Promises for God's Past, Present, and Future People: The Book of Joel

Law and Gospel in Joel

Background

- ➤ Joel's prophetic ministry was to the people of Judah (Southern Kingdom).
- The date of Joel's ministry falls within the **ninth century to sixth century B.C.**
- > Judah experienced a plague of locusts.
 - O An important feature of the book of Joel is a plague of locusts, insects that still periodically threaten the crops in large areas of Asia and Africa. The female desert locust lays eggs under the sand in "pods" of about one hundred. There may be as many as one hundred of such egg pods per square foot. When the insects hatch, usually after rains, they "cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen" (Exodus 10:5). Hatching may continue for several days, with young hoppers numbering up to one thousand per square foot at any one time. The young insects, each about one-half inch long, immediately get on the move, looking for green plants to eat. . ." (*The Peoples' Bible:* Eickmann, 127).
- > Joel proclaimed law and gospel.

The Law	Gospel (Good News)
is written in the human heart and revealed in God's word	is a mystery unknown to people by nature and is revealed by Jesus as our Savior.
demands perfect obedience from people	makes no demands but only offers the grace (undeserved love) of God to people
promises salvation and life to those who obey all its demands	promises salvation to those who have broken the law
says that all who obey the law shall be justified	says that those who have not kept the law shall be justified, and that a person is justified without obedience to the law
says that God will not forgive sin nor acquit the sinner	says God has acquitted all sinners, that he has forgiven the sins of the world
says that every sinner is to be cursed	says that all people are blessed in Christ
says that God hates sinners	says that God loves all people
says that God is angry with sinners	says that God is reconciled to all mankind and his anger gone
has the effect of making people angry at God	has the effect of reconciling people with God
terrifies sinners, as it is intended	casts out all fear
must be preached to make the comfortable distressed	must be preached to make the distressed comfortable

- The balance of law and gospel in Joel is about 50/50.
 - o First half is primarily law (1:1-2:17). Second half is primarily gospel (2:18-3:21)
- > Joel does not point out any specific sins when proclaiming law. Why?
- > Joel uses **restoration language** to share the **gospel**.

Listening for and Examining Law and Gospel in the Book of Joel

1.	As you listen to the audio recording of Joel, follow along in the Bible in front of you. Then, pick out your three favorite gospel promises from the entire book.			
	I			
	II			
	III			
2.	Acts 10:43 says, "All the prophets testify about [Jesus] that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." What passage in Joel proclaims the truth of this New Testament passage most clearly?			
3.	The messages of law and gospel can appear contradictory, especially to someone who is not familiar with the differences between them. Compare/contrast the following passages.			
	1:12	vs.	2:23	
	1:16	vs.	2:19	
	1:20	vs.	3:18	
4.	What accounts for a change in Joel's 1:13; 2:12-13	messag	e/tone (i.e. the switch from law to gospel)? Cf.	
For F (5.	urther Consideration What happens when			
	only the law is proclaimed?			
	only the gospel is proclaimed?			
	when both are proclaimed, but the	ne gospe	el does not predominate?	