



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

## Joel 2:12-13, 18-19, 28-32 New International Version March 26, 2017

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 26, 2017**, is from **Joel 2:12-13, 18-19, 28-32**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(Joel 2:12) “Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”**

Little is known about Joel and whether or not he preached before or after the Babylonian exile, but his message is timeless and he is quoted in the New Testament. Through Joel, the LORD invites those who may have sinned grievously against Him, and who are even being punished for their stubbornness, to repent and return to Him “Even now” and not wait. But those who repent must sincerely repent by feeling and expressing true remorse for what they have done. God will know whether or not they are returning to Him with all their heart.

**(Joel 2:13) Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.**

God sees into the human heart and knows the reasons for our behavior. An outward show of repentance; such as tearing your clothes, means nothing to the LORD if there is no sincere desire to return to obeying God. Still, there are many good reasons to sincerely repent and return to the LORD. He may be punishing someone or threatening punishment for sin, but because of God's character He can choose to stop a punishment after true repentance.

**(Joel 2:18) Then the LORD was jealous for his land and took pity on his people.**

Joel described an army of locusts that God had sent to devour the land of Judah as punishment for their idolatry and sinful rebellion against God and for the way the unrighteous had abused the righteous. Joel states in human terms that God wanted to free His land from the swarm of locusts, and from pity for His suffering people God wanted to remove the cause of their suffering. God wanted to save them because of His abounding love, not because His people deserved or merited His forgiveness.

**(Joel 2:19) The LORD replied to them: “I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.**

God was speaking to the generations that were alive at the time. God would not only remove the cause of their suffering; God would also abundantly bless them and meet all their needs (material and spiritual). They would learn about God’s justice, come to respect God’s kingdom on earth, and experience God’s gracious compassion in giving them so many undeserved blessings. Those alive at that time would never again be an object of scorn to the nations. They would remain obedient to the LORD. Of course, later generations would rebel against the LORD and suffer the consequences.

**(Joel 2:28) “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.**

“Afterward” came when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon and within Jesus’ followers and those who came to faith in Jesus on the Day of Pentecost and later (Acts 2:17-21 quotes Joel 2:28-32). With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, not just on the prophets or the 12 disciples of Jesus but on all people who believed in Jesus the Messiah, God gave assurance to the world that the Last Days had begun. Believers of all ages would anticipate the future with joy in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

**(Joel 2:29) Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.**

On the Day of Pentecost and afterward, God has poured out His Spirit on His servants (young and old, men and women, rich and poor, slave and free): those who believe in and trust in Jesus Christ – those who sincerely repent of their sins, and love and seek to serve God in the Name of Jesus Christ in His Church. The Holy Spirit is only poured out and into those who by the grace of God come to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

**(Joel 2:30) I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.**

The Last Days began on the Day of Pentecost; so, as Joel promised we have assurance that sometime in the future there will be “the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” We have seen many wonders in the heavens, some terrifying, but the Last Day has not come yet, because the LORD is “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” What the world has seen in the past and what we see today can serve as warnings to repent before our last day.

**(Joel 2:31) The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.**

In the past, people have seen some of these types of signs locally or in various geographical areas. We have had many eclipses and blowing red sand can make the moon look like it has turned to blood. But on the great and dreadful day of the LORD these signs in the heaven will be final, universal, and seen in some sense by everyone on the earth. God does not tell how He will do this, but with modern technology everyone can see major events almost simultaneously wherever they happen.

**(Joel 2:32) And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.”**

A great Last Day is coming (and will come for all of us, if we die before Christ comes again), but it will not be a day of total disaster for “everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” The Name of the LORD includes the total personality, character, and nature of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To call on the Name of the LORD, one looks with faith to God as He really is as revealed in the Old Testament and the New Testament (see especially 1 Corinthians 12:3). The Lord Jesus came to Jerusalem and brought deliverance by His death on the cross, and no matter what the calamity the LORD can save those who call upon His Name. Notice especially how the Apostle Paul applies the words of Joel in Romans 10:13-17.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** — “Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”

**See Romans 10:13-17** — “for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without

someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. From your reading of Joel, how does God expect sinners to come to Him?
2. Why can sinners feel confident that God will save them when they come to Him?
3. Will God only meet people's spiritual needs? Give a reason for your answer?
4. When did God fulfill His promise in Joel 2:28-29?
5. What do Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:13-17 teach about the way to be saved and the responsibility of Christians?

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Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

Visit the [International Bible Lessons Forum](#) for Teachers and Students.

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