

Week 3 | “7 Takeaways From The Book of Joel”

I. A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF JOEL

- A. As I stated in the second message, the book of Joel has four primary sections, **Joel 1:1-20, Joel 2:1-27, Joel 2:28-32, Joel 3:1-21**;
- B. Section #1—Joel 1:1-20 “The locust invasion”
1. Joel open’s up his prophecy in a horrific, nightmare-esque scene where he’s standing in the middle of dried up water basins, in fields totally stripped of their crops, from four waves of locust that have utterly ravished the land.
 2. Joel’s appeal to wake up and consider the devastation is directed towards *elders, the inhabitants, the drunkards, the priests, the farmers and the vinedressers/the family of God* (not the wayward nations, or the rebellious gentile nations).
 3. This opening chapter is Joel’s attempt to get God’s family connected with the crisis that’s among them.
- C. Section #2—Joel 2:1-27 “There’s Another Crisis Coming”
1. Joel, who’s standing in the midst of one crisis (*the locust invasion*), is at the same time crying out to God’s people, sounding the alarm, making known that on the heels of these locust, is a greater, more punishing army, that won’t just touch their crops, but will destroy everything.
 2. Joel makes clear, this coming army, the northern army will *cause everyone’s faces to be drained of color*, and all the people to writhe in pain before them.
 3. But there’s hope, if God’s people will return to the Lord, He might relent, and show mercy!
- D. Section #3—Joel 2:28-32 “The Outpouring of The Spirit”
1. With the people’s response of repentance, and God’s commitment to restore the land, and their economy, Israel is asking how will they keep the covenant, how will they remain in the land, after they’ve returned and been restored.
 2. God’s response is most amazing; I will pour out My Spirit, not on one or two national prophets, but all everyone, male and female, and young and old, and His promise to Abraham will be fulfilled, that whosoever calls upon of the Lord name will be saved.
- E. Section #4—Joel 3:1-21 “The restoration of all things”
1. With Israel restored, the land prospering, and God’s family growing as the stars in the heavens, the Lord answers the final question about the fate of gentile nations, and the restoration of all things.
 2. God assures Israel, that He will deal a swift and punishing blow to His enemies, those that have exploited Israel and His family, full removing them from the face of the earth, as He ushers in restored world, a New Jerusalem, that’s not for a moment, but for eternity.
- F. Through the book of the Joel we see clearly the Gospel of the Kingdom, not just the Gospel of salvation. This is the grand metanarrative of the scriptures, the story from which all stories come.

II. 7 TAKEAWAYS FROM THE BOOK OF JOEL

- A. Recently as I've been reading and re-reading the book of Joel I've been challenged with some personal questions that the book has forced me to ask. I've also made a few observations that I think could be helpful to you as we study this book verse by verse over the next coming months. This is list of takeaways from the book of Joel;
- B. (1) The Promises and Cruses of Deuteronomy are Still Binding over God's Family Today—IHOPNW is among millions of believers throughout the world that confess the Old Testament is equally as valued and Spirit-inspired as the New Testament (**2nd Timothy 3:16**).
1. Around 144 AD a prominent (christian) named Marcion from Rome alleged that Jesus was sent from God, and Paul was his chief apostle, but he rejected the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) declaring that the God of the Old Testament was a lower entity than the all forgiving God of the New Testament.
 2. Marcionism effectively states that God changed during the intertestamental period, as if He got counseling and became a better, more low-key, easy going, less judgmental version of Himself.
 3. If the family of God obeys, life will go well for us, but if God's family disobeys/wanders then trouble and adverse circumstances will come our way, from God (**Leviticus 26:17, 25, 33, 37; Deuteronomy 28:25, 49; 32:23,24**).
 4. *"Notice that even as it is a book of preparation, the book of Deuteronomy is not primarily a military briefing. It is not primarily about demographics and geography. Above all it is about the word of God. It is about the fact that God is spoken, and his people need to be ready to hear him and obey. The intensity here is enormous, because the necessity of obedience is a matter of survival for Israel. You see the entire theology of Deuteronomy comes down to the fact that God has spoken. Thus hearing and obeying is life, but refusing to hear and disobeying is death. Moses wants the people of Israel to know that life and death hang in the balance of their willingness to hear God's word and respond to it ... I believe that the central problem in our crisis of preaching today is that somehow we believe this has changed. We no longer believe that hearing and responding to the word of God is a matter of critical importance..."* Albert Mohler Jr, "He Is not Silent"
 5. Israel is a template for how God deals with not only His nation, but with nations. And as we watch God deal with Israel, we are to assume this is how God is and will deal with us;
 - a. **1st Corinthians 10:1-13** *"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, all ate that same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ...Now these things became our examples...Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition..."*

- b. **Romans 11:17-28** “And if some of the branches were broken off, and you being a wild olive tree, are grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and the fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God didn't spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either...For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles has come in...”
- C. (2) We Are Not In Control Of Human History, God Is—In a total of 10 verses, in just 3 short chapters, God states clearly and authoritatively that He’s the One controlling all of human history, including the locust invasion, and the future Babylonian army;
1. “...For the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty...For the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand...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 terrible; Who can endure it?...and He relents from doing harm...Who knows if He will turn and relent...Let them say, spare Your people O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach...I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations...But I will remove far from you the northern army...So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, My great army which I sent among you...Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel...(Joel 1:15;2:1,11,13,14,17,19,20,25,27).”
- D. (3) We Don’t Know If God Will Relent; But There’s No Alternative, Then To Return To Him—Corporate and national repentance might be too late for this present crisis, but not for the future one! Mike Bickle calls this, “the divine perhaps of God.”
- E. (4) Though There Is Trouble Today, and More Trouble Tomorrow, We Are Assured That God is Near, Leading, and Will Bring About Redemption, Some in This Age, But Ultimately In The Age to Come—Joel assures his readers, apart from repentance this trouble, this invasion will be full, covering everything...but don’t lose heart, as you return to the Lord your God, God’s invasion of the invaders will be full, leaving nothing untouched.
1. Justice will be served, God’s Spirit will be poured out, the gentile nations will be judged, and His eternal city, will be filled with His covenant people, both Jew and Gentile.
2. Jesus’ teachings about His return are for the purpose of giving us hope/courage. Knowing what’s coming allows us to reserve engineer our lives today, in light of where God is leading them. He’s not left us in the dark.
- F. (5) God’s Intention Is To Dwell Back on The Earth, With His People, Not Just In a Garden, But In a Garden City—Jesus’ prayer in Matthew, that His will would be done on earth, just as it is in heaven, is hastening his coming Day, a Day when God will once again dwell with Man.
1. God doesn’t just want to be the center of your heart, and He doesn’t just want to be the center of His Church, He wants to be in the center of His people, literally, dwelling among them, like He did with Adam. The first Adam wasn’t able to take us there, but the second Adam, Christ has made a way for us to dwell/tabernacle with God.

- a. The New Jerusalem, according to **Revelation 21** is a square, that measures the same in length, width and height, 12,000 furlongs = 1,580 miles or 8,342,400 ft.
 - b. If you remember, in 2012 Felix Baumgartner the Australian daredevil rode up into the stratosphere in a hot air balloon, as he jumped back down to earth from 132,000 ft.
- G. (6) Joel’s Message Is Intended To Produce Sobriety, Godly Sorrow, and The Fear of The Lord—As I survey our current scene of Christianity, looking at what many are saying, and how they are responding, it’s as if it’s a big vacation, a goofy time, a silly time, but not a sober time, not a serious time (Tik-Tok | ZOOM call with our citywide Pastors | Mocking our governor).
1. The fact that on Easter weekend we reached close to the apex of death tolls from COVID-19, every state under a disaster declaration (first time in US history), and our Churches closed here, and in 190 countries. Did we even take note of this? Did we mark this down? Did we consider this?
 - a. **Luke 21:34-36** “But take heed to yourselves, let your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth...”
 - b. **Romans 13:11-14** “And do this, knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our Salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, and in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”
 - c. **2nd Corinthians 7:8-11** “For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; Though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to Salvation, not to be regretted; But the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication...”
 - d. **Ephesians 5:15-18** “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine which is in dissipation; but be being filled with the Spirit.”
 - e. **Titus 2:11-13** “For the grace of God that brings Salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and savior Jesus Christ...”
 - f. **1st Peter 1:13** “Therefore gird up (prepare mentally for action) the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

- H. (7) The Day of The Lord Is The Main Theme of This Book—Douglas Stuart rightly stated, “*For Joel, the Day of the Lord is the engine driving this entire prophecy.*” Beloved, we must return to studying, praying about, and teaching what Paul referred to as the blessed hope, the apex, the penultimate summit of all biblical longing, desire and expectation. If we lose the hope of Christ’s return, we lose nearly everything!
1. Joel is a prophet among a dispirited, discouraged, and dejected people, encouraging them to return to the Lord, because God is the One behind the calamity, and though He seems against them, He’s at the same time for them. Joel’s message is a message of hope among a hopeless people; GOD HAS NOT ABANDONED YOU, even though you’ve abandoned Him.
 2. Like Joel, we have to cultivate a relationship with God that allows us to see His hand ruling and reigning over the nations of the earth and leading all things, even in the midst of disaster.
 3. God’s working to raise up thousands, maybe millions of Day of the Lord preachers, singers, writers, producers. This message that Joel preached, is the message that He’s giving His family to preach, to speak both to the present trouble of people’s lives, and also to a future trouble that’s not here yet.
 - a. John Piper had this to say in 2015 at the Gospel Coalition conference regarding Day of the Lord preachers;
 - b. *“However, we do have some advantages over the prophets — which may sound strange, since they were inspired by God, and we are not. 1) We have all the prophets so we can compare them with each other, 2) we have the New Testament use of the prophecies, and 3) we have the perspective of 2,700 years to see what has happened. So, strange as it may sound, we may understand the timing and the relationships of some things more clearly than they did.*

Which leads me to insert an exhortation and prophecy of my own here. Many in my generation of evangelicals have held dispensational eschatological chart-drawing in such derision that we have been virtually paralyzed in our study of prophecy. For two generations, perhaps, we have failed to study prophecy with anything like the rigor that it deserves. We have been so afraid of being viewed as one of those Zionist, right-wing, antichrist-sniffing, culture-denying, alarmist left-overs from the Scofield, prophecy conference era that we give hardly any energy to putting the prophetic pieces together — at least not in public.

So my prophecy is that younger evangelicals who take the Bible seriously will start to feel like the paralysis of my generation was an overreaction to prophetic studies; Chris Tomlin and others will write more worship songs about the second coming; and younger scholars will not be embarrassed to write doctrinal dissertations on Daniel 9 and Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2, unintimidated by the academic scorn of futuristic possibilities.

And my exhortation is: Go for it! But in the process don’t lose any of the real gains of the last 60 years — like the chastening of our abilities to predict the end, and the full-blooded engagement with the challenges of this present day. If anything is clear from the prophets, it is that their prophecies were meant to empower present, God-centered righteousness and sacrifice for the relief of all suffering, and we know now, especially, eternal suffering.

So as we walk through Isaiah 11 we will not be able to avoid some of these prophetic perplexities and controversies. But O, the riches that are here and are clear.”