

The Book of Joel “The End Times Church”

4-Return to the Lord

We are looking at the coming of The Day of the Lord in Joel

- Joel is giving us these harbingers, warnings from the Lord of a coming day
- God is saying you don't have to be caught off guard—you have an “Intelligence Briefing on the end of History”
- This part of Joel is hard to hear—it's terrible but beautiful
- God uses terrible to be beautiful for the people of God because He is simultaneously warning us of the reckoning and judgment of evil but that His Church will shine during these days
- Joel is both about a hope we have even as the judgment of God is unleashed upon our world, upon our nation
- In chapter 2, Joel says “Blow the trumpet, sound the alarm”

Joel 2:6

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.

- We are seeing these black hooded ISIS soldiers with machine guns
- It's demonically empowered
- Demons have been released upon the earth. Satan is organizing it. God's in charge but they are organized
- Just in the past weeks we have seen over 700 people killed in

two airliners shot down, bombing and shootout in London, bombing in Lebanon...Folks this is becoming common place. These are the harbingers, God's warning to us, of the Day of the Lord

- It is like a "thief in the night" suddenly upon us!

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.

- The environment will be impacted—the environmentalists will be completely dumbfounded. This is not what they expected. The Day of the Lord will bring on environmental anomalies spoken of in scripture and even by Jesus himself
- Signs and wonders in the heavenlies in the last days:
 - Jesus says at the end of the tribulation period, "the sun will be darkened (that's a solar eclipse. On March 20th there was a complete solar eclipse), and the moon will not give its light (lunar eclipse-what John Hagee calls Blood Moons—2 in 2014; 2 complete lunar eclipses in 2015—April 4th and Sept 27-28th!); the stars will fall from heaven (meteorites—remember the meteor that hit Russian, the Urals in Feb 15, 2013, Hit with the impact of 300 tons of TNT, 3000 houses damaged and 1000 people sent to the hospital), and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."
- God, are you trying to get our attention???
- You keep pushing me and there will be more of these!

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?

- God is in charge. THE LORD is doing this! All things are working together for good, to be conformed to the image of Christ
- The Lion of Judah is roaring! He is bringing His kingdom on the earth. But it will be preceded by judgment. Are you ready?
 - Amos: “The Lord roars from Zion” (1:2)
- But you need to be in God’s will—it’s the Lord’s Day, not just The Day of the Lord
- Judgment will be sure, severe, and certain! But God gives us a way to slow it down, to give us the opportunity to change our lives to change our nation

The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.

15

That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

16

A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.

17

“I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse.”

18

Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord’s wrath;

- How seriously do we take God's Word? Don't miss this—this is God's Word, not my opinion, not the Wall Street Journal, not the NY Times, this is what God's Word says
- Jesus said, "not one jot to tittle will pass away until all is fulfilled"
- Ex. Rob Bell, once a leading evangelical pastor in America, who wrote a book, Love Wins, espousing universalism (meaning all will eventually be saved) said recently on Oprah, "God's word is irrelevant and who wants to read two thousand year old letters..." and our emotions are more important than God's Word
 - Amos: "A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken" (3:7)
- The Good News is that God's Word stands forever and Oprah and Rob Bell will only be a small footnote in this age of apostasy and compromise
- God is moving but God is loving...

Vs. 12

"Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

- Even now, turn to Me. You can turn this thing around.
- This is being wholehearted! A wholehearted disciple. A wholehearted church.
- We are talking about a "Wholehearted Awakening!"
- Look up! Look up! Look up like Isaiah and see God...

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. **2** Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his*

face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **3** And one cried to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; *The whole earth is full of His glory!*"

- Ezekiel was in a refuge camp, an exile, by a garbage dump, He sees Jesus!

*Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. **5** Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. (Ezekiel sees Jesus on the throne)*

- John on the Island of Patmos, is a prisoner, sees Jesus high and lifted up

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, **11** saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," **13** and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. **14** His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; **15** His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;*

- He is on the throne in the midst of this judgment
- Jesus has never left the Throne! He is on the Throne!

13

So rend your heart, 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.

- Why are you here tonight? Why do we go to The Road?
- Rending your heart! Repentance. It is a heart matter.
- Return to the Lord—return to intimacy with Jesus!

- Jesus said, “eat of Me” Eat His Word! Ezekiel was told to eat the Word, swallow it, not just in your head, but in your heart, digest it, apply it, live it out
- Hosea says, 14:1-2 “Return to the Lord”
- Revival begins by drawing a circle around yourself and says everything in this circle is God’s Will
- Rend your hearts!
- Ex. Two years ago, God took me out of the church I loved. God humbled me. I had to repent. I had to rend my heart. For the past two years I have been rending my heart. Wholehearted!
- Make time to get alone with God with fasting and prayer.

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?

15

Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;

George: Shofar

- The First Shofar, trumpet blast was a warning. The second blast was of impending danger—a call to prayer, seek God for the enemy is here!
- It’s the Lord’s Day calling us to seek Him!
- Ex. 81% of Americans believe another terrorist attack is going to happen soon! What are we doing?
- The Last Days Church will be a prayer and fasting church!

- The Last Days Church will not do business as usual because business can't be usual when you are in a war!
- Crying out to God for Freedom and Joy
- Crying out to God for deliverance
- Return to the Lord—get alone with Him. Fasting is turning away from things. Make time to get alone with God.
- Ex. God has shown me through hours and days of being alone on prayer walks, time with God alone in His Word, listen to Him
 - Noah was alone with God when he was told judgment was coming and he had to build the Ark with only his family believing him
 - Abraham was alone with God when told him of the promises of God for a new nation. Abraham was discouraged and God showed him the stars in the heavens and said he would produce a great nation
 - Jacob was alone with God in the wilderness when he wrestled with God and was given a new name
 - Moses was alone with God, had to hike up alone, when he heard from God on Mt Sinai
 - Joshua was alone with God when he was told how to overcome Jericho
 - Gideon was alone with God when he was told how to fight the battle against the Medionites
 - Elijah was alone with God on Mt Carmel
 - Peter was alone with God when he was told to go to Cornelius

- Paul was alone with God for 3 years after he became a Christian
- If you turn to Him, he will bring revival in your heart!
- Ex. Like the sunrise—watching the sun rise is slow, but the sun is rising
- God is waiting on us to repent? Cry out to Him? God doesn't want to judge, He wants to heal us, love us, pour out blessing
- That's who God is!
- Have we mistaken the patience of the Lord for toleration! Our culture has. God is so patient and loving that He is delaying. He is just too weak and old to act, or indifferent, or doesn't care, or not there at all. But God is working slowly and giving us a chance to repent
- Ex. In your own life—I got by with my sin yesterday and last week
- Ex. You can choose your sin but you can't choose your consequences
- We could have a 3rd Great Awakening but there is a price to pay—rend your heart!
- Come back to the cross—the ground is level at the cross!

16

Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room.

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?'"

- God wiped out Israel, his beloved nation. If God wiped out Israel, why would he not wipe out America
- Everyone is touched by God's judgment: elders, adults, children, nursing babes, even those getting married. All will be touched
- "Between the porch and the altar". Between the porch of the Temple and the Altar of burnt offerings. This would take directly in front of the door of the holy place, where the Presence of God is enthroned
 - This is the place where the priests acted as intercessors or mediators for the nation
 - This is for your heritage! The nation of Israel was considered to be God's own possession
 - Our nation was founded to be a "city on a hill". The Pilgrims came and believed that our nation would be a nation that would propagate the Gospel all over the world—it's in the Mayflower Compact
 - *Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia,*
 - We have a heritage as believers—we've been promised new life, forgiveness, joy, peace...but where is it? We've traded in our first hand faith for a second hand faith! You can ride on the back of those who went before us
 - A Second Hand Faith is riding on what others have experienced but we don't do the work, we don't seek the

Lord. Some of you men are riding on the faith of your wives!

- A First Hand Faith is when you decide to go after it yourself—you seek God, you get up and read your Bible, you begin to pray...

Look what God promises He will do for a people who seek Him:

Vs. 18

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.

- God will be zealous for your family; for America
- The Lord will answer prayer
- God will even bless us economically
- More on this next week

As we prepare to take communion, ask the Lord if you have a First Hand Faith or a Second Hand Faith...