

The Day of the Lord

Joel 3

Good morning, my name is John and I'm glad that you're here this morning. The children are dismissed for EFCito this morning. This morning I want to mention a couple of things related to our mission outreach here at EFC. First, I want to introduce Sara Borman. Sara grew up in our church and is now serving on a church planting team in Mexico. She teaches the children of missionaries plus also participates in the outreaches there in Mexico. You may have noticed that Sara has recorded several EFCito lessons this past year during the pandemic, especially from the Ark Encounter in the US with different animals to help with different illustrations. Recently the Elder Team of the board voted to support her monthly in her church planting efforts. So, this morning we welcome Sara to our missionary family!

Also, I want to mention that this week Pan de Vida is celebrating 20 years of ministry. Pan de Vida is very Gospel centered in their outreaches while ministering to the thousands of people that walk through their doors. If you see Oscar today, please congratulate PdV for their ministry, and if God would lead you to give an offering to the ministry, I'm sure it would be an encouragement to them.

Lastly, I want to mention that our teens are planning on a mission's trip for later this month. Rani Borman is organizing our young people for this special outreach. They will be joining forces with Pete Emery's church in Manta for several days of outreach, so we want to start praying for them that God will use them to reach many people with the Gospel.

I want to mention two other announcements before we pray. First, today you can still sign up to participate in a small group. Last week Bob Eckler gave us the announcement that there will be groups in both English and Spanish, online and in person, so if you would like to

participate, please sign the sheet on the back table. The second is that we are in need of nonperishable food for the food pantry. If you would like to donate toward this important ministry, please see us after the service.

Let's pray this morning.

Today we are finishing the book of Joel. For several weeks Pastor Jeremy has been preaching about the different themes mentioned throughout the book. Today I will look at the prophecy of "The Day of the Lord." To review, there is little known about the Prophet Joel. In verse 1 it tells us his name and that his father's name was Pethuel. Nothing is said about where he lived, what was the time period of his prophecy, or what specific sin was being addressed to God's people. But what was important is that the Bible says in verse 1 that ***the word of the Lord came to Joel***. God had a message to deliver, and Joel was the person for which that message was communicated to the people of God.

There are two themes mentioned throughout the book. They are:

- 1 – The Day of the Locust and a call to lament
- 2 – The Day of the Lord and a call to repent

What we do know is that there was a natural calamity that took place. Not only was it a calamity, but also catastrophic. It affected the people, the land, the economy, and everyday life. It was so catastrophic that God told the people to tell it to their children, and their children's children for several generations.

The natural catastrophe was the devastation from a swarm of locust. We first read about a locust invasion in the book of Exodus 10:1-20. It was one of the plagues that God used to bring judgement to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. The plague swarmed the Egyptians but did not touch the children of God. However, this plague in Joel devastated the land of Israel, the land that flowed with milk and honey.

A few weeks ago I mentioned about the life and habits of locusts, so I'll not go into that again. However, in Joel's message about "The Day of the Lord," he uses the imagery of the locust devastation to describe a future event. In Joel 2, the prophet describes that future judgement in detail. That detail is also described in Revelation 19 and 20. We'll get into that in a few minutes.

The term "Day of the Lord" is mentioned some 19 times in the Old Testament by several prophets. It describes the coming judgement of God. Here are a few verses used by the OT Prophets.

Isaiah 13:6 Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

Isaiah 13:13 Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

Amos 5:18 Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light,

Obadiah 1:15 For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.

***Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent before the Lord God!
For the day of the Lord is near; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.***

Zephaniah 1:14 The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.

Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

There are many other verses about this “Day of the Lord.” But we’ll look at Joel’s prophecy and our response to it.

Joel 3

The first thing that we want to look at this morning is: why is there a future judgement?

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, ³ and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

In verse 1, the Bible tells us that ***God will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem.*** There is that word again: restore. God will restore. In chapter 2:25, God tells us these words, ***“I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten...”*** Because He is holy and just, He must judge sin. Yet when we accept His mercy and grace, He will restore our lives to the communion that was first given to Adam and Eve.

But why judgement? Because men are wicked and sinful. In verse 3:2 the Bible says, ***“I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them***

there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, (3) and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.”

God said that He will gather all the nations. That means Ecuador, United States, Iran, China, Russia, UK, Australia, Singapore, France, Germany. All nations. God will bring all nations into judgement. From every generation since the creation of mankind. All the wickedness that has committed throughout the ages, God will judge. We may forget what has happened in the past, but God hasn't. He has every detail written down in a book. There will be no bribes or cover ups. The Bible tells us in Revelation 20:11-13:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

The reason God will judge is because human evil is great. In Joel 3:3 it talks about human trafficking, prostitution, and rebellion against God. God will bring all the nations into a valley, the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The name Jehoshaphat means “God judges.” God will bring all the nations to the valley of judgement and pour out His wrath on the Day of the Lord. Revelation 19 tells us that story, that terrible day of judgement.

First, why judgement? Because human evil is great. Second, what will the judgment be like?

In Joel 3:14, it says that there will be vast crowd. ***Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision.*** Have you ever been in a crowd of hundreds of thousands or millions? Twice I've been at sporting events where there

was over 110,000 at one place and over 200,000 at another event. Yet, here the scriptures tells us that they will be vast crowds at that day.

What will they be doing? In 3:9 and 10 it says that they will be there for war. They will take their instruments of peace (plowshares and pruning hooks) and convert them into swords and spears. All the human races will stand in defiance toward the eternal holy God, creator of heaven and earth and attempt to engage war against him. But imagine, all the armies of the world stand to fight with their swords and spears against the greatest supreme being ever to have existed. In verse 12 it says that God is sitting on His throne. It doesn't even move him. Psalm 2, a Messianic psalm tell us these words:

Why do the nations rage^[a]

and the peoples plot in vain?

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 burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”*

⁴ *He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.*

⁵ *Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,*

⁶ *“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”*

In Joel 3:16, it tells us, “*The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and the earth will quake.*” In verse 15 it tells us that the lights will go out, “*The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.*” It will be a cataclysmic moment when judgement will be declared on all people and nations. So, if God's wrath is going to be poured out on that day, is there any hope for us?

First, we have looked at the reason for judgement, secondly, we have looked at the details of that day of judgement. Now we will look at where we can find refuge from that judgement.

Joel 3:16

***The Lord roars from Zion,
and utters his voice from Jerusalem,
and the heavens and the earth quake.
But the Lord is a refuge to his people,
a stronghold to the people of Israel.***

As the scene of judgement takes place, there is a wonderful little word that is given here. It is the word “but”. There is only one way to avoid God’s wrath and judgement. It is found in this little word. It is the LORD is a refuge (safe place) both to his people and the people of Israel. The same God who declares judgement also provides salvation.

Let’s look at Romans 3:23-25

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Humanly speaking, there is no hope because we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But God has provided a refuge, a way to escape the divine judgement that is to come. It is through our faith in Jesus Christ who paid for our sins and judgement on the cross. Romans says that we are justified (declared righteous) by redemption through Jesus Christ. By his shed blood on the cross, he provided propitiation for God’s wrath on our sin. It is by received by faith, and when we receive his redemption as our substitute, God declares us justified. We can know now here in this life that our eternal fate has been secured by faith and our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Many people have told me that they are waiting for that judgement day, waiting for God to weigh all the good works with their bad works hoping that the scale will balance in their favor. But let me tell you that it will never balance in our favor because our sin has us fall short of God's glory. The only way we can have the assurance that we will be reconciled to God and have eternal life is by trusting in God's son, Jesus Christ who took our judgement for us on the cross. We can have that assurance now. However, if you chose not to accept Christ's substitutional death of our sins, the bible tells us these words:

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. It is the final words of God concerning **"The Day of the Lord."**

If you are here this morning and have never trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, your place of refuge, let me plead with you to not leave this room today without finding that place of refuge in your life. Today you can have that assurance that your declared righteous before God.

Let's pray.