

The Book of Joel “The End Times Church”

Chapter 1:4-12: Devastation Coming

Last week we looked at:

- 5 Reasons we study Prophecy
- 4 Layers of Prophecy: historical, national/church, individual, and future nature of prophecy
- Opened the Book of Joel: Theme: Day of the Lord
- Taking place in Judah after swarming locusts have devoured the land...

Vs. 4 What the chewing locust[a] left, the swarming locust has eaten; What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

- In the now world of Joel, there has been enormous devastation of Judah by a plague of locusts
- A locust is a grasshopper like insect that descends in swarms so thick that they can obscure the sun and strip bare all vegetation in a matter of minutes
 - Ex. In the 1950’s a locust swarm devoured every growing thing for several hundred square miles in the Middle East
 - But these are not normal locusts but demons released in the form of locusts
 - God is bringing economic disaster to Israel in judgment for sin
 - We don’t like to think about this side of God—but He is a holy God and He does judge sin

Not unlike what we read about in Rev 9:1-12 and the releasing of locusts upon the earth from the bottomless pit when the 5th seal is broken

Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

9 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

- This is why I believe Joel is an introduction to and “Cliff’s Notes for Revelation”
 - When we get into Revelation, we will fill in the details
- Sin is a chewing locust in our lives. Locusts can come in and ravage an area—literally eat up everything
 - The locusts is “chewing...swarming...crawling...consuming”
 - The Locusts of Sin: 4 waves of temptation & sin:
 - 1) Chewing on our flesh Stage—in the form of outward temptations and the opportunity to just look at something, crave something, wanting, longing for something

- 2) Swarming around us Stage—as we allow our mind to drift into fantasies and thoughts of what we think will bring us pleasure
- 3) Crawling into our Life Stage—this is when we act on our sin, indulging in the sin, enjoying the pleasure of our desires
- 4) Consuming our Lives Stage—looking turns to gazing turns to craving turns to acting upon which leads to consuming. Sin taking over our life resulting in addictions, passions, and illnesses
 - a. So many cancers come from unhealthy choices we have made
 - b. Prescription drugs
 - c. Pornography
 - d. Jealousy, envy, broken relationships
 - e. Illegal drugs

This is also true over a nation:

Isa 26:9 With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments are in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

God gives us Harbingers or Signs warning of impending judgment:

- 9-11 was a Harbinger, a warning of coming disaster
- Hurricane Katrina
- Oklahoma tornadoes
- In Colorado Springs: Waldo Canyon Fire; Black Forest Fire
- The mass killings in Kenya in April
- The shooting down of a Russian Airline
- Paris massacre last week!
- School shootings in America

God is Calling out to us!

Vs. 5 Awake, you drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you drinkers of wine, Because

of the new wine, For it has been cut off from your mouth.

- Wake up! We can't afford to just "check out"
- You check out and you will lose everything
- A leader who checks out; a leader who sleeps, will be consumed and overwhelmed
- A sleepy leader who sleeps will be awakened by an emergency! A good leader recognized a problem before it becomes an emergency
- America, wake up! Church wake up! The hords are coming
- Ex. Pornography is taking over the Internet—the fastest growing business in America is the sex trade! Sex makes more money than Apple, Amazon, and EBay combined. Sex makes more money than the NFL
- We've been telling God to get out of our business for the past 40 years and the chickens are coming home to roost!

2 Thess. 2:5

Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining (the Holy Spirit), that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He[d] who now restrains will do so until He[e] is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Vs. 6-7 *For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number; His teeth are the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has laid waste My vine, And ruined My fig tree; He has stripped it bare and thrown it away; Its branches are made white.*

- The possessive pronoun refers to the Lord. He is the owner of the land; He is the One who sent the Pilgrims and Puritans to America. This is His land
- The Lord is judging Israel. It is the Lord who will judge America if we don't repent and turn back to Him
- This was a literal invasion of locusts! Will God once again bring an economic devastation or a nation to invade America?

And the Lord provides a God-sent Solution. This doesn't have to happen to us as it did to Israel. God is giving Israel and America a Prescription for Awakening:

Vs. 8 *Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the husband of her youth.*

- First, Lament like a bride who has lost her husband! The kind of pain and grief that a newly married bride would feel at losing her husband, lament in grief for you country, for Israel, for America

Vs. 9 *The grain offering and the drink offering Have been cut off from the house of the Lord; The priests mourn, who minister to the Lord.*

- Second, pastors who minister to the Lord, mourn—weep, lament, languish. This very occurs 40x and is always associated with mourning over death, over sin, over a tragedy
 - Repentance over sin. Ask God to come back into our marriages, our families, our businesses
 - Dedicate your business to the Lord: Dedicate your marriage to the Lord

Vs. 10 *The field is wasted, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers,*

Wail, you vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered; The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also, And the apple tree—All the trees of the field are withered;

Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

- The locusts have eaten out all the grass, stripped the bark off the olive trees—there is no pasture for the cattle, for the sheep, there are no olives and thus no oil
- The vineyards are eaten away and there is no wine
- Complete economic devastation!
- Ex. The National Debt is like the hords of locusts caged up, banging at the door, straining the door, about to break out upon our country. The Democratic Debate last week, it was never even mentioned! Congress doesn't have the courage to battle with the president
 - We cannot even comprehend was the locusts of our debt are
 - Just to count to 1 billion, saying one number for every 3 seconds, it will take 97 years. To count to 1 trillion, will take 24k years! And we owe \$19 trillion! Which is the equivalent of each taxpayer owing over \$150,000
 - Congress has had to increase the debt ceiling an astounding 74x over the past 50 years. In fact, the limit has been raised 7x on Obama's watch alone. It was \$11.3 trillion when he took office and is now over \$19 trillion
 - And the Republicans, who have the power to the purse strings never does anything either because they fear the fight and a potential government shut-down
 - Mitch McConnell in March, has already said that the Republicans aren't willing to fight hard enough on this one and

risk a default or government shut down. He told CBS's "Face the Nation," "We will figure out some way to handle that."

The constant conflict over Federal spending and debt levels has left many desensitized to it all. To many Americans, the approaching \$17 trillion of debt may seem so incomprehensible that it appears to be just another number. Back in 1981, the national debt was only about \$1 trillion, yet Reagan still tried to put it all in perspective. He said, "I've been trying ever since to think of a way to illustrate how big a trillion really is. And the best I could come up with is that if you had a stack of thousand-dollar bills in your hand only 4 inches high, you'd be a millionaire. A trillion dollars would be a stack of thousand-dollar bills 67 miles high." Multiply that by 17 and you get 1,139 miles high, which is about *the altitude that military and spy satellites hover.*

Don't like zero gravity? Try circumnavigating the world instead. Lining up 17 trillion dollar bills lengthways would circle the Earth (24,901 miles) 66,663 times.

That's the locusts in America! Our National Debt...and it's not being taken seriously enough!

Next Week, Thanksgiving weekend, the Lord gives us an out, a way to avoid the judgment of God

Communion tonight: who needs prayer for healing?