

The Book of Joel “The End Times Church”

5-Marks of the Last Days Church I

antiphonal reading: Joel 2:25-27

Joel is prophesying: Devastation is coming

- Devouring locusts have destroyed Israel economically
- But Joel is prophesying of spiritual devastation
- The locusts symbolize sin in our nation and our lives, devouring us

God is giving us Harbingers or Signs warning of impending judgment:

- 9-11 was a Harbinger, a warning of coming disaster to our nation
- Hurricane Katrina wiped out a city
- Oklahoma tornadoes category 5 with 200 MPH winds, created fear in the heartland
- In Colorado Springs: Waldo Canyon Fire; Black Forest Fire—more on that next week
- Lately: The mass killings in Kenya in April
- The shooting down of a Russian Airline just a few weeks ago
- Paris massacre
- Shootings in Colorado Springs
- The worst terror attack since 9/11 in San Bernardino

The theme of Joel is 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—terrible for the unrepentant, wonderful for the saints

Day of the Lord—A day of reckoning and accountability

- God's patience runs out!
- It is near; it is coming
- Just this week...
- Longfellow wrote:

*The Mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small;
Though with patience He stands waiting,
With exactness He grinds all.*

Mike Bickle has said: "A Psalm 2 crisis will require a Joel 2 response, resulting in an Acts 2 outpouring!"

Turn to Psalm 2

1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,

3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

- The kings of the earth, the presidents of nations, the prime ministers of nations will hate the church because we will place the Word of God over them
- They don't want any restrictions!
- Hollywood hates our values because they restrict—they are bonds and cords—and they hate that
- Ex. Far Side: two deers one with a bullseye on it, "Bummer of a birthmark" Israel has a target on its chest. You now have a target and satan wants to destroy you
- See God's response...

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:

6 “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”

- God will be placing His Son on His holy hill in Zion
- I believe this also means in Israel—bringing revival in Israel
- Setting Christ on the throne in the Last Days Church
- God will be judging the nations and blessing the Church

“I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.

- The nations will grow in their hatred for God’s people, for the Jews, for the Spirit empowered Church
- But God is laughing and moving! God is laughing and moving!

In chapter 2 Joel says “Blow the trumpet in Zion”

- The First trumpet was a warning trumpet, warning us that an enemy is coming—repent, turn back to God
- The Second trumpet was to sound an alarm of impending danger. This is a call to repent and cry out to God
- Return to the Lord!
- Only those who have an intimate wholehearted walk with Jesus and the Holy Spirit will be able to handle the fear, frustration, and shock of what is happening

- Now Joel is making a turn and is giving us the hallmarks of the Last Days Church and the people of God...

Joel is prophesying of the End Times, the Last Days Church!

Chapter 2:18

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

- God will refresh His land, His people
- In the midst of devastation and turmoil, The Lord will pour out fresh blessing upon His people
- The Day of the Lord will bring devastation to the world and blessing to the Church
- But what kind of church? What kind of people will Jesus bless? Who will the Lord be zealous for?

Joel gives us the Marks of the Last Days Church

2:1

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

2:12

“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; 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? congregation, Assemble the elders,

First Mark of a Last Days Church will be Wholehearted Intimacy!

- Arguably this is the definition of a disciple—wholehearted intimacy with Jesus
- We will have to have intimacy with the Holy Spirit in the last days
- Turning to the Lord with all of your heart! Rending your heart! These are the marks only of one who is seeking God with all of their heart
- These days are going to be so fearful, so traumatic, so shocking. You will have to have an intimacy with the Lord
- When Jesus was asked about the signs of His second coming he begins, just like Joel, with ominous world events: wars, rumors of wars, falling away, hearts growing cold, false signs and wonders, demonic powers over the earth
- Joel speaks of these same harbingers but now he turns a corner in his prophetic letter—turn to me with your whole heart, rend your heart—he is speaking of wholehearted intimacy
- Beloved Saints, Worshipers and Warriors, you will have to walk closely intimately with Jesus during these days or you will fall under the spell of demons
- As demonic power is rising, God's Spirit's anointing will be also rising!
- Listen—you must cultivate an intimate walk with the Lord now! Cultivate a life lived in the presence of God
- These harbingers—wars, ethnic cleansing, rapes, terrorism, religious demonic zeal, and even environmental signs—blood moons, sun being darkened—solar and lunar eclipses, will create fear if you don't cultivate intimacy with the Spirit
- The choices will be stark: cultivating fear or cultivating faith

- God will grow you in first hand faith—experiencing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit
- Second hand faith won't cut it any longer! This is why many will fall away in the last days

Secondly, the Last Days Church will be a Wholehearted Prayer & Fasting Church, a Watchmen Church

1:14

Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders *And* all the inhabitants of the land *Into* the house of the Lord your God, *And* cry out to the Lord. Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord *is* at hand;

Vs. 19

O Lord, to You I cry out; For fire has devoured the open pastures, And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.

Chap 2:15

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

- This will be a church that has wholehearted intimacy through prayer
- Wholehearted in fasting!
- This will be a church wholeheartedly crying out to God
- God will place His zeal for holiness and righteousness over this church
- The contrast between this kind of church and other churches, even more prominent churches will be marked, will be obvious
- Many will fall away. This will be a time of falling away of many pastors and churches:

- 2 Thess 2, “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, **2** not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. **3** Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition”
- Jesus, speaking of the last days, said in Matt 24, “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. **10** And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. **11** Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. **12** And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. **13** But he who endures to the end shall be saved.
- But the true church, the church of the last days will be characterized for wholehearted Fasting & Prayer! Crying out to God
- This will be a people who know that unless they fast and pray God will not be able to answer because the level of evil will increase exponentially
- With the escalation of evil and demonic power, there will be an exponential outpouring of the Spirit
- The Last Days Church will be wholehearted in evangelism, works of service, loving the community
- I would also call it a Watchmen Church! A church that is studying God’s Word, believing God’s Word, trusting in the promises of God and sounding the trumpet!!
- A Trumpet Church! Israel was to be a trumpet nation, sounding the alarm to the nations of judgment

- The Last Days Church will be a Trumpet Church, a Watchmen Church

Thirdly, the Last Days Church will be Marked by Answered Prayer!

- This will not just be a watchmen church, a prayer and fasting church, but it will be a church that sees the zeal of the Lord answering prayer
- God is purifying His Church through fire! It will be hard but amazing.
- God will be answering the prayers of such body of believers—miracles and signs and wonders will mark this kind of church

Joel 2:18

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.

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.”

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.

- See it? “Don’t be afraid” the choice will be fear or faith—intimacy that leads to prayer, worship, fasting, seeking God

- The world will be in amazement at what God is doing in these churches
- Non-believers, politicians, even the military will be asking for these last days Jesus people to come and pray at their rallies, at their meetings, because God's power will be rising
- You see, and don't forget this, that even as demons are released upon the earth, preparing for the Day of the Lord, God will also be releasing greater Holy Spirit power upon the Church
- The wholehearted church will be crying out to God, fasting and praying, seeking God, and God will pour out major blessings upon the Church

Jesus said that in the last days, don't miss this, listen to what Jesus says,

Matthew 24 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

- God is purifying His church, His bride, in the last days
- Jesus is saying that simultaneous with false prophets, deception, growing lawlessness, and many falling away, will be the Gospel of the kingdom being preached to the whole world!
- This can't happen without greater anointing and power upon the church
- Answered prayer!! We will see God anointing intercessors like never before—men and women who cry out to God for things to happen

- It will be a time where fire comes down from heaven in answer to prayer
- “Fire from heaven Anointing” through men and women of God consecrated to seek God for His power and see it happen! I believe such power will be upon the Church again,
- So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, “If I *am* a man of God, then let **fire** come down **from heaven** and consume you and your fifty men.” And **fire** came down **from heaven** and consumed him and his fifty. (2 Kings 1:10)
- And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering. (1 Chron 21:26)
- [*Solomon Dedicates the Temple*] When Solomon had finished praying, **fire** came down **from heaven** and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. (2 Chron 7:1)
- The Last Days Church will be Marked with Fire from Heaven Answered Prayer. Amazing zeal from God for His church!
- Amazing signs and wonders through answered prayer
- In the midst of the terrible will be terrific blessings! God will be bringing us the inheritance of the nations
- Whole nations will turn to the Lord! Whole nations will hate Jesus and the Church, but then the whole nation will come to Christ!

Look at the last verse of Psalm 2

Vs. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in* the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

- Let's kiss the Son now in worship and communion. Lets give of our devotion and love to the Lord right now...