

Joel 2:1-27

Rend Your Hearts

Last week we began a study in the book of Joel part of a Minor Prophets series we will do thru summer

A) Noted when reading the Book of Joel – you need your spiritual 3D glasses on

B) Joel writes about – an immediate Disaster – Locust plague in Ch.1

1) An imminent Disaster in Ch.2

2) An ultimate Disaster – all nations Ch.3

C) The events described in the book of Joel take place in Israel.

Israel is mentioned 3 times in the book

2:27, 3:2, 3:16

Jerusalem is mentioned 4 times in the book

3:1, 3:6, 3:17, 3:20

Judah is mentioned 6 times in the book

3:1, 3:6, 3:8, 3:18, 3:19, 3:20

Zion is mentioned 7 times in the book

2:1, 2:15, 2:23, 2:32, 3:16, 3:17, 3:21

The “fig trees” of Israel are referred to 3 times in the book.

A) NOTE: Figs trees are often used throughout the Bible as symbols of the nation or state of Israel.

In Matthew 24:32-33, the Lord Jesus referred to the “parable of the fig tree” to tell us that the State of Israel would be prophetically reborn in the last days

A) That happened in 1948 – after almost 2000 years of not existing as a nation – { never happened before

B) And that in the last days the Jewish people would prophetically return to the Holy Land after centuries of exile. – that has continued to happen.

C) Jewish people returning to Israel in large numbers

Now we saw last week – Joel described a locust Plague that hit Israel.

A) **Devastated the land** - two pics are from Egypt in 2013 – estimated 30 million locust plagued the land

B) When Locust devour a place it looks like a fire has gone through – everything looks burned.

C) Joel 1:2 **Nothing like this has happened before!**

1) That devastating of a Disaster

D) And because Joel tells the people to wake up – **be ashamed – mourn –**

1) An indication brought on by SIN

Joel calls the people to Repentance.

A) Wake up – Consecrate a Fast – and Cry out to the Lord - He will restore.

B) Focus of Chapter 1 – Immediate Disaster

Tonight as we move to Chapter 2 – Joel prophecies about an imminent Disaster

A) Not a plague of Locust – but a coming army that has the potential to be worse than the Locust.

B) 3 Responses for the People

1st Blow the trumpets

C) The figure of the trumpet, twice used in the chapter (verses 1 and 15),

1) Connects intimately with Numbers, Ch. 10.

There we find the “two trumpets of silver” were used for a double purpose-

A) The 1st was to sound an alarm, and to summon the whole congregation to the presence of the Lord.

B) So **The first was to arouse;**

1) The second trumpet was to instruct.

C) We find the same thing here. In verses 1 to 11 the trumpet of alarm is blown,

1) and the people are warned about what is coming

D) Read beginning in V.1

Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; {people of Israel For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand:

2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.

A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations

Joel is describing not a plague of Locust but an army of men – Great army – great and strong –

A) Like nothing they have ever seen before,

B) V.20 tells us **the army is from the North** –

1) Which has caused Bible teachers to speculate as to whom this army could be.

C) Every invasion that has come against Jerusalem – has come from the North -

1) Only way: Jerusalem sits on a Mt. – South side is too steep.

D) Only 2 invasions from the south – One David in 2 Samuel – David claimed Jerusalem King

1) The other was 1967 War – Where learned? Bibles

So the invasion coming from the North doesn't necessarily help us –

A) Some speculate when Hezekiah was King and the Assyrians came with a mighty army

B) General Sennacherib – comes with a Vast Army

1) Hezekiah prays -

C) God sends an Angel – that in one night kills **185,000 Assyrians – AWESOME**

D) Some think – this is talking about that battle – especially those who place the writings of Joel in that time period.

Others hear of an army from the North and immediately think of Ezekiel 38 –

A) Ezekiel describes an army coming from the uttermost parts of the north – Russia

B) Join with some other nations – Iran, Turkey Ethiopia – few others.

1) Russia's interest is the oil –

C) Iran and the other nations have two things in common. **#1 All Islamic - #2 they all hate Israel**

D) So many Bible teachers believe that this army that Joel writes about – that comes against Israel

1) Is the battle that takes place in the last days Ezekiel 38

The Day of the Lord – time period that begins with the Rapture – Culminates at the 2nd coming.

A) Battle of Ezekiel 38 could take place before the rapture or shortly thereafter.

B) Makes sense to me – because I see two groups who will need to be taken out before the Antichrist comes into Power – THE CHURCH –

C) 2 Thessalonians 2 before the Antichrist can come into power – he who restrains must be removed

1) He is the Holy Spirit – No – many saved – can't come unless the Holy Spirit draws you

D) But the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church – the Church is removed

The 2nd group that I believe will need to be taken out is Islam – Battle of Ezekiel 38 – God intervenes

A) This great army is destroyed – Like the Angel and the Assyrians - Death blow to Islam –

B) Jehovah is God – The God of Israel reigns

C) So many believe this army is describing that group of nations in Ezekiel 38

V.1-11 Joel is sounding the Alarm – notice how he describes this army –

A) Notice the word Like - not but it is like

V.3 A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns; The land **is like** the Garden of Eden before them,

And behind them a desolate wilderness; Surely nothing shall escape them.

4 Their appearance **is like** the appearance of horses;
And **like** swift steeds, so they run.
5 With a noise **like chariots** Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.

6 Before them the people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color.
7 They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war; Every one marches in formation, And they do not break ranks.
8 They do not push one another; Every one marches in his own column.
Though they lunge between the weapons, They are not cut down.
9 They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief.
10 The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness.
11 The Lord gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word.
For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible;
Who can endure it?

Note Joel is trying to describe a modern day army in the vernacular of his day.

A) Like horses – sounds like a Chariot – like the sound of flaming fire – Maybe missiles?

B) Joel is prophesying of a radical coming invasion.

C) 2nd response: Rend your hearts V.12

“Now, therefore,” says the Lord,
“Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”
13 So rend your heart, and not your garments;

It was common in Israel when something bad happened for the people to rend (rip) their clothes –

A) God says – I don’t want you going through the motions – **REND YOUR HEARTS**

B) We can do that too. – Things get routine or mechanical – Communion / Worship

C) These people worship me with their mouths but their hearts are far from me
1) God is interested in the Heart

D) **He sees the heart** – He is not impressed with right religious actions when our heart is wrong.

E) God says – don’t just go through the motions –
Rend your hearts – Hearts Cry out!
Rend your hearts and not your garments
Return to the Lord your God,
For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger,
and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.
14 Who knows if He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the Lord your God?

This is an interesting idea that we see throughout scripture { Prayer can change the mind of God!

A) The idea that our prayers can change the mind of God or delay what he is going to do.

B) Too be honest – I am not sure how it works – but I believe it – practice it

1) Where God determines that he is going to do something – Judgment is coming

C) But if his people repent and pray – and seek his face – because He is gracious and merciful
1) He is Slow to anger and of great Kindness

C) He will change his mind – He will postpone the Judgment or cancel it all together.

D) God is Sovereign – all knowing – but He Sovereignly allows our prayers to move His heart

E) Not sure I understand how that works exactly but I want to believe it and walk in it.

Why I think it is so important to pray for our country

A) Pray for Revival – 2 Chronicles 7:14 is written to Israel for Israel – but I believe has application to any nation – people – community – family

14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

B)The Prophet Joel is calling the nation to repent – He is going to give them some specific instruction

1)The 2nd trumpet was for instruction

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;
16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders, {starts with the leaders
Gather the children and nursing babes;

Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.

C) How serious is this – Call off the Honeymoon!

1)Jesus said: Last days people will be getting married acting like everything is normal – BOOM

D)Sometimes the party needs to stop – we need to call for a solemn assembly – Pray – seek the Lord

The Church today pulls away from such ideas

A)Church is supposed to resemble a Party

B)TV shows now depicting the lives of Pastors – like the Rich and Famous

C)Sunday in 1 Thessalonians – God’s call for believers to be rapture ready

1)Wake up – Watch attentive – be sober –

D)Not Somber – but a seriousness about the state of the Church – our nation – the world

1)We are living in turbulent times – not a time to be getting caught up in trivial things

Joel gives the people instruction – Rend their hearts – Repent – Consecrate a Fast –

A)In other words get serious about seeking God again

B)Joel even gives some insight on how to Pray

V.17 Let the priests, who minister to the Lord,

Weep between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, “Spare Your people, O Lord,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples,
‘Where is their God?’ ”

C)Priest Weep – asking God to spare His people

This is another thing that we often see in scripture is the focus is on God’s Image – His reputation

A) Moses prayed – Nations will say – what kind of God is he who abandons his people

B)The idea is not to try and manipulate God – but it is a concern for the glory of God!

C)It reveals an attitude of the heart that is more concerned with God’s glory – than our immediate happiness and welfare.

Isn’t that one of the main reasons that Christians rebel and sin

A)Their focus is more on their own happiness than God’s Holiness.

B)How many of us would think twice before doing something if we were focused on – this

1)How are my actions going to hurt or help God’s image.

C)I remind you of this all the time – We EXIST for Him –

1)He doesn’t exist for us – this form of prayer is a recognition of that fact!

D)Lord we are concerned about your name – your Glory –

1)The way our actions are going to reflect on you!

Church Discipline – actions seriously/ patiently
Three Responses

- ◆ Blow the trumpets
- ◆ Rend your hearts
- ◆ Believe the Promises v.17-27

Then the Lord will be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.

19 The Lord will answer and say to His people,
“Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil,

And you will be satisfied by them;
I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

20 “But I will remove far from you the northern army, And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, With his face toward the eastern sea And his back toward the western sea; His stench will come up, And his foul odor will rise, Because he has done monstrous things.”

God promised to restore material prosperity to a repentant Judah, and to defeat the mighty army from the north.

A) Because this mighty army had done monstrous things,

B) God would turn the attention of His judgment away from His people and now against this mighty army.

C) If this is referring to the Battle that takes place in Ezekiel 38 – it is interesting

1) because we read in Ezekiel 39:11,12 burying bodies for 7 months – Imagine the stench of rotting bodies

21 Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice,
For the Lord has done marvelous things!

22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;
For the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit;

The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.

23 Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the Lord your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,
And He will cause the rain to come down for you— The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month.

24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.

At the end of Joel 1, the prophet saw the destruction drought brought.

A) Now with the eye of faith he sees God restoring both the former and latter rain to Israel.

B) Ancient Israel had no irrigation system, and relied on rain to water their crops.

1) In a time of drought, nothing grew. God promises to restore both the former rain (falling in autumn) and the latter rain (falling in spring).

C) When God restores these rains, Judah will have full threshing floors and wine vats.

D) V.25 is an awesome verse that has brought great comfort to many

25 “So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,
The crawling locust, The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,
My great army which I sent among you.

“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten” is a word of promise to all who return to the Lord with sincere and broken hearts.

A) God is able to restore -

B) Charles Spurgeon’s great insight on this: “You cannot have back your time but there is a strange and wonderful way in which God can give back to you the wasted blessings, the unripened fruits of years over which you mourned.... It is a pity that they should have been locust-eaten by your folly and negligence; but if they have been so, be not hopeless concerning them.”

C) Spurgeon is right – you can never get back time but I have seen God restore – families after years

1) Marriages – Ministries

D) If you have suffered loss for your sin be encouraged tonight – God is able to restore

1) He is able to give back what you lost

E) But it is going to take time – You seek the Lord and leave the restoration to him!

Joel continues with the results -

26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
And praise the name of the Lord your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you;
And My people shall never be put to shame.

27 Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God
And there is no other.

My people shall never be put to shame.

Pray – Rend our hearts – Cry out to the Lord for our nation – Our community – Unsaved loved ones - Pray for a Revival