

## **Week 10 | Joel 1:15-20 “The Lament of Solidarity”**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Previously in **Joel 1:8-14** (week #8, #9) we heard Joel’s great desire for God’s people to come before the Lord in mourning, lamentation, and deep sorrow (*like bride who’s been bereaved of her betrothed husband*).
- B. But it’s here in **Joel 1:15-20** that we learn about the specifics of their lament, and Joel’s personal prayer to God.

### **II. THE DAY OF THE LORD HAS COME (JOEL 1:15)**

- 1. **Joel 1:15** *Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*
- B. Now that the *priests, the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land* have been gathered together, Joel rightly begins to address the situation, starting with Who’s responsible for the destruction among them.
- C. Joel’s called them to significant mourning, asking the spiritual leaders to wear sackcloth instead of their priestly garments, and to lie all night before God. And as the prophet has their attention, he gives them the compelling evidence of why their response to God is to be so disruptive to the normative flow of life.
- D. It’s clear, this is no locust plague that’s responsible for the destruction, and the devastation among them; it’s God. It’s the Almighty, a day of destruction, coming from Yahweh Himself. Their response to the crisis is so disruptive, because they are dealing with the Lord (**Isaiah 13:6; Ezekiel 30:2-3; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7**).
  - 1. This is *devastation*, from the *Devastator*; a *shattering* from *Shaddai* (*destruction and Almighty use the same Hebrew root word; shadd*).
  - 2. The Church is quick to talk about satan and his role, and even sinful man and his role in the destruction of society, but we are very slow to talk about God and His role, God and His judgements among the nations.
- E. The fact that Joel doesn’t give this day any explanation, other than saying it, speaks to the reality that his readers were well aware of the day of the Lord, and its implications.
  - 1. Where is the knowledge of this DAY among the Church now? Where is the knowledge of the Day of the Lord among God’s family? Why is this day treated with such contempt within God’s household?
    - a. **2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:3-4, 9,11-12** *“...Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation...The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness...Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the come of the day of God...”*

2. Among the many reasons we should care about the Day of the Lord is because offense will run rampant among the Church in the days ahead, as many followers of Jesus become offended at Him and His leadership over the nations of the earth (**2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:3; Heb. 12:25-28**);
  - a. **Philippians 1:9-10** *“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ...”*
- F. What’s so shocking, and maybe even silencing among Joel’s audience, and by way intention, is Joel’s use of the day of the Lord. The nation of Israel always understood this Day, as a day of vengeance among the ungodly gentile nations, but it was very uncommon to think about this day coming upon Israel, upon God’s family.
- G. Thomas Edward McComiskey says, *“Joel ransacked the prophetic literature to find a startling, and shocking term to awaken Israel to the seriousness/gravity of their present and future situation.”*
- H. Israel understood that the Day of the Lord was against evil, but what they stopped short at, was understanding it as a day against **ALL EVIL**, including theirs. Like most people, they always assumed it was about someone else, but never them.
  1. The most terrifying thing wasn’t the devastation among them; IT WAS THAT THIS present destruction was only a harbinger of things to come. If God’s family didn’t rightly respond to God through returning to Him, confession of sin, and mourning over their condition, it would only get worse. *If we will repent, God will relent.*

### III. AS GOES THE CHURCH, SO GOES THE NATION (JOEL 1:16-18)

1. **Joel 1:16-18** *“Is not the food cut off from before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; barns are broken down, for the grain has withered. How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.*
- B. It’s my belief that our cities are a reflection in large part, of the Church. We assume that God’s judgment touches cities, and regions, because of the non-believer, and though that’s true in part, I think it’s truer that God touches cities, regions and nations because of the Church (**Prov. 11:10**).
- C. The prophet now speaks to their minds, asking them to look around, to survey the land, the natural situation, to take in the scope of the disaster among them, and for them to make up their own minds.
  1. *“Guys, gals, it’s clear, isn’t it, this isn’t simply a locust invasion, a freak accident or mother nature; this has come from the hands of Father God. This isn’t a 1,000-year flood, or a once in a lifetime regional disruption; this is God, isn’t it?” -Joel*
- D. **It’s Before Our Eyes**—The nation of Israel sits utterly helpless to prevent the great travesty among them, this day of the Lord, as these locusts, driven by the hand of God take over everything. This is God reminding His covenant people of their pride, and inability to stop God’s mighty hand, especially among them.

- E. The Seed Shrivels Under The Clods—The judgment had moved beyond them, and was now touching their future crops. The seed was dying under the dried up, crusty dirt clods of their parched fields. It's bad enough to lose the present crops but having to relinquish a future harvest is demoralizing; but it was intentional.
- F. Storehouses Are In Shambles; Barns Are Broken Down, For The Grain Has Withered—The barns are now worthless items on the farm and of no use whatsoever. They are turning into waste because they are no longer needed. What was to be stored up for next year, is nowhere to be found.
- G. How The Animals Groan! The Herds Of Cattle Are Restless; Because They Have No Pasture; Even The Flocks Of Sheep Suffer Punishment—From the disheveled storehouses, Joel points out the empty fields, the animals and all the livestock.
1. Joel is a fellow sufferer alongside them, *"...the house of OUR God..."*, and in great tenderness Joel is mourning together with the animals, who are suffering greatly.
  2. **Romans 8:20-22, 26** *"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because creation itself will also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together till now...Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession which cannot be uttered."*
  3. The purpose of God touching that which was precious to them, their livelihood, was so that they would lift up their eyes and no longer set them on the temporal, but on the eternal, on Him! Their/ours temptation in this place, is to return and work harder to restore that which has been destroyed by the judgment.
    - a. *"When we lose our gifts, we should find the Giver, and when we lose our streams, we should find our Fountain."*—Anonymous

#### IV. THE UNIFIED LAMENT OF SOLIDARITY (JOEL 1:19-20)

1. **Joel 1:19-20** *"O Lord, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field also cry out to You for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures."*
- B. In the middle of stripped fields, ransacked cities, broken silos, lost crops, and groaning animals, Joel doesn't work to put an agricultural plan in place, he doesn't gather the civic leaders to find the best path forward. On the contrary, Joel comes before God and prays! As the cause of their judgment, He's also the only solution.
- C. Joel is making it clear that in a season of national calamity God's family must cry out to God! There's nobody else to intervene and break in. To take their frustration out on the locust, or the parched fields, would be to fight against God; it's futile.
1. Even in our season of national, and international calamity, be mindful who's voice you listen to. Be mindful who's opinions you take in. If God's behind the crisis, than it's God that we have to cry out to.

- D. If the animals are lamenting before God, how much more so should God's family, whom He's called directly to lament come before Him? If these dumb, mindless creatures could understand the judgment of God in the land, couldn't the priests, couldn't the elders, couldn't God's covenant inhabitants?
- E. One thing Israel was well aware of was their water being cut off from their enemies throughout their history. This was an important strategy to defeat God's family, and God's family against their enemies, but now, a more threatening, more ominous, more punishing Foe/Lover was cutting off their water; it was Yahweh, God Almighty (**Genesis 26:18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 3:19, 25; 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 32:4**).

**Joel 1:19**

**Joel 1:20**

**Joel 1:19a**—*O Lord, to You I cry out*

**Joel 1:20a**—*The beasts of the field cry out to You*

**Joel 1:19b**—*For fire has ruined the open pastures*    **Joel 1:20b**—*The water brooks are dried up*

**Joel 1:19c**—Flames burned the tress of the field    **Joel 1:20c**—*Fire devoured the open pastures*

- F. Even the animals are in solidarity with man—they are both suffering under the judgments of God among them. A land once flowing with milk and honey, has now been reduced to want, privation, and futility. Once strong, now weak. Once feeding others, now unable to feed itself. Once prosperous, now poor. Once at the top, now at the back.