

The Day of the Lord

Joel

Sermon Outline

- I. General observations.
 - A. The main message of Joel is *There is a coming judgement!*
 - B. Nothing is known about Joel.
 1. We don't know where he came from, where he is, who he's speaking to, what happened to him, etc.
 - C. Most likely—he's in the southern kingdom (Judah) specifically in Jerusalem.
 - D. "Joel" is made up of two Hebrew words: "Yo (or "Jo")" = Jehovah/Yahweh and "El" which means "Elohim" = God—"Yahweh is God"
 - E. All prophets in the Bible prophesied a near prophesy and far away prophesies.
 1. Near prophesies would concern the people the prophet was speaking to.
 2. Far away prophesies were prophesies that would take place in the far future, to another people.
- II. The locust invasion (chapter 1).
 - A. The setting for Joel is a massive locust invasion that has taken place.
 1. The invasion was a judgement from God.
 - B. Other accounts of locust.
 1. Exodus 10
 2. Deuteronomy 28
 - a. Lessons learned:
 1. ***God caused the locust invasions.***
 2. ***Calamity is designed and implemented to get one's attention!***
 - C. The locust invasion in Joel (Chapter 1).
 1. Locust in general.
 - a. "The incarnation of hunger".
 - b. There are accounts of a swarm of locust having 150 million locust per sq. mile, covering as much as 2000 sq. miles.

2. Joels locust-- **Gnawing, swarming, creeping, stripping**—the process of devastation.
3. God sent the locust judgement on His people to “AWAKEN” them (1:5).

PROSPERITY TENDS TO RESULT IN PEOPLE LEAVING GOD....CALAMITY TENDS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO GOD.

III. The day of the Lord.

A. General:

1. The day of the Lord is found throughout the Bible.
2. The day of the Lord is always a span of time during which God personally intervenes in history, directly or indirectly to accomplish some specific aspect of His plan. Most often the day of the Lord refers to the final day of the Lord at end of history.

B. The day of the Lord for Judah—the future Babylonian invasion.

1. The day of the Lord for Judah also can be attributed to the future final day of the Lord yet to come.

C. Repentance—the requirement to escape judgement.

1. Repentance means “to turn from”.
2. In Joel, repentance is a “change of heart” (2:12).
3. Every aspect of life:
 - a. Intellectual change—turning of the mind.
 - b. Emotional change—turning of affections.
 - c. Volitional change—turning of the will.
 - d. Behavioral change—turning the conduct.

D. The prophesy regarding the Holy Spirit (2:28-29) to prepare people for the day of the Lord. This began at Pentecost in Acts 2:16-21.

E. Salvation comes to those who “call upon the name of the Lord”.

1. Calling on the name of the Lord reveals we are in relationship with Him.
2. It is the process for salvation.

The Day of the Lord

Joel

Sermon Notes

Please begin searching your Old Testament for the Book of Joel... The last twelve books of the Bible are called the minor prophets... in our Bible, Joel is the second in the order following Hosea... Hosea follows the large major prophet Daniel...which is easy to find in your Bibles...

So if you find Daniel... go right two books...it's a very small book...only three chapters...70 verses... the pages may be stuck together for you probably have never opened this short book before...

That is not a put down or a criticism... it's just if you have ever started reading Joel... you may have wondered *what benefit is there reading this?*... this seems to be for a people far removed from my people.... well, this is one of the questions I hope to answer this morning... and to show you the relevance of this great little book to each and every one of us.

As you will see as we go through these minor prophets... they all have some similarities in their messages though each one is very unique and adds new dimensions in the recurring themes... in effect... Each of the minors build upon the other even though there are differences in time...audience...geography and situations.....

If you were with us last week as we went through the first of the minor prophets, Hosea... the overall message was **God WILL take you back**...regardless of your sin(s)... regardless of how far you've drifted away from Him...turn your back on Him...HE WANT'S YOU BACK!...and if you repent of your sins... HE WILL TAKE YOU BACK.

Just as Hosea demonstrated with the most amazing radical illustration of the prophet under instructions by God Himself... took a bride who was a prostitute... had three children with her... and she returned to a life of harlotry...denying her family, denying her children and husband... **AND YET**... God instructs Hosea to take her back... to be his wife again... as an illustration of God taking back His sinful, idolatrous people Israel.... And eventually us.

God will take you back....

So building on that...I'll just go ahead and give you the main message of Joel up front...**There WILL be judgment for sin**...this isn't just a message for the Israelites 2500 years ago... it has been the message throughout time... especially today.... And it will be the message until the final future judgement indeed comes.

There has been and there will be a Day of the Lord...which we will discuss a little later...

AS God had His prophet Hosea demonstrate His message through the picture of a prostitute... God uses a very vivid picture here through his prophet Joel...before we get into that... who's Joel?... we know NOTHING about Joel...

We don't know who he was.... Where he came from ... where he went... what happened to him... we don't absolutely know where he even prophesied from... or specifically who he was speaking to....we really have to scratch to get SOMETHING about Joel....

He's some of my scratchings...we know in verse 1 of chapter 1 that he had a dad named Pethuel...his name means "*vision of God*"... all we know about him was he was the father of Joel...

There is a little bit of evidence that Joel probably prophesied in the southern kingdom Judah...

[Remember Israel after Solomon divided into two kingdoms... the northern kingdom Israel (Ephraim) and the southern kingdom Judah... Both kingdoms were headed for God' judgment in the form of exile after being defeated by ominous foreign armies..... The Assyrians would conquer the northern kingdom of Israel first due to their flagrant idolatry....

136 years later... the southern kingdom would follow suit... being conquered by the Babylonians...Joel is prophesying to the southern kingdom warning them about this impending judgment... and calling on Judah to repent and return to the one true God.... After only two prophets are you starting to see an overall message?]

He's probably in Jerusalem... he refers to the temple) We also know something about Joel's name...It probably shouldn't be pronounced "Joel" but rather Jo-El... "Jo" refers to Jehovah...or better Yahweh.... "El" refers to "Elohim" the Hebrew name for God... so Joel's name means "Jehovah, or Yahweh is God"...

But they would not have pronounced it as Jo-El back in the day... Hebrew does not recognize the "J" sound... so it most likely was pronounced Yo-El...so what about this book?... what's the picture?

Keep this in mind... this is true for all the prophets in the Bible... major and minor prophets.. let me illustrate it this way... a great day for me is when my optometrist told me I needed "*progressive lenses*"....

After 45 I went from perfect vision to needing glasses.... But I was in a mess... I couldn't see distant OR up close... the old solution would have been bifocals...[think Ben Franklin]...the new solution is "*Progressive lenses*"... the bottom of the lens lets me read... the upper 2/3 of the lens lets me see distances...

In all the prophets... there is an "up close" prophesy and a "distant prophesy"... the prophets are like progressive lenses letting us see into both... SO... in the day the prophet lived... he warned the people of his day of impending judgement..... but at the same time... he's warning people of a later era of impending judgment....

So these prophesies are not just for the people of that day.... They are for us as well!... the entire prophesy of Joel is built around a pesky critter called the locust... Joel begins with the prophet being told by God to talk to His people about what had happened... what happened?

There was a massive locust invasion in Judah... this is past tense... this is not a warning about an impending locust invasion... it is a warning that God has made a judgement on His people... and they had better take notice because if they continue on the road they are on.... There will be worse judgment on their way... we'll get to that but what about locusts and this locust invasion?

Read 1:1-3

Has anything like this happened in your day or your father's day?.... the implication is the right answer would be "no"... this is the most devastating thing to have happened..... but in fact... something like it had happened in their father's day.

Remember the eighth plague of Moses and the Pharaoh?... Exodus 10...let me read you some of that...

Read Exodus 10:1-5; 11b-12; 15;

The reason I wanted you to look at that is because it gives us insight into something very important..... it holds true in Joel...it holds true in all of life!:

1. **God caused the locust invasion... "I will bring locust into your territory...."** It is a judgment on Pharaoh and on Egypt. It speaks on God's sovereignty over all of His creation.

2. **Calamity can get one's attention! Calamity** (disasters, tragic situations... by definition *a state of deep distress or misery caused by major misfortune or loss.* **Calamity can bring one to his knees...Calamity can cause repentance....** In other words... God causes calamity in people's lives to change their course and bring them to *His* will.....

Exodus 10:16-19

One more place...Deuteronomy 28...bear with me these are important passages, important principles... three books to the west...Deuteronomy means "The Second Law"...it is the second giving of the law by Moses as he prepares his nation to enter into the Promised Land... Moses goes into great length detailing all that goes into obeying God's Laws.....

When we get to chapter 28...after 21 chapters of fleshing out the Law... Moses reveals what happens if the nation is in obedience to the Law.... And what happens if they are disobedient... note the blessings take up 14 verses.... The curses for disobedience take up 50 verses!...just saying!

Deuteronomy 1:1.... **Now it WILL be....THIS IS GOING TO HAPPEN...**one of two outcomes:

Read Deut. 1:1 -2

And then he lists the blessings..... OR **Read Deut. 28:15-20** and on and on and on!... and this: **Read 38; 42.**

Back to Joel... This is what HAS happened:

Read Joel 1:4-7

Picture this... the sky turns black... it's not rain clouds!... it's locusts... in broad daylight... the sky turns black when locust swarm... I had no negative feelings about locust when I started my study of Joel....

My grandparents lived in the Imperial Valley at the very bottom of California... just a few miles from Mexico...it is hot...dry... mostly miserable.... It is one of the great salad baskets of the world because of irrigation from the Colorado river... it is an area that has been compared to the Holy Lands in Israel both in climate and topography..... and locusts!

I would visit and on occasion so did the locusts... my grandparents front yard had many fruit trees... when the locust were there they were black... but we liked them!...My cousins and I (ages 8-12) would catch a locust.... Tie a string around its body and fly them like airplanes!.... they would just go in circles....we had no idea they were damaging to the fruit trees!

But locust are not good!... there are historical accounts of 150 million locust per square mile... covering at one time an area of 2000 square miles!... locusts have been called "*The Incarnation of Hunger*"... Every speck of greenery.... Down to every blade of grass is consumed by invading locusts.... It is literally "scorched earth warfare."

I don't usually show pictures in my sermons... but I think this might help...There are several kinds of locust...the cicada is a locust...but when you think of the "biblical locust"...think this **[SHOW PICTURE]**... We know it as a "grasshopper".... Specifically the locust in the Bible were the "short-horned *grasshopper*"...

Back in 1915 was the last major, major locust invasion in Israel... It decimated thousands of farmland acreage...National Geographic back in the day did a photo issue of the before and after the invasion....

[Show tree picture]... this is a tree before the locust arrived.... this is what the tree looked like after the invasion **[Show final picture]**.

Gnawing, swarming, creeping, stripping.... This is not a description of four different kinds of locusts.... This is the description of the process and phases of destruction of consuming vegetation... what one locust left...another one came in and devoured.... What that locust left... another one came in and devoured....until the vegetation was decimated.

What Joel is describing is much like the vivid picture of the Japanese man walking with his son in Hiroshima after the nuclear devastation...nothing left!.... everything is destroyed!.... Joel says...1:16

Has food not been cut off before our eyes, and

Joy and rejoicing from the house of our God?

17 The seeds have dried up under their shovels;

The storehouses have become desolate,

**The grain silos are ruined,
Because the grain has dried up.**

18 How the animals have groaned!

**The herds of cattle have wandered aimlessly
Because there is no pasture for them;
Even the flocks of sheep have suffered.**

This is Deuteronomy 28 fulfilled!... this is God's judgement on His people.... make no mistake about it... this wasn't simply an act of nature... this was God bringing judgement on His defiant, lawless, idolatrous people (who played the harlot!).

Really?... God did that?...yes He did!... chapter 2:25... comparing the locust invasion to "a great military force... God says **My great military force which I sent among you** Why did He do that?... Why the judgement?... or maybe a better question..... **why didn't He just annihilate all His people for their disobedience?**..... why all the calamity?...why the destruction?

God doesn't want to destroy His people... He wants them back!....(remember Hosea)...He wants to turn them around....to come back to Him.... He wants to get their attention.... That's why in verse 5 He starts with **AWAKE!**.... WAKE UP!

"I sent this tragic devastating event to happen to you to get your attention".... Back to Exodus 10... God caused the locust invasion.... God uses calamity to wake us up!... to move us back in the right direction in a relationship of obedience to Him.

This week Doug was sharing with me a movie he watched... one of the scenes was a man talking to a priest... the man asked THE big question...."*Why does God allow bad things happen to "good" people?*.... the priest answered"I don't know"...

Now there's an honest..... but worthless priest!...first of all there are no "good" people.... but God allows bad things happen to people to bring them to Him... if they are straying... get their attention and bring them back... if they aren't straying.... To get them to rely on Him.

Fact: PROSPERITY TENDS TO RESULT IN PEOPLE LEAVING GOD....CALAMITY TENDS TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO GOD.

[I'm not saying all difficult things that happen in life are judgements from God... no... But God is in control of all things... all things happen according to His will... He uses, puts, and allows difficulties in our lives to form us into enduring people of God.... Gut when His people turn their hearts away from Him... he often tightens the thumbscrews and brings on judgement]

[today I think God is judging this country...or more specifically the church for looking so much like our country...A major portion of this country professed having faith in the true God... and yet like Israel... they have turned their back on God...]

Look at some of the pictures here:

Read verse 5

All the vineyards have been eaten up.... No wine... the priest are mourning... why?

Read verse 9

The elements for worship... the offerings are all gone!... they can't worship!...the farmers are wailing...

Read verses 11-12a

how horrible is this?

Read verse 8...a young girl about to be married... the bridegroom of her youth dies... pretty sad?!... in the Bible when you read about sack cloth...sack cloth was usually sack made of black goat hair...it was very uncomfortable to wear... that's one of the points...the tradition of wearing black at funerals comes from this...

Sackcloth represents mourning, sorrow, grief... usually from the death of a loved one... it also can represent sorrow over sin resulting in repentance as in verse 13.....**read verse 13**

There is no more joy in the land!...**Indeed rejoicing dries up from the sons of men**.... now... all this is to get their attention... but there is more... it is a warning that more is on the way...

Read verse 14-15

You think the locusts were a judgment... just you wait... for the Day of Yahweh is near... The Day of the Lord...Joel repeats this term 4 more times...

2:1 For the day of the Lord is coming.

2:11 The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome...

2:31 Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

3:14 For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

let's talk about this....The day of the Lord... it's found all over the entire Bible... it usually identifies events that take place at the end of history... (Isaiah 7:18-25) it is always a span of time during which God personally intervenes in history...directly or indirectly to accomplish some specific aspect of His plan.....and it is linked to repentance and redemption.

Do you hear the sense of urgency in Joel?.... **THE DAY OF THE LORD IS NEAR**.... Gird yourselves in sackcloth (REPENT!)... fast... **assemble together in the house of the Lord**.... Get ready!....it's imminent!

Blow the trumpet! (2:1) *Make an announcement to everybody!* This is important!... now remember the progressive glasses... up close... Judah is devastated by God's judgement from locusts.... As you look up the lens... a near future event is going to take place... A day of the Lord for Judah.... And for Israel for that matter...

Unless Judah and Israel repents... turns from their idolatrous disobedient ways...their sin...
There is a day of the Lord on the horizon...(about this far up the progressive glasses....)

Read 2:2-3

Looming for Israel is the mighty Assyrian army...for Judah, the mighty Babylonians... it is inevitable if they don't repent!..... moving up on the progressive glasses is a bigger picture of a future event... the greatest day of the Lord in all of history... the final day of the Lord... so this warning... this prophesy is for us as well!.....something changes in verse 4... listen carefully:

Read verses 2 & 4-11

If Joel was describing the Babylonian army...HE knew what they were like... he wouldn't have said **Their appearance is LIKE the appearance of horses**.... LIKE war horses.... LIKE chariots....LIKE mighty men...there's a lot of "LIKES" here!

I think.... And many others think,.. Joel uses the word "Like" because this army isn't going to be made up of horses... or chariots... or like mighty men... these are terms he WOULD have used if he was referring to the Babylonian army.... They would be using chariots... not something LIKE a chariot...

He uses these words because these are the words he knows... He's never seen an F-14... or an Apache helicopter that can make **the earth tremble and the heavens quake**.... **This army leaps on the tops of the mountains!**

There is a day of the Lord on our horizon... where God is going to judge... so this is an urgent call to all of us and everyone around us... **get right with God!**... I don't know the time schedule of the return of our Lord...I hope premillennials are right... I don't know when He will come and take His church...

I do know there has never been a time in history where everything matched up so well to what the Bible calls the very last days... People, we could be literally 7-10 years away from *the* day of the Lord...He could rapture His church at any moment...no notice... 7 years of tribulation and then THERE IT IS! ...the day of the Lord!...Jesus returns....we could be there!...or not

Joel is packed with prophesy of the end times... but I want us to see a few vital things... **Joel most of all is a call for repentance**... Judgment is coming... it hasn't happened because God is verse 13...**gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, and relenting concerning evil**....

Read verses 12-13a

This is repentance...the most common O.T. words used for repentance is "*shub*" (used over 140 times) which means "**turn**"...the idea is to do a turnabout...setting a new direction away from evil and toward the Lord.

Another word means "**to change one's mind**"...here verse 12 says **return to me with all your heart**...I take that to mean it involves more than just a change of mind.

There are theologians...you may have been in a church or even a seminary... that do not believe repentance to be a vital part of salvation... that repentance does not involve any sorrow for one's sin (Lewis Sperry Chafer)... *repentance could be just a synonym for "belief"*... as Charles Ryrie claims repentance is simply *a change in what one thinks about Christ*.

In fact... this is right out of his book *Basic Theology* sitting on my bookshelf: *Repentance—a genuine, not superficial, **change in mind about something** which is followed by some change.*

SOMETHING?... yeah... YOUR PATHETIC SIN!

Joel 2:12 suggest otherwise! **RETURN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART... WITH FASTING...WEEPING...AND WAILING.....wow..... and tear your heart... not your garments....**

In that day when one tore his garment... it was an OUTWARD display of grief... In this case grief over one's sin...God sees past the outer man all the way to the heart... it's easy to look religious... act religious... tear your clothes for an impression... But tear your heart!....repent for your sins!

Repentance is not just a change in mind... "it involves a change in the entire person! And one's ENTIRE outlook on life...people do not only repent of their false beliefs...but they repent also of their deeds!...their sins.

Revelation 2:22... John writes his letter to the church at Thyatira... God's complaint of this church was they tolerated the sin of Jezebel... God said "**I gave her (Jezebel) time to repent, and she does not wish to repent of her sexual immorality.... SO...**

22 Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of [a]her deeds. JUDGMENT!...Judgement can be averted through repentance.

Every aspect of life:

1. Intellectual change—turning of the mind.
2. Emotional change—turning of affections.
3. Volitional change—turning of the will.
4. Behavioral change—turning the conduct.

The entire person.

When the preaching of Christ crucified and risen again cut the crowds in Jerusalem to the heart and they cried "**what shall we do?**"...Peter said "**REPENT!**" and promised forgiveness only to those who did so (Acts 2:38). I have to throw a puritan in here...

William Perkins—"Genuine repentance is "an inward and true sorrow for sin, especially that we have offended so gracious a God, and so loving a Father; together with a settled purpose of

heart, and careful endeavor to leave all our sins, and to live a Christian life according to all God's commandments".

Repentance is both turning from sin and turning to God... turning from darkness to light...from the power of Satan unto God...

The central thrust of repentance is turning from the defiling dominance of our self love to love the Lord with all our hearts...[Joel Beeke]

Over and over we will be warned by the minor prophets...*no repentance there WILL BE JUDGMENT!*

In repentance is restoration... restoration of a wayward people back to being God's people... for Judah...this didn't happen... they ultimately did not repent... but there will come a time they will... and when that happens:

Read verses 2:18-19; 25-27

Looking near the top of the progressive lens.... Something truly amazing... way in the future for Judah.... But it began to happen a couple thousand years ago....still going on today and will continue until the end of the millennium...

Read verses 28-29

"I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind"....The Holy Spirit...we immediately think The day of Pentecost in Acts 2...but Acts 2 is not the full fulfillment of this prophesy...only the beginning... Peter, in Acts 2 says the same thing...

Read Acts 2:14-21

Today the Holy Spirit is available to any and everyone on the entire planet... rich people, poor people, yellow, brown, black and white people.... the Holy Spirit is available... the work of the Holy Spirit:

Works in the hearts of all people everywhere...knows no distinctions... Jesus told the disciples that He would send the Spirit into the world to "*convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment*"...CONVICTION LEADS TO REPENTENCE... It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to repent of our sins... to have that heart to do so.

He is our encourager... He helps us understand God's Word... He leads us... He is the ultimate guide, going before, leading the way, removing obstructions, opening the understanding, and making things plain and clear.

God is pouring out His Spirit today... **I will pour out My Spirit in THOSE DAYS**.... Today is those days... the Holy Spirit is to prepare us for the great coming of the day of the Lord!

Read verse 31-32a

Calling on the name of the Lord...

1. Shows we have a relationship with God... we call on His name... [if someone yells at me "Hey you!"... I'm most likely not in a relationship with that person.... But if he calls me by name... it suggest he knows me... we have some relationship...

2. It is the process for salvation—to call is to ask Jesus into your heart.

But this meaning goes deeper... it signifies being a member of God's family... being one of His.... The apostle Paul quotes this passage in Joel in Romans 10:12-13—

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

We're past out of time... quickly... chapter three confirms there WILL be coming judgement... this has NOT happened yet... a day of reckoning.... It includes a great war... where God gathers all the nations together for judgement... everyone who is against God will be eager for war...

And God basically says.... "BRING IT ON!"(Rev. 16) verse 10 **Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears** (the opposite of Isaiah 2!)

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision

They are not there to make a decision for God..... NO!... they are there to get God's decision about them!...NO!!! IT'S TOO LATE!.....JUDGMENT!

Take homes:

1. Disasters and calamity are often messages from God... God uses calamity to get your attention... to shake you up... to bring you back. *Affliction has done its work if it brings you to your knees!* And if you are defiant... the affliction will worsen.

He may come at you economically... relationally...physically...at work or in your health...
"AWAKEN! LISTEN TO ME!

Some of us are so thick headed it takes forty blows to the head to get our attention...starting with a stick... then a 2X4...to a 4X4 to a freight train!...for God to get our attention.

Famous words from A.W. Tozer... *"It is doubtful that God can use anyone greatly until He has hurt him deeply."*

2. Repent! Repentance for salvation... repentance for restoration... we are all sinners... we all need to repent.

Charles Finberg.. great theologian of the past... I got to sit under him right before he died... he said *"There is always the possibility of God's displeasure being turned into His favor...when His people come low before Him.*

3. When God restores... He does so abundantly.... "Then I will pay back to you the full of the years that the swarming locusts have consumed!... my goodness... just the freedom from guilt and shame alone!

And you will have PLENTY to consume and be satisfied and praise the name of Yahweh your God.