

**The Day of the Lord
Or a Really Bad Day to Be an Unbeliever
Joel 1: 13 – 20**

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When last together, we ended in verse 14 and the call to consecrate a fast. The idea of a consecrated fast is a new concept for Judah. God had given them feast days but not fasting days, until they fell into sin.

Joel tells of only one sin, the intentional impairing of their minds and judgement by becoming drunks. This sin was preventing them from making good decisions.

Were there other things going on? We will look at a few other places in the scriptures that address this time period.

What Joel reports on is that in Judah, rather than deal with the reality of the current culture and the problems in it caused by Athaliah's illegitimate rule, the nation opted instead to place themselves into a state of altered consciousness vis-à-vis drinking.

This is no different than our current culture doing the same, rather than dealing with the realities of the evil around us, the culture asks for and indulges in mind altering substances. This causes the same issues seen in Judah. When you sober up, reality is still there.

We know from Revelation 9:20 that the yielding oneself to mind altering substances is an event in the culture that gets worse, not better. It is one of the primary characteristics of the culture of the beast in the last days.

Even after all the seal judgements and most of the trumpet judgements have taken place, those following the beast are still into mind altering substances.

Revelation 9:20–21

“The rest of humanity, all those who had not been killed by these plagues, did not turn away from what they themselves had made. They did not stop worshipping demons, nor the idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, hear, or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic, their sexual immorality, or their stealing.” (GNB)

The Greek word translated as magic is the word pharmakeia. There is more to this than just the implied usage of drugs in order to approach demons and fallen angels in worship.

The word pharmakeia (and its cognates) can be a neutral, generic term for the use of drugs, but more often it has the negative connotation of drugs and potions supplied by a sorcerer or magician. It is also used to refer to poisons and mind-disturbing drugs. In Soranos’s Gynecology, it refers specifically to the use of one type of evil drug, the abortifacient. The word pharmakeia itself, then, can mean the use of drugs, evil or magical drugs themselves, or a specific evil drug such as a poison or an abortifacient. (Gorman 1998, 48)

Judah had not yet gone all in with sorcery (magic) or idolatry, but the northern kingdom had. They had, by this time, gone all in on Baal worship and child sacrifice up north. Elisha was a contemporary of Joel.

The concept was not foreign in Judah. There was an awareness of the child sacrifice which had been engaged in by Baal worshipers who were following the leadership of Ahab and Jezebel, Queen Athaliah’s parents. Even though Joel does not reference it, we see 2 Chronicles reference Baal worship in connection with Athaliah.

When her son was killed after being King for only a year, she went further than her mother Jezebel ever did and usurped power for herself using assassination to secure that power. She attempted to kill off the Davidic line and came close to succeeding. However, one male baby of about a year in age, was bundled off into hiding in the Temple and was hidden for the next 6 years.

During that time, Athaliah pushed Baal worship onto an unwilling people. This was not Israel, but Judah and Temple worship never ended.

Her initial attempt to end the Davidic line was foiled by the High Priest. For 6 years she thought she had succeeded in killing off the line. But hidden in the Temple was Joash who took over as King at the age of 7 with the High Priest as regent.

As we covered last week, it appears that the locust invasion either precipitated the overthrow of Athaliah, or closely followed it. But a point was reached where it was time to deal with her and the High Priest had her put to death in the name of the King.

We read the following once the Davidic line was reestablished.

2 Chronicles 24:1–7

“Joash was seven years old when he began to reign. He reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah, who was from Beer Sheba. Joash did what the LORD approved throughout the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. Jehoiada chose two wives for him who gave him sons and daughters. Later, Joash was determined to repair the LORD’s temple. He assembled the priests and Levites and ordered them, “Go out to the cities of Judah and collect the annual quota of silver from all Israel for repairs on the temple

of your God. Be quick about it!" But the Levites delayed. So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest, and said to him, "Why have you not made the Levites collect from Judah and Jerusalem the tax authorized by Moses the LORD's servant and by the assembly of Israel at the tent containing the tablets of the law?" (Wicked Athaliah and her sons had broken into God's temple and used all the holy items of the LORD's temple in their worship of the Baals.)" (NET 2nd ed.)

Joel does not make reference to that, but Baal worship was something being actively foisted onto the people. Adding that, and the locust invasion together, and we arrive at a tipping point, Joel's call for fasting and repentance.

Joel 1:13–14

"Put on sackcloth And mourn, you priests; Wail, you ministers of the altar! Come, spend the night in sackcloth, You ministers of my God, For the grain offering and the drink offering Have been withheld from the house of your God. Consecrate a fast, Proclaim a solemn assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land To the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD." (NASB 2020)

As we learned last time, the destruction of all of the crops, caused by the locust invasion, is a catastrophe. It may have been the last straw leading to the overthrow of Athaliah.

This has laser focused the nation on one thing, "God as the only source of hope in such a crisis. Fasting and prayer are both acts of devotion that recognize in humility the power of God that holds possibilities for the future beyond those that seem within human power." (Birch 1997, 138)

There is hope in this call. God is ready and willing to rescue if the people will humble themselves.

As believers in Christ, we know, based on our study of the Word, that judgement is coming for this world. This causes some fear in some, but as believers, we should never cringe at the judgment of God. "The child in a right relationship with loving parents does not live in terror. Instead, he finds life and joy through the disciplines of a father and mother who love him. In a similar way, even the most difficult times of life should be characterized by hope in the Lord's ultimate blessing. For though this first message of Joel may seem glum and depressing, it actually is opening the way to hope and restoration." (Robertson 1995, 35)

If Judah repents, God will rescue them. Even though all looks to be desperate right now, it is not as bad as it could be.

This event is something that God has done. He is still on the throne and in full control. This is also a picture of something that is going to come to the entire planet at a future date. It is a type of the Day of the Lord.

Joel 1:15

"Woe for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty." (NASB 2020)

When we see this term, the Day of the Lord, used, we realize that the idea "is that this is Gods' time. Man has his "day," and the LORD has His day. In the ultimate sense, the day of the LORD is fulfilled with(sic) Jesus judges the earth and returns in glory. In a lesser sense, a time of judgment as Judah experienced with the locusts and drought is also an example of the day of the LORD." (Guzik 2000, Joel 1:15-20)

We are currently living in what the Bible calls, the times of the gentiles. In fact, Jesus Himself made a statement concerning this time of the gentiles including evidence that we are in it and a definitive statement of when it will eventually end.

It all has to do with Jerusalem, how the nations treat it and the rescue of His people who have prayed for rescue when He returns as the avenger of blood as Armageddon rages and the beast attempts to achieve the genocide of all Jews worldwide.

Let's examine this term, the Day of the Lord.

As believers in Christ, the scriptures are very clear that we who believe today, prior to His return for the church, also known as the rapture of the Church, will not be subjected to the Day of the Lord. We also know it is not just a day but a time period.

Paul makes this crystal clear in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 & 10. "For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 5:1–10

"Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him." (ESV)

The Day of the Lord will take the world by surprise, but for those of us waiting and watching for Jesus, we are anticipating this to happen once we are gone.

The Day of the Lord "is a time of divine intervention into the affairs of men. This phenomenon has taken place historically, which is but a picture of that future intervention of judgment beginning at the Tribulation. The "light" or blessing aspect of the Day will be experienced during the Kingdom age after Israel has been brought to repentance in keeping with the "unconditional" nature of the OT promises." (Hullinger 2015, 101)

That historical example of the day of the Lord is here in Joel involving locusts and drought. The only hope Judah had, was to turn to the Lord and repent. This is no different than the hope we have. We too must turn to the Lord, repent and rely on Him to rescue us, just as Judah did.

Our hope is this, that at any point of the day or night, our Lord Jesus Christ will come for us. He promised to "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (John 14:3, ESV)

1 Thessalonians 4:15–18

"For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words." (ESV)

When Jesus removes His body, the church from this planet, that clears the way for the Day of the Lord to begin.

The Thessalonian church understood this to be the case. Paul made it clear to them that they would not be subjected to the wrath of God. Their confusion was making connections that did not exist between persecution from the world and the wrath of God connected with the Day of the Lord.

Paul pointed that out to them making it clear that the Day of the Lord will not start as long as the church is still here.

I believe that Jesus saw our generation as the terminal generation. The events that He described in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 & 25) as well as in Luke 17, are all converging in terms of fulfillment in this current time.

We are rapidly approaching the time that would see the time of gentile come to an end.

Luke 21:24–27

“They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away as captives among all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth nations will be in distress, anxious over the roaring of the sea and the surging waves. People will be fainting from fear and from the expectation of what is coming on the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man arriving in a cloud with power and great glory.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The nations on earth in distress...check.

Signs and wonders in the sky...check

NASA is actively working on developing the capability to redirect asteroids. (Dunbar 2018)

Sunspot activity has increased and currently in June 2022, there is concern over a sunspot pointed directly at earth that doubled in size in 24 hours. (Turner 2022)

By the way, we are not only talking about astronomical phenomena, but phenomena associated with the prince of the power of the air...Satan (Ephesians 2:2). If we examine the so-called UFO abduction theories, we see something interesting. “The thousands of contacts with the entities indicate that they are liars and put-on artists. The UFO manifestations seem to be, by and large, merely minor variations of the age-old demonological phenomenon.” (Keel 2013, 326)

Are we approaching the time being discussed here in Joel? I would say yes.

Again, the church; let me rephrase that, true believers in Jesus Christ, will not be here when it does start.

When the time of the gentiles closes, which takes place at the end of the Tribulation, it is also when Jesus Christ returns in power as the avenger of blood to rescue His people, the Jews from being completely wiped out.

Zechariah 13:8–9

“It will happen in all the land”, says the LORD, “that two-thirds of the people in it will be cut off and die, but one-third will be left in it. Then I will bring the remaining third into the fire; I will refine them like silver is refined and will test them like gold is tested. They will call on my name and I will answer; I will say, ‘These are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’ ” (NET 2nd ed.)

When His people do the same as they are being asked to do by Joel, repent and return, He responds.

Revelation 19:11–14

“Then I saw heaven opened and here came a white horse! The one riding it was called “Faithful” and “True,” and with justice he judges and goes to war. His eyes are like a fiery flame and there are many diadem crowns on his head. He has a name written that no one knows except himself. He is dressed in clothing dipped in blood, and he is called the Word of God. The armies that are in heaven, dressed in white, clean, fine linen, were following him on white horses.” (NET 2nd ed.)

He is coming back to rescue His people. In Joel they are to repent and mourn asking that He do that for them. They will do this at the end of the age as well and He returns.

Isaiah 63:1–4

“Who is this who comes from Edom, dressed in bright red, coming from Bozrah? Who is this one wearing royal attire, who marches confidently because of his great strength? “It is I, the one who announces vindication, and who is able to deliver!” Why are your clothes red? Why do you look like someone who has stomped on grapes in a vat? “I have stomped grapes in the winepress all by myself; no one from the nations joined me. I stomped on them in my anger; I trampled them down in my rage. Their juice splashed on my garments. and stained all my clothes. For I looked forward to the day of vengeance, and then payback time arrived.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Zechariah 14:3–4

“Then the LORD will go to battle and fight against those nations, just as he fought battles in ancient days. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives that lies to the east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, leaving a great valley. Half the mountain will move northward and the other half southward.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Zechariah 14:12–14

“But this will be the nature of the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will decay while they stand on their feet, their eyes will rot away in their sockets, and their tongues will dissolve in their mouths. On that day there will be great confusion from the LORD among them; they will seize each other and attack one another violently. Moreover, Judah will fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered up—gold, silver, and clothing in great abundance.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Those graphic word pictures drawn for us in the scriptures are just some of what the Day of the Lord is all about.

The basic picture being provided for us is the situation in Judah, with the locusts and the devastation they have left, being a type of the Day of the Lord. A picture in advance. This will not be the only time the nation will see a hopeless situation turning into rescue by repenting and returning to the Lord.

This term, the Day of the Lord, will show up four more times in the book of Joel, 2:1, 11,31 and 3:14 and 19 more times in the Old Testament, where it appears in the same context as seen here in Joel, in Isaiah 2:12, 13:6, 9, 34:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5, 30:3; Amos 5:18 (x2), 5:20; Obadiah 15, Zephaniah 1:7, 8, 14, 18, 2:2, 2:3; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5. The term is also used another 5 times in the New Testament, Acts 2:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:10.

This term “became a technical term for a great day on which YHWH would intervene in a unique way to judge either Israel or foreign nations.” (Barton 2011, 59)

Your homework assignment, there won't be an exam by the way, is to spend the next week reading and meditating on this theme as we see it developed throughout the Bible.

As you do so, you will be finding for yourself “there is absolutely no doubt that the day of the Lord is a major doctrine of Scripture. There should be no question that the biblical judgments in the day of the Lord have not happened especially to the degree as described in God's Word. To say these divine judgments have occurred in the past and are already fulfilled or perhaps are being fulfilled is a rather naïve and shallow view of the Text.” (Olander 2009, 97)

Are there really some who think this already took place? Yes. There are some who teach and believe that the Day of the Lord took place around the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD. One who believes and teaches that is called a preterist.

They believe that the “prophecies regarding the “antichrist,” “tribulation,” and “day of the Lord” were fulfilled in the middle of the first century. Jesus Christ did return—not physically, but spiritually, and not to reign, but to judge. But most preterists do believe Jesus will return physically in the future, and then will follow the resurrection of all, the judgment of all, and the eternal state.” (Aaron 2012, 198-199)

Dr. Charles Ryrie tells us that “as used in the Bible, the broad concept of the Day of the Lord always involves God’s special intervention in the affairs of human history. The concept includes three facets:

1. A historical facet, which concerns God’s intervention in the affairs of Israel (Joel 1:15; Zephaniah 1:14–18) and in the affairs of heathen nations (Isaiah 13:6; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 30:3);
2. An illustrative facet, in which a historical incident of God’s intervention also illustrates a future intervention (Isaiah 13:6–13; Joel 2:1–11); and
3. An eschatological facet, that is, God’s intervention in human history in the future (Isaiah 2:12–19; 4:1; 19:23–25; Jeremiah 30:7–9).” (Ryrie 1981, 93-94)

The current devastation caused by the locust swarm is unprecedented, but an event is coming, and coming soon, that is also unprecedented and will make the locust swarm look like nothing. “The Hebrew word order is literally, ‘Because near is the day of the Lord,’ placing the emphasis on its nearness. The term does not denote the actual presence of something, but its speedy approach, in this case the fast approaching Day of Yahweh. The designation indicates that ‘the writer does not mean that the plague of locusts is the day of Yahweh, but that the plague is pointing to a more awful period still future.’” (Busenitz 2003, 100)

An event that is history in the present day but also reflects the salvation that can come only from the Lord, and a pointing to a future day that will be similar to the current experience.

The LORD himself is at work in the locust plague and intends by means of it to do something unprecedented, that will stand the test of time and serve to teach future generations (1:2–3). (Seitz 2016, 147)

The devastation caused by the locusts is unprecedented in the history of the nation. Never have they ever seen devastation as widespread as this. “Joel warned his hearers that the locust plague was but a precursor to the imminent, terrible Day of the Lord. Due to Israel’s sin (cf. Amos 3:1–5:13), that day was surely to occasion its demise (cf. Amos 5:16–20). The almighty God would send such destruction that life as God’s people knew it would be completely shattered.” (Patterson and Hill 2008, 114)

For those alive at the time of the locusts, life stands still. The food is gone, the hope for a future is gone, there is no place to turn other than to the Lord. That is where Joel has called the people to. This is not a natural event, this is a call from God to repent. Is this a fulfillment of what He said He would begin to do if the people violated the covenant with YAHWEH. Yes, but He also stands ready to save.

What do we know at this point? There has been a major disruption by the Levites as they have failed at multiple points.

- The current ruler over Judah is not someone selected by God or anointed by Him to be in that position. The ruler is illegitimate.
- No one has done anything to judge or remove the threat posed by the current regime.
- The current regime is imposing idolatry onto the people.
- The Levitical Priests are on their pity pots as they see decreased tithes as a result of the illicit regime and with the locust plague, they are the now despondent as their entire way of life is now at threat.
- The nation, rather than confront the situation, has turned to drinking to “forget” what is happening in real time.
- All of this specifically prohibited by the covenant.

Now God has their attention, and the people are responsive to what it is Joel has called them to do.

One more thing to drive the point home, a drought on top of it all. Not only are the crops gone, now there is no rain, regrowing crops is not working, and the livestock are beginning to suffer from this. This is a disaster.

This “day” is the beginning of the approaching day of Jehovah, which will come like a devastation from the Almighty. Yōm Yehōvâh is the great day of judgment upon all ungodly powers, when God, as the almighty ruler of the world, brings down and destroys everything that has exalted itself against Him; thus making the history of the world, through His rule over all creatures in heaven and earth, into a continuous judgment, which will conclude at the end of this course of the world with a great and universal act of judgment, through which everything that has been brought to eternity by the stream of time unjudged and unadjusted, will be judged and adjusted once for all, to bring to an end the whole development of the world in accordance with its divine appointment, and perfect the kingdom of God by the annihilation of all its foes. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 123-124)

Joel provides some of the current conditions.

Joel 1:16–20

“Has food not been cut off before our eyes, and Joy and rejoicing from the house of our God? The seeds have dried up under their shovels; The storehouses have become desolate, The grain silos are ruined, Because the grain has dried up. 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. To You, LORD, I cry out; For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, And the flame has burned up all the trees of the field. Even the animals of the field pant for You; For the stream beds of water are dried up, And fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.” (NASB 2020)

What is described in these five verses is the worst-case scenario on steroids. But in the Bible, this is not an unusual occurrence. God tends to use these types of situations as a means to teach us or to draw us back to Him. The lesson is we need to be wholly dependent upon Him. In fact, there is an entire book based on the worst-case scenario...Job.

For Job, life was good, until the accuser shows up at the Divine Council and makes a few accusations about Job. The result, God allows the accuser the leeway to destroy his life and then later, his health.

Job 1:13–20

“One day when Job’s children were having a feast at the home of their eldest brother, a messenger came running to Job. “We were ploughing the fields with the oxen,” he said, “and the donkeys were in a nearby pasture. Suddenly the Sabeans attacked and stole them all. They killed every one of your servants except me. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.” Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, “Lightning struck the sheep and the shepherds and killed them all. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.” Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, “Three bands of Chaldean raiders attacked us, took away the camels, and killed all your servants except me. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.” Before he had finished speaking, another servant came and said, “Your children were having a feast at the home of your eldest son, when a storm swept in from the desert. It blew the house down and killed them all. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.” Then Job stood up and tore his clothes in grief. He shaved his head and threw himself face downwards on the ground.” (GNB)

When we come to the end of the book of Job, we see that he has repented of his self-righteousness to the Lord and not only is he restored, but deeply blessed.

Job 42:12–13

“So the LORD blessed the second part of Job’s life more than the first. He had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters.” (NET 2nd ed.)

For Judah, here is the historic background leading to this point.

- The last good Davidic King was Jehoshaphat, known for his worshipping while the enemy killed each other. (2 Chronicles 20:22 & 23)
- His son, Jehoram became King. He had married Ahab and Jezebel’s daughter and that was the problem.
- Jehoram assassinated all of his brothers and only ruled 8 years. God had the Philistines humble him and then God struck him down with disease and no one was sorry to see him go (2 Chronicles 21:20).
- Ahaziah became King, Athaliah’s boy, he was worse than dad and only lasted a year before being murdered by Jehu in Israel as Jehu purged the land of all things Ahab and Jezebel connected. Athaliah was a loose end from this purge.
- Athaliah then murders all the royal children trying to eliminate the Davidic line.
- The Levites sit on their hands and do nothing at this time.
- Athaliah makes herself Queen but does not know that Ahaziah’s daughter, Jehoshabeath, has hidden 1 year old Joash in the Temple.
- Baal worship becomes politically correct in Judah.
- Locusts, drought, fire, destruction, despondency.
- The High Priest sets Joash on the throne at age 7 naming himself as Regent and then follows the Torah in dealing with Athaliah and her minions.

Joel simply piles on the rest of the problems.

Current Conditions in Judah

- Food production and surplus destroyed.
- Joy and rejoicing in worship gone.
- There is not enough moisture to replant.
- All the surplus food and food stored is gone.
- The storehouses and silos are all empty.
- Livestock have nothing to eat and are dying off because there is no forage.
- Fire has burned the dried-out fields.
- The fires spread to areas not under cultivation and to the forests.
- There is not enough water for the streams to run meaning even natural springs are now dried up.
- The impact is so severe, that even Joel cries out.
- The intent of these verse was simple, Joel is encouraging Judah to come together for fasting and prayer.

Not emergency prayer like we all tend to do when things go south, but real doing business with God kind of prayer.

The problem with emergency prayer is simple, we find ourselves engaging in that because of a crisis, usually of our own making. What we need to be doing is making a habit of prayer and spending time with the Lord even when there is no pending emergency. I have found that the more I do that, the fewer emergencies there are.

Joel is advocating that those in leadership, the priests lead the way in prayer, and this means to be really getting down and doing business with God kind of prayer.

Concerted prayer, sometimes intentionally done at an inconvenient time, forces us to put our mind completely on the one we are seeking.

At Calvary Chapel Austin, I was a part of a group of men who would get together every Friday morning at 6am solely for the purpose of spending the time in prayer for the church, each other, missions, our nation and the ministry. God moved. We knew it and could feel it. Was it hard to keep this up? Yes. We were only talking about 5 to 10 guys normally. But the power I experienced for the rest of the day...wow.

Joel has begun his message with an alarm-cry directed towards the people of the Lord. Judgement must begin with the house of God. This judgement is occurring now, and is as certain as the Lord's own covenant commitments. The current temporal judgement anticipates the great coming Day of the LORD. The servant of the Lord who knows the certainty of this divine sentence must lead the way with a response of personal repentance and prayer. (Robertson 1995, 40)

Being leaders per Joel means leading the way in seeking the Lord.

So, what does this all have to do with us today?

Some of the conditions seen in Judah are now being seen today, not all, but the warning signs are there.

Some Current Conditions

- Food production is down worldwide, and surplus is down. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2022)
- Much of the Church has lost its way turning to social justice and other causes neglecting what the task assigned by Jesus truly was. (Barna 2021)
- Current cost of fertilizers and fuel are making planting too costly. (Elkin 2022)
- Surplus food and food storage is now being drawn down. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2022)
- Agricultural production will be adversely impacted due to shortages of various chemicals used on the farm. (Polansek 2022)

Not all the signs that were evident in Judah are there, but the trend is not encouraging.

What do we need to be doing? Praying.

The spiritual leadership of Judah was asleep and several things took place that they should have stood up against...but they didn't. The High Priest will eventually do so, but only after or because of locusts.

I am reminded of a song reminding us of what we need to be doing in these last days. Annie Louise Coghill wrote these words in 1854 when she was 18.

Work, for the night is coming. Work thru the morning hours; work while the dew is sparkling; work 'mid springing flow'rs. Work when the day grows brighter. Work in the glowing sun; work for the night is coming, when man's work is done. (Coghill 1996, 305)

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