the God it is centered on. You see this new world that God promises.

[ 13 : 15 ] Is not a world of self-satisfaction. This new creation is about satisfying. Finding satisfaction. In the only place that it is promised. In the Lord. Do you see that in verse 21?

Look at verse 21. Fear not O land. Be glad and rejoice. Rejoice. For the Lord has done great things. You see heaven is only heaven. Because people are wholly focused on Jesus Christ.

Fear is shattered. And joy is given. And when you realize that the Lord has done great things. Look at verse 23. Be glad O children of Zion.

And rejoice. Why? Rejoice in your circumstances. Rejoice in your beauty. Rejoice in your wealth. Rejoice in your wealth. Rejoice how good life is at the moment.

No rejoice in the Lord your God. Not in your good fortune. In God's promised land in the future. We won't be feeling great about ourselves. We will be feeling great about our God.

[ 14 : 24 ] And that's the future is there. For everyone who trusts in the Lord Jesus. His promise is because he's risen from the dead. We will rise from the dead. And we will live in this perfect world

with him forever.

And in fact we can experience that now. Can't we? Just a taste of those blessings now. Stuart alluded to it in his prayer.

He talked about Ephesians 1 didn't he? Where Paul says the reality of this future are ours now. Ephesians 1 verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who has blessed us in Christ. With every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He's already blessed us. We have it already.

It is ours. It is in the account. It is in the future. Just waiting for us to inherit it. So we can have a taste of this blessing now.

[15:24] This life without fear. By looking to the great things that the Lord has done for us. And there's a reason isn't there. Why in heaven everyone is looking at Jesus.

In Revelation it tells us where everyone is looking. They look to the throne of the Lamb. In God's future new world. They're not looking at each other. They're not looking at themselves.

They are looking at Jesus. And when they look at him. They know that they are loved. Because he is the Lamb that is slain. And you can see the scars that declare his love.

When he went to the cross for them. And when they are looking at him. They know that they are secure. Why do they know that they are secure when they look at him? Not because of their job.

Or their bank balance. Or their marriage. But because they are looking at the God of heaven and earth. The Lord Jesus Christ who has promised. He will never leave you nor forsake you. And when you are looking at him.

[16:21] They know they are safe. Because the Lord Jesus says I will dwell with you. And so you and I can have a taster of this perfect land now.

It is broken in. Today. Tonight. If you will do. What you will be doing in eternity. Now.

And what will you be doing in eternity? You will look to the Lord who has done great things for you. And that is how. Not to be afraid now.

To begin to experience the never again. Never again the shame of this world. And Joel tells us now. How God empowers us to do that.

Which is so important isn't it? The promised land. And secondly the promised spirit. There is a problem isn't there for the people in Joel's day. The problem is this. They could only have the land of blessing.

[17:19] Only when they kept their side of God's place. Do you remember what God said when he rescued his people out of Egypt? It's Deuteronomy 28. If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God.

Being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today. The Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you.

And overtake you. If you obey the voice of the Lord your God. Well there's the problem is that. If you obey. That's the problem. Because they couldn't obey.

But they for more than. Well about two verses in the Bible. So last week we saw the common experience. Didn't we? Was not Deuteronomy 28 verse 1. But actually it's Deuteronomy 28 verse 15.

But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God. Or be careful to do all his commandments. And his statutes that I command you today. Then all these curses will come upon you. And overtake you. Curses like. And lots of locusts.

[18:20] That's the problem. So how is this people of disobedience. Going to become people of obedience in the promised land. What God promises is something new for the future.

We don't know when. But look at verse 28. They didn't know when. But look at verse 28. And it shall come to pass. And it shall come to pass afterwards. 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. So back in the Old Testament.

God's spirit was only given to particular people. At particular times. For particular jobs. So it was given to the king. It was given to the prophets.

The spirit came upon various judges. But not your olden reach out. They just didn't get the spirit in the same way. But now God says.

[19:22] Can you see that? All of my people. All of my people. I am going to pour my spirit out upon. In verse 29. On my servants.

No half measures. There is a pouring out. Not a dribbling out. All of God's people. And so there is no sexism.

There is no ageism. There is no classism. From the greatest to the least. They will be awash with his spirit. And what is the effect? Well it is an extraordinary effect.

Isn't it? Verse 28. And it shall come to pass afterwards. That I will pour out my flesh. Or pour out my spirit. On all flesh. Your sons and your daughters. Shall prophesy. And your old men shall dream dreams.

And your young men shall see visions. This is what God says. In Numbers 12 verse 6. To understand that. It's very important. Numbers 12 verse 6. Hear my words.

[ 20 : 17 ] If there is a prophet among you. I the Lord. Make myself known to him. In a vision. I speak with him. In a dream. Do you see what God is saying?

What is God saying to you? He's saying. I'm going to pour my spirit out. And everyone is going to have. The same knowledge of God. That the prophets of old had. You are all going to have.

A relationship with me. On the same level. As my prophets of old did. There's going to be. No one who knows me. More specially. More closely.

Who's got the kind of hotline. To go on. All of my people. I'm going to know me. Intimately. And they are going to make me known. In fact. There are only going to be prophets.

Among my people in the future. Only going to be prophets. Among my people in the future. People who know me intimately. And make me known. One. So why does God need this massive increase.

[ 21 : 19 ] In the amount of prophets. Who speak God's word. Amongst his people. Well it's made clear. Verses 30 and 31. And I will show wonders. In the heavens and on the earth. Blood and fire.

And columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness. And the moon to blood. Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it's the great day of the Lord. We saw mentioned in chapter 2.

The day of the Lord. That no one can endure. And no one can stand before. And the day when God judges the world. The day when God returns. When Jesus returns. But there's hope for that day.

Isn't there? Verse 52. And it shall come to pass.

That everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. There shall be those who escape. As the Lord has said. And among the sight of the survivors. Shall be those whom the Lord calls.

Those who call on the name of the Lord. And those whom he calls. Will be saved. And this message has got to get out. And the terrible day of judgment is coming.

[ 22 : 18 ] The day of the Lord is coming. So call on him. And that is why God needs so many prophets. That is the heart. Isn't it? Of Peter's sermon in Acts chapter 2.

Turn to Acts chapter 2. Will you? Turn to Acts chapter 2. Keep a finger in Joel. You'll never find it again. If you don't. Acts chapter 2. And I want us to play a little bit of.

Spot the difference. You can see that game in the newspapers. Or football programs. That you use to spot the difference. Alright. And I think. As you look at this passage. I think it will help you spot the difference.

And see how it applies to now. So have a look at Acts chapter 2. In verse 17. And in the last days. It shall be. God declares.

The last days. The period between Jesus. Going back into heaven. And his return. To judge the world. We live in the last days. And Peter is saying. Now that promise of the Spirit. Being poured out. Is being.

[ 23 : 14 ] Being poured out. Has just been poured out. Of Pentecost. Tongues of fire. Winds. Speaking in different languages. Different languages. To speak the knowledge of God. Across the world.

The day of the Lord has come. That is what Peter is saying. So look at the end of chapter 2. And verse 21 of Acts. How do we know. That the day of the Lord has come.

And it shall come to pass. That everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. Shall be saved. Now do you notice. This has been very quick. And it's very hot tonight. But do you notice. What Peter has left. Peter has left off.

Can you see that. At the end of Joel. Chapter 2. And verse 32. Peter has left that off. 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. Instead. He tells people about the deliverance. That has come about in Jerusalem. The deliverance.

[ 24 : 09 ] That the Lord Jesus has brought. And that is what he does. From Acts 2.22 onwards. He tells them. How the day of the Lord has come. And judgment has come. But judgment.

Hasn't fallen upon the people. Judgment has fallen upon one person. God hasn't judged the world. He has judged his one and only son. And what happened.

The sky down. And he took the punishment. His people deserved. And so that all who call on his name. Will be forgiven. So when you go back to Joel chapter 2.

And verse 31. I would want to argue with you. That that verse there. That the sun shall be turned to darkness. And the moon to blood. That is fulfilled twice.

There is the fulfillment of Jesus. His first coming. As he dies outside Jerusalem. And it will be fulfilled. His second coming. When Jesus comes to judge the world.

[ 25 : 07 ] See what it tells you is this. There are only two places. That sin will be punished. And both are very dreadful. And both are places of darkness.

There is the cross of Christ. Isn't it? Where the light of the world. Is plunged into darkness. When it goes dark. And Jesus dies in our place. And the pit of hell.

That is the place of awful darkness. And there is the place of awful outer darkness. Where people face the judgment of God. And that is why so many prophets are needed.

In the last days. In that time in between Jesus' first coming. And the second coming. And that is why the spirit is poured out. So that this message can be taken to anyone and everyone.

Chapter 2 verse 32. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And what is that the message of? That's the message of the book of Acts. Isn't it? That as we see people calling on Jesus' name.

[ 26 : 07 ] As Jesus' name goes out from Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth. So that all those who call on God. Will be saved. You cannot call on the name of the Lord Jesus if you never heard of him.

And this means that tonight every single one of us will be in one of two groups. But there will be some of you here tonight who have not called on the name of Jesus. You've not done that.

And so let me ask you tonight. Do you want to go to the promised land of no fear and no shame? The land of perfect satisfaction. Not because you're getting what you want.

But because your life is totally focused on God your Saviour. The God whom you were created to relate to. Do you want to go there? But if you do want to go there.

The only way to get there is to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. And he will save you. You've got to look to that first day of darkness. And you've got to see your sin. Nailed to the cross.

[ 27 : 17 ] In the body of God's Son. Because if you will not do that. The Bible warns you. You will experience the full horror of the second day of darkness. When Jesus returns. And if you will not let Jesus take your sin at Calvary.

You will bear it for all eternity in heaven. And so call on his name. Come to heaven.

Acknowledge your need. For forgiveness. And accept it through Jesus through your cross. And pledge your loyalty to him as Lord.

And you might be sitting there and you think this. The cost of coming to Jesus. It's just too high.

Let me tell you this. The cost of not calling on the name of the Lord Jesus is far, far higher. And so come to him. Come to him before it's too late.

[ 28 : 19 ] Come to him before it's too late. You can sit in the church like this week after week after week.

You can give all the right answers. You can know all the right things. And yet never come to the Lord Jesus. And in your heart of hearts you just think it's going to be too hard.

It's going to be too tough. It's going to be too high. There's too much to lose. Let me tell you again.

The cost of not calling on the name of the Lord Jesus is far, far higher. Well if you come to the Lord Jesus tonight.

We need to thank God. Don't we? Because the only way that you know God. And the only way that I know God. Is by his spirit. And you only trust in the cross of Christ.

Because God has poured his spirit into your heart. And we only have understanding of this wonderful gospel. of grace. Because that is God's gift to us.

[ 29 : 25 ] And we are not given this gift of Holy Spirit to remain silent. You and I have the same spirit that was poured into the apostles.

See their bravery. See the way Peter preached the gospel. It's remarkable. So brutal. So brave. The same spirit that changed Paul from a persecuted to a preacher. That same spirit. Is in you. And the reason that God has multiplied his prophets.

By millions in these last days. Is because the message must go to millions. Who will tell the people. Of Ealing. Greenford. Perivale. Brentford.

Northolt. England. The UK. Europe. The world. Who will tell people that they need to call on the name of the Lord. Well. Who will tell.

[ 30 : 23 ] If it's not you. Who will tell your school friends. Who will tell your colleagues. And if you don't care. It means you probably not come to the Lord.

Who will tell your friends. Your neighbors. Your work colleagues. To call on the name of the Lord. If it's not you and me. Salvation is found in no one else.

For there is no other name. Given under heaven. By which we may be saved. God. And the only way. To God's promised land. Is to call on the name of the Lord Jesus.

Let's pray.