

I. Joel in Biblical Perspective
A Minor Prophet with a Major Message
“The Day of the Lord”
Joel (selected texts)
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There will be six studies in the book of Joel and this is the first one. This study will be an overview but a very important overview of this minor Prophet Joel. There is a very distinct purpose in this minor Prophet. He is dealing with God’s covenant people. There is a very distinct purpose in Nahum as well. Nahum is a prophecy that is dealing with a Gentile nation which God had blessed significantly one hundred years earlier. In light of our theme this year – Contending for the Faith – I had mentioned this theme would have two sections to it. Contending for the faith as a church in an increasingly neo-pagan secular society that has become aggressive against Christianity and therefore how do we contend for the faith. If you contend for the faith with any notion that you are a majoritarian voice in our culture, you will be dismissed because you will be considered out of touch with reality.

I realize we are in Birmingham, Alabama that was named in the top five most knowledgeable cities of the Bible in the US, but in the breadth and depth of this country Christianity is clearly, at most, a minoritarian voice. Christianity has been a majoritarian voice but I don’t think it has ever been a majority of people. However now it is a minoritarian voice. If you speak as if it is a majoritarian voice then you’ll be dismissed as if you’re out of touch with reality. So how do we deal with a nation that has been blessed by God which now opposes God? That is why I’m going to preach through Nahum on Sunday mornings.

In Joel what are we dealing with? This book is directed to God’s covenant people, Israel. He is telling them that He has blessed them but now they have forgotten God. This is the message that would be comparable to the church of Jesus Christ that is the people of God who have been blessed by God and they have embraced the blessings but have forgotten God. I think both of messages of these Prophets, Nahum and Joel, are important to understand in order to understand how to contend for the faith.

How should we contend for the faith in an increasingly paganized, secular nation that has been blessed by God on numerous occasions but has now intentionally, conscientiously, aggressively begun to oppose God? This nation opposes Him with significant strategies, with a boldness that is almost overwhelming. How do we as a church realize one of the reasons that the nation that has been blessed by God through His people now has turned in opposition to God, is because of the loss of the clarity of the salt and light of God’s people in that nation? In other words, it should never amaze us that world increasingly acts like the world. The only thing that keeps the world from acting like the world is the salt and light of the effective witness of God’s covenant people. When God’s covenant people who have been blessed of God begin to forget God then they lose their role, responsibility and privilege to affect a surrounding nation.

I am not sure that any Gentile nation in all the world, in all of time, has ever experienced such an extended overflow of God’s blessings as this country has. I believe there are two reasons that has happened. One, is that God’s people, while never a majority, had a way to winsomely and effectively communicate the truth of God’s Word to every sphere of this society as salt and light, drastically effecting it. Now the church is at best five miles wide and one inch deep. We don’t have that kind of effect anymore. We don’t have that kind of consequential

ministry and impact any longer. The second reason why I believe the Lord has blessed this nation is because this nation has consciously and intentionally opened its doors to the people of God and welcomed them. The Lord says I will bless the nations that bless My people. Now this nation no longer does that so it stands very clearly in a position of the judgment of God. How should we understand that and that's what I want to unfold for you in Nahum.

Where should we be as a people in this nation, contending for the faith? That is why we are studying the book of Joel. I want to read some selected passage of Scripture from the book of Joel and then give an overview of this three chapter book. Let's look at Joel 1.

Joel 1:1-20 says *[1] The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel: [2] Hear this, you elders; give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? [3] Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation. [4] What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten.*

[5] Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. [6] For a nation has come up against my land, powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. [7] It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white.

[8] Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth. [9] The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests mourn, the ministers of the LORD. [10] The fields are destroyed, the ground mourns, because the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil languishes.

[11] Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil; wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has perished. [12] The vine dries up; the fig tree languishes. Pomegranate, palm, and apple, all the trees of the field are dried up, and gladness dries up from the children of man.

[13] Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. [14] Consecrate a fast; call 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.

[15] Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. [16] Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? [17] The seed shrivels under the clods; the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are torn down because the grain has dried up. [18] How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep suffer.

[19] To you, O LORD, I call. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has burned all the trees of the field. [20] Even the beasts of the field pant for you because the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

It is an interesting opening chapter. We don't really have a lot of evidence of who Joel is, except for the fact that we know he is the son of Pethuel. Joel is the Hebrew name that means 'Jehovah is God' or 'Yahweh is God.' It is not referring to the gods of this age or this world but the God of Israel is the One true and living God. That's what the name Joel means. It seems as if the extra Biblical historians that go back near Joel's time the notion was that he was actually from the Northern Kingdom of the tribe of Rueben. That is not known for sure. It's purely

speculation. It's very clear though that he probably lives now near Jerusalem. As we go through this book you'll see Joel is very familiar with Jerusalem, the land of Judah, the temple and its ceremonies, practices, feasts, fasts and its rituals. So very likely he is now living in the Southern Kingdom.

What is the date around this book? We don't know. There are dates from the 8th century B.C. all the way to the 4th century B.C. but my educated guess is that this is an older prophecy and that's why it continually shows up in the older manuscripts that outline the Old Testament books where Joel was always second after Hosea which was notably an early prophecy. So my guess is that he was in the 8th century. Likely Joel prophesied under King Uzziah which was a day of unmitigated success militarily and economic prosperity was all around Israel both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Another reason I think it was around the 8th century is the mentioning of six different nations in this book and notably two are absent. Those two are Assyria and Babylon which tells me this was during a time before Assyria and Babylon had risen to the heights of their influence in the area. Joel will actually prophesy about how Assyria will be raised up but he doesn't mention them by name.

So my guess is that this is around the time of 780 B.C. probably during the reign of King Uzziah who was the tenth king after the division of the Kingdoms. He was a king who was highly successful militarily. The book of Chronicles tells us he built weapons to protect Jerusalem and he extended Israel almost to the very borders that had been under David and Solomon, reclaiming land. Everyone was prosperous. Economically, it was a day of great prosperity in his reign.

Now what has occurred in the days of Joel? Those days of prosperity have been interrupted by a three strand epic plague. The most predominate piece of it is the plague of locust. As you read the opening text it's hard to discern whether this is a series of plagues over a number of years or is this a single year plague with waves of locust that came in being described as those that were hopping, those that were devouring and it gives more of those descriptions. Locust was no rare thing for those people. When they would plant they would then pray that no locusts would show up because they could not be stopped in multiplication and there were so many they could darken the sky. Locusts were so predominate in those days that the Israelites in the Hebrew language have nine different words for the word locust, with shifting our understanding of each one.

That's not all that happened. It was also accompanied by a famine and drought where there was nothing even for the animals to feast upon. There was not even the grain to bring to the worship center or anything to bring in sacrifice. It was absolutely devastated in a drought and famine.

Thirdly, clearly they had had of epic proportions a fire that had devoured everything. It raced across the land for all the foliage had burned up. It had contributed to the famine or perhaps the famine had set up the wild fire that spread across the area.

The reason I'm using the phrase of 'epic proportions' is because of the language of Joel. Has there ever been such a day in your generation or in your father's generation or the fathers of your father's? This was something that was even beyond the normal plagues of locusts, famines and droughts that are common to this area. This is something that has stopped the prosperity and everything in its tracks. So the Joel is the one raised up by God in order to address the situation of those days.

If you want to do more study than what I'll cover in this study of Joel you may want to read John Blanchard's book titled Major Points from the Minor Prophets but what becomes

abundantly clear in the midst of all of this prosperity is that spiritually they were not prospering. Spiritually they had forgotten the Lord and walked away from the Lord. The Lord was not a consuming fire. There was a drought spiritually and now the prosperity that they had joined of all of these temporal blessings was now being taken from them in a way that they had no comparison whatsoever in the history of this drought, famine, fire and waves of locust that were taking place. So spiritually it's the reverse of what they were enjoying in terms of temporal and physical blessings.

What is Joel's major message? This is not hard to find out. I'd like to look at a number of passages here. Joel 1:15 says [15] *Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.* This is a settled reality. It's near, it's destructive and it comes. Now let's look at Joel 2:1, 11, 30-32 which says [1] *Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, **for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near.*** [11] *The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. **For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?*** [30] *“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. [31] The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, **before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*** (Does that sound familiar? It sounds a lot like Jesus' prophecy before the day of the end of the age is coming.) [32] *And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.* (Paul uses this quote in Romans) *For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.*

So this Day is coming. What is your hope? It is to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Here you see the sovereignty of God declared? Who is it who is going to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved? It is those whom the Lord calls. So there is our responsibility to call upon Him for our salvation and then the instruction and awareness that we will not call upon Him or seek Him unless and when the Lord calls upon us.

Now let's look at Joel 3:14-15 which says [14] *Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! **For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*** [15] *The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.* As we go through this you'll see the dynamics that come from this book but what you need to see is the unmistakable reality that the burden of Joel in light of the people of God having forgotten God and now in the adversity that has come upon them in this epic plague, fire, drought and famine, Joel has been given Divine revelation to tell the people of God in the nation of Israel that these days of plague are days from the Lord to warn you that there is coming the Day of the Lord and that it is near and certain.

That certainly begins to affect my theology. It's interesting that our insurance policies used to make distinctions between man-made disasters and God-ordained events – tornadoes, hurricanes, famines, droughts. How do you see those things? Are those things the spawns of mutated circumstances that just occur and isn't it tragic or are they heaven-sent warnings to a people who inhabit the earth in opposition to God and to His people who forget God? What you don't do, is when those things occur, begin to identify who they are occurring against but let me tell you what you do as a believer.

You acknowledge like Jesus did in Luke 13:1-5 which says [1] *There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [2] And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? [3] No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. [4] Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and*

killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? [5] No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

When you see these things occurring, the phenomena of cataclysm or tragic moments of creation, you don't begin to investigate who they are sent against but it is a call to you to repent for you and I, unless our refuge is in Christ, stand under that same judgment and our only hope is in the Lord. The fact that those days are there are pointing to the Day that is coming. When those days come they are there to refine God's people and put us back on track calling us to repentance and they are there to warn the people of this age that there is a Day coming in the valley of decision. There are only two destinations in that Day – the judgment of God for all eternity or the salvation of Lord to be with the Lord for all eternity. They are not a chance arrangement or collision of circumstances. These things are instruments of God's Divine purposes and while we don't know the individual applications unless we have direct special revelation like a prophet, which you and I don't, but what we do know from the Word of God is why they are there. They are warning of the Day to come and a call to God's people.

This phrase 'the Day of the Lord' is used five times in the three chapters of the book of Joel. All of the chapters are arranged in how that phrase 'the Day of the Lord' is pointing to that final Day where all of time ends and eternity is then engaged. You will find that phrase thirteen times in the Prophets. You will find it enhanced by the phrase 'the last days' or 'that day' or 'those days' but just the phrase 'the Day of the Lord' you'll find five times in the book of Joel. Then he says what you are encountering are days from the Lord designed to warn the world of the Day of the Lord and designed to refine God's people that they live in light of the Day of the Lord.

Let me ask you a question. Do you and I disciple people in light of the Day of the Lord? Do we ever speak about heaven? Do we ever speak about hell? Do we ever warn of the Day to come? Clearly the Lord sends His Prophets to make clear that there is a Day of the Lord whereby no means will He leave the guilty unpunished and there are days in this sin-cursed world in which all that collides together is actually the tapestry of God's providence warning men and women of the Day of the Lord to come and refining God's people to live in light of that Day. The Day of the Lord is a fixed Day. It is coming and it is an inflexible day of righteous judgment upon the world and all that is in it. It must not be ignored and it must be proclaimed.

What is peculiar to Israel is that they are being warned. When you look at Israel you see a nation and you see God's covenant people. You see this mixed multitude. You see that God is speaking to His covenant people in the nation of Israel where in as redemption is unfolding He is drawing out His elect from these twelve tribes. Periodically, as He will a few years from when this is written, He'll send the Gospel to Ninevites because His purpose is to take the Gospel to all the world and that shows up in the Old Testament but the Old Testament is basically focused upon the redeeming work of God to gather His covenant people out of the nation of Israel, in order that through Israel He will bring His Seed, the Messiah. Then when the Messiah comes the Gospel message will go to all the nations and God's covenant people will come from every tribe and nation in that day.

So what is the Lord doing? He is refining Israel so that Israel will be faithful through which He will bring the Messiah and draw a covenant people, who are the people of God, the Israel of God, the children of God, from every tribe and nation including Israel, itself. In that glorious day when the Messiah comes and we'll be able to proclaim the Gospel so that everyone who believes, Jew and Gentile, shall know the Lord. So this is refining Israel for its call to be this channel of the Messiah and from its own midst will be drawn the elect to that Messiah. Then

that Messiah will proclaim that Gospel to all the nations and then He'll draw people from every tribe and nation as the inheritance of all the nations will be His. So He is refining Israel even in this century for its call and purpose.

I want to give you three takeaways on this study and then we'll have kind of set the study for Joel as we move forward. The first takeaway is the Day of the Lord is a day where Joel points out seven things about the Day of the Lord. Joel says the Day of the Lord is a day of judgment. The Day of the Lord is near. The Day of the Lord is one of utter destruction. The Day of the Lord is inevitable. It is assured. It is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment. Fifthly, the Day of the Lord is inescapable. All will stand before the judgment seat of God. Some young people these days think they have an impenetrable bullet proof vest but that's not true. Man knows not his time and our days here are fleeting and fast. There is a Day coming called the Day of the Lord and it's inescapable. On that Day the verdict of judgment is irrevocable and unendurable. Joel also says with the phrase 'with the valley of decision' that, that Day is a revealing day and a glorious day.

What is that Day revealing? It will reveal those who have taken refuge in Him and those who have not. On that Day the people of God will be owned by the Lord. They will be declared. The Lord will say 'Enter in good and faithful servants.' The people of God who have put their trust in the Lord in that Day when all the nations are gathered before Him in the valley of decision. It will also reveal those who did not know Him. I am absolutely convinced that there are people that know Jesus Christ that are going to surprise me in that Day that they knew Him. I am also convinced that in that Day there are going to be people who don't know Him and I'm going to be surprised because I thought they did. The reason I say this is because of what Jesus says at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says in Matthew 7:22-23 says [22] *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' [23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

So what's the key? God's people live different lives but what in that Day is owned. The different lives we live do not gain heaven for us in that Day. It is that you know Christ. Jesus said "I never knew you" so who is going into heaven? It is those who know Him intimately, those who have put their trust in Him. That Day is a revealing day and therefore glorious day for as God is glorified in the judgment upon those who have opposed Him and God is glorified in the fulfillment of salvation for those whom Christ saved and who have called upon the name of the Lord.

Why is there in that Day the glorious privilege of such a refuge and salvation? Here is the second takeaway. The reason why is the Day of the Lord is preceded by days from the Lord, days in which God is getting the attention of men and women in a broken world – days of difficulty, days of challenge. God uses the elements of His creation and the phenomena of created nature to have days from the Lord which gain the attention of men and women who are in opposition to the Lord that they might come to the Lord and which reclaim, train and encourage His people. That's why there are so many wonderful phrases in the book of Joel. Let's take a moment and look at some.

Joel 2:12-14 says [12] *"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; [13] and rend your hearts and not your garments."* Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. [14] *Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the*

LORD your God? So here is the call to put your trust in Him, to return with repentance and call upon the Lord, not because you deserve to be saved because you deserved to be judged but God is a gracious God. This God who will be no means leave the guilty unpunished is a God who remembers grace and mercy from generation to generation.

Joel 2:23 says [23] *Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.* In other words, God sends refreshment, not only to the earth but to your soul. He is a gracious God and He shows His graciousness.

Joel 2:30-32a says [30] *“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. [31] The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.* (In other words, there are days of warning of the Day of the Lord that comes and those days of the Lord are seen in the elements of all that surrounds.) [32a] *And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*

Joel 3:10 says [10] *Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, “I am a warrior.”* What makes the weak warriors? It is the strength of the Lord when they call upon Him in the day of challenge and adversity. Let’s look at one more passage in Joel.

Joel 3:16 says [16] *The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.* God’s covenant people find their strength and refuge in the Lord. That’s the only place where you can find it.

Here is a third takeaway. The Day of the Lord has come and the Day of the Lord will come. There are days from the Lord that point to the Day of the Lord but I just said something else. I just said the Day of the Lord that is sure and inevitable has come, the Day of the Lord with judgment. When did that come? That came 2100 years ago when Jesus Christ came into this world and on that day when He went to the cross, the Day of the Lord that should have fallen upon me, fell upon Him on that day. We are a redeemed people. The Day of Judgment for the sins of all of the elect and for all eternity has already come and Christ took our place on that day. Christ, on that day, was the Lamb of God who takes away our sin.

I’m still waiting for the praise music, O Scapegoat of God, but that was the day when Christ came as the Scapegoat of God to take the sins of His people outside the camp and be judged for it. As the pure and perfect Lamb of God He took our sin upon Himself and on that day He redeemed His people which is why when that day was affirmed in His resurrection and on that day after His forty day tour of glory after the resurrection and then the day of ascension and then His people returned to the Upper Room, what occurred then? Let’s finish by taking a look at this.

Joel 2:28-29 says [28] *And it shall come to pass afterward (after the Day of the Lord), that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. [29] Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.* From old to young the Word of the Lord will fill their hearts and their soul. There is coming a day where Jew and Gentile, male and female, old and young, when God’s Spirit will be poured out on His people and that is the Day of the Lord and that day was our Savior’s day of atonement for His people, when He bore the judgment.

I want to try and prove this to you by looking at a passage in Acts 2. Jesus has risen, ascended and has sent them to the Upper Room. As they have prayed Jesus has promised that the Holy Spirit will come upon them with power and there will be evidences that a significant moment has come. Acts 2:1-21 says [1] *When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

[5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. (It wasn't gibberish but there were people there who did know the languages they were speaking and they were hearing the Gospel in their own language.) [7] And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, [11] both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." [12] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" [13] But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

[14] But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

[15] For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

[16] But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

*[17] "And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;*

*[18] even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

*[19] And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;*

*[20] the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.*

[21] And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Do you see how Peter is calling upon this message from Joel?

What is he saying that Joel has prophesied? Joel is telling us that there is a Day of Judgment that has come and I have good news for you; that day had another day of judgment where Jesus took our place and what you see here is the fulfillment of the prophecy that after that day you shall see the Gospel go to all the nations, great and small, with no ceremonial distinctions any longer. It will go to Jew, Gentile, old, young, male and female and they shall all have the Holy Spirit and these signs are here to let you know that, that day has come to that moment where they are actually speaking in languages of the truth of the Gospel that they don't

know that you might hear and that you might come. In other words, there is a reversal of the tower of Babel that is going on here with the victory of Christ over our sin.

I'd like to share with you an illustration of The Day of the Lord from the Old Testament. When I was little we would go to the mountains to see the fall colors and we would take one of a couple of routes. One of my favorite routes was on highway 74 where you would begin to see the Blue Ridge Mountains. It looked like this enormous peak yet when you arrived there the enormous peak was actually a silhouette and against it was another peak and that's the Day of the Lord. There was the first day of the Lord where He comes to bear our judgment where the covenant people of God and the elect will be called from all the nations. Now, there is coming the final Day of the Lord where He will bring judgment. It's near. It's inescapable. The verdict of judgment in that Day is unendurable and irrevocable, but today is the Day of salvation and the Lord has provided a refuge. All who call upon Him shall be saved. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could spend in Your Word taking an initial look at this book. We are grateful to You that You raised up this Prophet Joel who declares Jehovah is God. Yahweh is God and the days from God are pointing to the Day of the Lord. I thank You so much for the glorious Day of the Lord where He has born our judgment. Now Father, knowing there is the coming Day of the Lord when He will bring judgment, how much more should we live with awareness and thoughtfulness and how much more should we warn people of the wrath to come and announce to people of the Good News that Christ has bore the wrath against sinners at the cross that when you put your trust in Him you will not only escape the judgment of that Day, but that Day will be the most glorious Day for on that Day we shall be with Him forever and that is irrevocable. That is inescapable because of what Christ did on the cross for us. Now Father, what does this mean for Your covenant people? How can we be so blessed and forget our God? As we walk our way through this prophecy there are some significant, clear statements so would You give us understanding? Father, there may be some reading this who have not yet put their trust in You so would You warn them of the Day of the Lord to come and would You bring them to call upon the Lord because of the Day that has already come when He came to bear our judgment and He has risen. Glorious is our salvation and Father, I pray all of this in Jesus' Name, Amen.