

Joel 2:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The Spirit's outpouring extends even to the lowest social classes: "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." The Hebrew vegam al-ha'avadim ve'al-hashfachot bayyamim hahem eshpokh et-ruchi (יגם על-העבדים ועל-השפחות בימים בהם אשפוך את-רוחך) emphasizes that God's Spirit isn't reserved for elites but given to all regardless of social status.

"Servants and handmaids" (ha'avadim ve'hashfachot) refers to slaves and female slaves—the lowest social class in ancient society. They had no power, status, or rights, yet God promises to pour His Spirit on them equally. This radical egalitarianism anticipates Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

"In those days" (bayyamim hahem) emphasizes the eschatological timeframe—the days of the Spirit's outpouring inaugurated at Pentecost and continuing until Christ returns. The repetition "I will pour out my spirit" (eshpokh et-ruchi) from verse 28 stresses that this isn't residual blessing but full outpouring on slaves just as on masters, on women just as on men, on young just as on old.

This prophecy revolutionized early Christianity. When the Spirit fell on Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48) and on those from every social class (1 Corinthians 12:13), it demonstrated that God shows no partiality. In Christ's kingdom, former distinctions of race, gender, and social status don't determine spiritual gifting or

standing before God. All believers are indwelt by the Spirit, gifted for service, and equal members of Christ's body.

Historical Context

Joel's exact historical setting is debated, with proposed dates ranging from the 9th to the 5th century BC. The book contains no references to specific kings or datable political events. What is clear is that Joel addresses a community experiencing devastating locust plague, which he interprets as divine judgment and a harbinger of the coming Day of the LORD. The book moves from describing literal agricultural catastrophe to prophesying the eschatological Day of the LORD when God will judge nations and pour out His Spirit on all flesh. Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:16-21) applies Joel's Spirit-outpouring prophecy to the church age, showing the book's prophetic scope extends from Joel's time through Christ's first coming to His return.

Joel's prophecy of the Spirit's outpouring found initial fulfillment at Pentecost and continues in the church age, while his Day of the LORD visions await ultimate fulfillment at Christ's return. The book emphasizes genuine repentance ('rend your heart, not your garments'), God's character as gracious and merciful, and the call to corporate fasting and prayer in times of crisis.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Joel 2:29 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?

3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל	עַל	בַּעֲבָדִים	וְעַל	בְּשִׁפְחָה	וְעַל
H1571	H5921	And also upon the servants	H5921	and upon the handmaids	
		H5650		H8198	
בָּמִים	בָּמִים	בְּמִמְּה	אֲשֶׁר	אֶת	רוּחִים
in those days		H1992	will I pour out	H853	my spirit
H3117			H8210		H7307

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 12:13 (Spirit): For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Galatians 3:28 (Parallel theme): There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:11 (Parallel theme): Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

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