

**Joel: The Prophet of Fire**  
God's Hand in National Disasters  
Joel 1-2:11  
Pastor Phil Winfield  
April 12, 2006

Preliminary questions:

- Is there anything “minor” about the twelve “Minor Prophets?”
- What is a priest? A priest gets his position because of birth. A priest is mainly busy in the regular performance of repetitive duties and teaching the law of God line on line precept on precept.
- What is a prophet? A prophet got his position because of a call directly from God. His man duty was to hear God and warn the people. He did not so much teach them new material as he called them into account for not obeying what they already knew.
- Who is Joel? We don't now except that he is called by God for a particular message at a particular time. He is only introduced as the son of Pithuel. That separates him from 10 or so other Joel's in the Bible. His name means “Jehovah is God.”

The book of Joel is divided into two sections the Day of the Locust and the “Day of the Lord.”

Fist let me mention that “the day of the Lord” is mentioned 19 times in the Bible; 16 times in the Old Testament and at least 3 times in the New Testament. 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10 (let's look those up.) Joel speaks about the day of the Lord.

1:15 Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD *is* at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

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:

2:11 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?

2:31 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD

3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.

The day of the Lord! The day of the Lord is a period of time on God's prophetic calendar which will take place after the rapture. After God's children are caught up into the air. It will be a time of great judgment on the earth. The day of the Lord will be at time when God will judge the Gentile nations for their treatment of His special people, the Jews. It will begin at the rapture; it will conclude when the Lord Jesus Christ returns again.

So we are going to come to see the Day of the Lord as a future day but it also had a present day application for Joel in the day in which he was writing. He wrote here in the first part of his book about a national disaster; devastating plague of locusts.

National disaster can be a time of great heart searching. Hosea brought his message out of the midst of a personal tragedy, Gomer, his wife. Joel's message evidently arises from a national disaster. There is an invasion of locust on the way. It wasn't long until the sky became black and millions and millions of locusts were over the land. They covered the farm and the field and the forest. There were locusts everywhere. It was a national, economic disaster. Joel used it to speak a message to the people of God.

We have witnessed national disaster in our country.

- Who can forget Katrina? More than a thousand dead
- Can we forget a little more than a year ago the great Tsunami of Southeast Asia. More than 250,000 dead and tens of thousands more displaced.
- Nearly 5 years ago a disaster of sinister nature on 911 forever changed the world.
- There are disasters in nature, disasters in economy, disasters in culture and of course the root as seen in Joel is the disasters of a spiritual nature.

Does God ever use disaster as a tool to get our attention? Of course he does. He will use any pry bar he can to pry us away from our sin and from our possessions that we cling to so ferociously.

- 1) God Message of disaster
  - a) Deliver it to the elders verse 2
  - b) Deliver it to the children verse 3
  - c) Deliver to the grandchildren and the great grandchildren. Verse 3
    - i) Getting God's word to the next generation has always been the most difficult project.
      - (1) Deut 6:3 look at it
      - (2) Deuteronomy 11:1 look at it...
  - d) Deliver the message in detail... verse 4
    - i) Another version puts it like this (Message)
    - ii) What the chewing locust left, the gobbling locust ate; What the gobbling locust left, the munching locust ate. What the munching locust left, the chomping locust ate.
    - iii) In other words the locust invasion was incredible and left nothing to man or animal to eat.
    - iv) We cannot fail to tell the ones coming after us of both the bane and the blessings attached to God's messages.
    - v) Look at Psalm 71:14-18
    - vi) Also at Psalm 78:1-8
    - vii) Joel is given a message and like a good prophet he says to God's people: you know this! God told you to tell your children and to obey his voice but you didn't do it.

- (1) Children do not learn by osmosis
- (2) Children do not learn because you put them in the middle of state of the art equipment. They learn because someone teaches them by both word and deed!
- (3) Tell them the details
- e) Deliver it to the dissipated verse 5 – the drunkards. Those that think life is a party or a game!
  - i) When I read that I saw that alcoholism and drunkenness was a problem in the days of Joel and it is a problem in America tonight. It burdens my heart when there is so little spoken in the pulpits of our land today about the evil of alcohol and the dangers of drinking. The drunkenness and the alcohol creates tremendous problems in America.
    - (1) A high percentage of highway accidents involve alcohol.
    - (2) A high percent of murders involve alcohol.
    - (3) A high percent of rapes involve alcohol.
    - (4) Encourage the young people to never to let alcohol cross your lips. I would rather have a rattlesnake in a baby's cradle than to have alcohol in my home. I would rather have a maniac in an old folks' home than to have alcohol in my life. Think about the alcohol in Washington; on our college campuses, in our boardrooms and state rooms. We are pickling America and Christianity is paving the way.
  - ii) The most important question is not, "can I get away with something as a Christian?" The best question ever asked is, "is a certain choice a wise choice?" God gave us a whole book of wisdom called proverbs to help us make wise choices.
  - iii) Folks life is not a party!!!! Life is a project and to accomplish the goal of godliness we are going to have to make some wise decisions.
- 2) God's methods of disaster: verse 6-7 chapter 2:1-11
  - a) Locusts: a small thing that you would think you could easily destroy. Just a flick of the finger and a locust is dead. Not when there are billions of them
  - b) They destroy everything that grows! Read from Phillips. Pg 71.
  - c) A drop of water isn't much of a problem until God unites them in a flood that can breach the levees in New Orleans. (party on they said)

- i) God has used tiny bacteria
  - ii) God has used air borne spores such as anthrax.
  - iii) Ebola virus -
  - iv) God has used the small things to confound the mighty.
  - v) Here God used Locusts!
- 3) The world mourns in disaster
  - a) Verse 5 - the drunkards mourn because the party is over
  - b) Verse 8 – the bride mourns because she never made it to her wedding day
  - c) Verse 9 – the priests and ministers mourn because there is nothing to sacrifice
  - d) Verse 10-12 - Verse the common workers mourn because the product of their labor is perished and gone.
  - e) Verse 18-20 – the animals mourn because they have no food either. Isn't that curious the the animals have to suffer because of man's sin. Look back at Jonah 4:11 - much livestock. The animals suffer when God's people don't pay attention to him.
- 4) God's instruction in disaster – 1:13-15
  - a) Preachers get right
  - b) Elders get right
  - c) People get right!
    - i) Look at 1 Pet 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
    - ii) 2 Chronicles 7:14 <sup>13</sup>“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, <sup>14</sup>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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.