

Pastor Jason Huffman

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Joel 3:1-14

Title: The Great & Final Day

Big Idea: You do decide how the day will go.

3:1 “For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,

2 I will also gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. 3 They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy *as payment* for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink. 4 “Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; 5 because you have taken My silver and My gold and have carried into your temples My prized possessions. 6 Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders.

Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. 2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.

This judgment appears to be what Joel is describing.

God values all people, but God deals differently w/His own in relationship w/ Him.

1. Covenants have privileges & responsibilities.

4 “Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head.

7 “Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them and will return your retaliation upon your own head. 8 I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, And they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord has spoken.”

He promises restoration for His own & retaliation for His enemies.

9 Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. 10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘*I am strong.*’ ”

Joel **reverses** Isaiah, “Beat your swords into plowshares & your spears into pruning hooks”

2. Peace comes from surrender.

11 Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. 12 “Let the nations be wakened and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. 13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness *is* great.”

The sickle & winepress are symbolic of judgment.

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the Lord *is* near in the valley of decision.

3. Decide before He does.

LIFE Group Guide

General Timeline Guide: (Adjust as appropriate for your group’s needs.)

5-10 minutes connecting personally with how everyone is doing.

45 minutes going over message with discussion questions and life applications.

5-10 minutes praying for each other

Discussion Questions

Look over these questions before your group time. Write down your answers or ideas for at least a few questions if not all. You may not get to every question during your time, but speak up if you want to talk about one of them. Always try to start with question #1.

1. What stood out to you and/or what do you think God might be speaking about from this message?
2. Does understanding God's judgment being rooted in justice rather than arbitrary punishment effect your view of His character and His dealings with nations and individuals? How so?
3. Do we sometimes expect the privileges of a covenant relationship with God while avoiding the responsibilities that come with it? If so, how or when?
4. The message emphasized that unbelievers should not assume God’s protection while they are rejecting a relationship with Him. How might this challenge modern entitlement about God's universal favor?
5. What areas of your life are you still fighting to control instead of surrendering to God, and how might this be preventing you from experiencing His peace?

5-Day Bible Reading Plan

Day 1: The God Who Judges Justly

Reading: Joel 3:1-8; Romans 2:1-11

Devotional: God's judgment is not arbitrary or vindictive—it flows from His perfect justice. When Joel describes the gathering of nations, he reveals a God who remembers every injustice, every mistreatment of His people, every act of cruelty. God sees when children are sold, when the vulnerable are exploited, when His name is dishonored. This should both comfort and challenge us. If you've been wronged, know that God sees and will bring justice. But also examine your own life: How do you treat others, especially those who belong to God? Justice works both ways. The same God who defends the oppressed will hold the oppressor accountable. Today, ask yourself: Am I living in a way that honors God's justice?

Day 2: The Privilege of Covenant

Reading: Joel 3:2; Exodus 19:3-6; 1 Peter 2:9-10

Devotional: A covenant relationship with God comes with both privileges and responsibilities. Joel reminds us that God treats His covenant people differently—not because He's unfair, but because relationship changes everything. Think of marriage: your spouse receives love, commitment, and intimacy that others don't because of covenant. Similarly, God's people receive His protection, discipline, and restoration. But we cannot expect covenant benefits while living in rebellion. Are you trying to maintain independence from God while expecting His blessings? True relationship requires surrender. The beauty is this: God invites everyone into covenant through Jesus Christ. The question isn't whether God plays favorites—it's whether you've accepted His invitation to relationship. Have you committed fully to Him?

Day 3: Surrender Brings Peace

Reading: Joel 3:9-10; Isaiah 2:2-4; Romans 5:1-11

Devotional: Joel's reversal of Isaiah's famous peace prophecy is jarring: "Beat your plowshares into swords." Why? Because there is no peace for those at war with God. We spend so much energy fighting for our own way, trying to control outcomes, resisting God's will. This internal warfare exhausts us and steals our peace. Jesus said, "My peace I give to you"—but we cannot receive His peace while clutching our weapons of self-will. Peace comes through surrender. When you lay down your agenda, your need to control, your rebellion, you discover that Jesus Himself is your peace. What are you fighting God about today? What area of life are you refusing to surrender? The battle is already won—Christ is victorious. Stop fighting and experience His rest.

Day 4: Decide Before He Does

Reading: Joel 3:11-14; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Hebrews 9:27

Devotional: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." This haunting phrase describes not a place of choosing, but a place where choices have already been made. When you stand before God in judgment, it's too late to decide. The valley of decision is now—today, this moment. Scripture warns that after death comes judgment. There's no second chance, no opportunity to reconsider after you see Christ face to face. This isn't meant to frighten you into manipulation, but to awaken you to reality. Eternity is long. This life is short. Your decision about Jesus Christ determines everything. Have you truly surrendered your life to Him? Not just acknowledged Him, but given Him full control? Don't wait. Today is the day of salvation. Make your decision before He makes His.

Day 5: Mercy over Judgment

Reading: Ephesians 2:4, Joel 3:8

Devotional: Justice seems obvious and right. If someone does something wrong, there should be a consequence. Crime should be punished. Pain should be paid back. Most people appreciate justice. We like it when people get what they have coming, unless of course we are talking about ourselves! Mercy on the other hand doesn't really make sense. Why should someone not get what they have coming? What is the basis for not punishing someone who deserves it? Why wouldn't you fire someone who doesn't do their job? Thankfully, God is rich in mercy, and the reason He shows mercy is because He loves us. He cares for us. He wants to give us another chance and to see us grow. Because none of us are perfect, we all need mercy. Don't be afraid to ask God for mercy, but don't be stingy in giving mercy either. How might receiving mercy impact your relationship with God? And how might giving mercy change a relationship or situation this week?