

Title: The Day of the Lord

Text: Joel 1:1 – 2:17

Date: May 3, 2026

Good morning, everyone. It's good to see you all this morning. We had a wonderful time at our conference last week. Zach and I and we enjoyed worshiping with those believers down there, but there's nothing like worshiping with your family. And so, I'm thankful to be back. It's good to be back.

As we get started today, I just want to remind us that we are in a series on The Book of the 12, which is the 12 minor prophets. Where we are approaching The Book of the 12 as one unified book because history tells us so. And as we will see today the text also points us in that direction. So, I would ask you if you would have your Bibles with you that you would open up to the book of Joel. The book of Joel, directly following Hosea. Which is all about the day of the Lord, the day of God's simultaneous salvation and judgment in the end of days. The book of Joel we will read in chapter 1 through to chapter 2:17, chapter 1 through to chapter 2:17.

The author Joel records for us in verse 1, "The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel: Hear this, you elders; and give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation. What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against my land, powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness.

It has laid waste my vine and it splintered my fig tree; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white. Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord. The fields are destroyed, the ground mourns, because the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil languishes. Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil; wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine dries up; the fig tree languishes. Pomegranate, palm, and apple, all the trees of the field are dried up, and gladness dries up from the children of man.

Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, past the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed shrivels under the clods; the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are torn down because the grain has dried up. How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed because there

is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep suffer. To you, O Lord, I call. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has burned all the trees of the field. Even the beasts of the field pant for you because the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor it will be again after them through the years of all generations. Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle.

Before them peoples are in anguish; all faces grow pale. Like warriors they charge; like soldiers they scale the wall. They march on his way; they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another; each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls, they climb up into the houses, and they enter through the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.' Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priest, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, 'Spare your people, O Lord, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?''

This is the word of the Lord and let's pray together as we begin.

Father may your word multiply and increase and be fruitful among your people today by your spirit. Lord cause in us to bear fruit in good works because of the word that we hear and believe today. And cause in us the word to increase our knowledge of you, our God. For your praise and glory and our eternal good.

In Jesus' name Amen.

If you knew that you were going to die in six months, how would that change the way you live right now? How would knowing the day of your death change the way you live your life? I think of a country song when I think of that question. A song called Live Like You Were Dying, maybe some of you know it, which

depicts the life of a man who receives a diagnosis of a terminal illness, most likely cancer, and he starts living his life completely differently. He goes skydiving, rocky mountain climbing, he goes bull riding, he also loves deeper, and he spoke sweeter, and he gave forgiveness that he had been denying. And he wants all of us to have the chance to live like we were dying one day.

And while it's kind of a silly example, the truth that the song portrays is that knowing our future massively impacts the way that we live our lives today. It changes the way we view life today. But friends when we consider our ultimate fate as human beings who are created by God and accountable to him, we know that there is something after death. After death, we must come to terms with our creator in God to whom we were made and are accountable to. And this God will one day soon come and gather all people before his judgment seat and judge all people according to what they did on earth. And being sinners who lie, who cheat, who steal, who lust, who are angry, who are bitter, who sin, we are going to be rendered guilty if we are left to our own devices, if we are left to our own means and to fend for ourselves on that final day.

Now if I told you that that was the destiny of every human being, if that was your destiny you're going to stand before a holy God one day and you will be judged guilty on the basis of your inability to follow his word. How would that change your life? How would it change your perspective perhaps on the current calamity and destruction we see in our world today? How would it change how you respond to these things? How you respond to even the word of judgment that is sure to come?

As we turn the page in The Book of the 12 today to the book of Joel, we are met with exactly this dilemma. And God is going to judge the world on a final day. And the question is how should we respond? And Joel says in Joel 1 & 2 that we should respond to judgment by trusting in the gracious Lord for his glory. That we should respond to judgment by trusting in the gracious Lord for his glory. And he says that he leads us along this path to get to this trusting in the Lord in response to judgment. By telling us you first be wise, to beware of judgment, and to believe in the Lord. To be wise, beware of judgment, and ultimately to lead to belief in Lord.

So, first Joel tells us to be wise in the first 3 verses. And just because we have entered a new book, I just want to bring a brief note of the author and date of this book. The author of Joel, the prophet Joel, we have no other biblical record of outside of this book. We don't really know who he was and when he lived. And so, we're even not really told in the book much clue as to what king he was alive during, or when he was having his prophetic ministry. But I think we're going to learn later today that it's at least post-exile. It's after the exile has occurred. Because I believe he describes that in the text we have before us. So, the somewhat unknown author Joel tells us first to be wise. Specifically, Joel tells us to be wise in reading his book.

He says in the first 3 verses, he says, *"The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel: Hear this, you elders; give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children of it, and your children to another generation."* Joel wants us to be wise because by hearing the word of the Lord, this book is God's word to his people and so we should be wise

to hear it. And we also would be wise to know that what he's describing in this book has not happened in any day present or past or right now even. *"Has such a thing happened in your days, on the days of your father's?"* Answer? No. What's happening is something still to come.

And finally, we should be wise in telling our children of it, he says. That this message is so important that it needs to be passed down from generation to generation. But Joel also tells us to be wise in a different way. And I want to bring your attention first to the fact that Joel is purposely placed after the book of Hosea within The Book of the 12. And this is very very important. What we see in Joel 1, 2 & 3, and Hosea 14:9 together is the first of many significant passages that demonstrates a purposeful arrangement in unity of the various books of the minor prophets.

So, in other words, we're going to see passages throughout The Book of the 12, throughout the minor prophets that together show that they are supposed to be in this order for a particular purpose and for ultimately understanding the book as a whole. And the first of these passages is Hosea 14:9 and Joel 1, 2 & 3. And what we see in the overlap of these two passages is what we will see in each of the key passages throughout the rest of the minor prophets.

In particular there are three main characteristics to these special important passages. The first is that they have unique material in the book that they are existing within. So, Hosea 14:9 if you remember is very distinct. All the sudden out of nowhere it seems he just starts talking about wisdom. It sounds like he's reading Proverbs, *"Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the Lord are right."* And similarly in Joel 1, 2 & 3 you have a wisdom trope being used in him saying, *"Hear this, you elders.... Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation."* This is kind of pattern we see in Proverbs 1-9 where Solomon acting as a father tells his son, receive my word, hear my word, and take it, receive it, and be wise. So, Hosea and Joel both uniquely have this wisdom theme. They want us to be wise in reading it.

And the second is that there's a quotation or allusion to the book of Jeremiah, which is very specific, which marks how I think this is obviously purposeful by the authors, in that Hosea 14:9 refers to Jeremiah 9:12. Hosea 14:9 says, *"Whoever is wise, let him understand these things."* Jeremiah 9:12 says, *"Who is the wise man? Let him understand this."* It's an almost direct quotation of Jeremiah 9:12. This is something we see throughout each of these special passages as well.

And finally, there is a development of the themes of judgment and salvation which is what we've seen in The Book of the 12 so far. We've seen it over and over again in Hosea that these passages in some way progress or push forward the themes of judgment and salvation. And Hosea and Joel fit together to tell us that to be wise is to read this book and its message about judgment and salvation and to respond accordingly and to respond with understanding and with repentance and with faith. It is telling us that we should be wise in reading this message of judgment. And while we see more passages in the future these three characteristics that have these things it's more important right now to cover how we are to be a wise reader of this book. And Joel I think that we see because of the fact that it follows Hosea, we should be instructed to bring with us everything Hosea has already taught us about judgment and salvation and the

nature of this future restoration that God is bringing. And therefore, a wise reading of the prophets is a reading that flows from Christ and flows to Christ. It leads from Christ because the fact that as we saw last time to be wise is to be united to the wisdom that is from God is to be indwelt by the Spirit.

To be a Christian is the necessary prerequisite and requirement for a right reading of the Bible. A wide reading comes from Christ, but it also leads to Christ. It leads to Christ. We see that wise readers see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as they read the text. They read this judgment and salvation, and they see the glory of Jesus. They see the message of the gospel as what a wise reading does. The Old Testament as we see in 1 Corinthians 10 is written for us on whom the end of the ages has come in the last days. You might be wondering what is some of those things then that we're supposed to take with us from Hosea to read this wisely?

The first is that we are in what we call in big word eschatological context which just means the last days. We're in a last day's context. Hosea 3, 4, & 5 tells us that the restoration and the judgment that is going to come comes in the last days. Which for us we know as the New Testament tells us we are in the last days. And that means we need to be reading this with particular attention knowing that the things that it is speaking about or either in some way fulfilled now or will be fulfilled completely very soon.

Second is that there is this salvation is through God's Messiah the Davidic King. We saw this in Hosea 1, 3, 6, & 11. And finally, this salvation is for *"not my people"* Jew and Gentile alike. We saw that Israel becomes *"not my people"* because of their sin. And for God to call his people out of *"not my people,"* he is calling both Jew and Gentile, all who would believe in Him. Such that the ethnically mixed *"not my people"* becomes an ethnically mixed my people that gathered children of Abraham and of Israel. And this is why Paul says in Romans 9 and Peter says in 1 Peter 2 that Hosea 1 & 2 refers to a remnant of both Jews and Gentiles. So, we need to bring all this with us if we're going to read the rest of The Book of the 12 wisely. That is how we will read wisely and see Christ if we remember the context and the salvation in the person specifically this Messiah who is bringing this salvation in judgment.

Second Joel tells us that we need to beware of judgment. Beware of judgment. The first section of Joel's book in the first two chapters is devoted to judgment and the back half of his book is devoted to salvation. And Joel's section on judgment is split in half at the turn of chapter 2. So, where he speaks in the first half about a present or past judgment that has already happened, and he speaks after that about a future judgment that is still to come. The question is how do you describe, how do you speak about the horrible future all destructive judgment and salvation of God? And how do you put that into words? I mean imagine Joel trying to put it into words. How would you put that into words describe it properly? Well, maybe like a teacher would do in math class or history class where they start with a concept that the students understand that they know about and then build on it to introduce new and more difficult topics.

So, Joel takes something that his readers already know about. They've experienced. Perhaps they've read about it and then he casts the future judgment in that language that means they understand what kind of judgment it is. And specifically, Joel portrays the present judgment of exile through the lens of a locust plague. And second, he uses the imagery of the exile and the locust plague to predict what the future

judgment of the day of the Lord will be like. So first he portrays present judgment. He portrays the present judgment of the exile through the lens of a locust plague. You see this in verse 4 when he talks about these locusts. *"What the cutting locusts left, the swarming locusts has eaten. What the swarming locusts left, the hopping locusts has eaten."* In verse 5 that they should wail and weep because all of their wine is gone. The locusts have eaten everything. And the locust plague here could be referring to a historical locust plague that we have nothing else about that obviously decimated Israel. It could be that. If it's not true, then that doesn't affect the way we read the text. Or I think we at least can say we know for sure that he has in mind the Exodus plague in Exodus 10. The plague of locusts. Plague number six in Exodus.

This is something that the Israelites would be very familiar with because they've read Exodus many times. And we see this through several connections that he uses exact language, that he uses to describe the judgments that he's speaking about in his book. For instance, Exodus 10:5, 14 & 15 describe how *"they,"* that is the locust, *"shall cover the face of land, so that no one can see the land.... the locust came up all over the land of Egypt and settled in the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts has never been seen before, nor will ever be seen again. They covered the face of the whole land, so the land was darkened."* And we see in like verse 6 of chapter 1 of Joel how they're *"beyond number."* Or in 2:2, *"a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread on the mountains a great and powerful people."* He's casting this judgment in the same language of the locust plague of Exodus. And the same thing with a phrase like never before or this has never happened and will never be again. This only happens a handful of times in scripture and two of them are this locust plague in Exodus 10 where he says that *"such a dense swarm of locust has never been before, nor ever will be again."* And then in chapter 2:2 he says this, *"powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations."* Similarly, the destroying of all plant life is in chapter 10:5 & 15 of Exodus where they eat all the plants in the land and the fruit trees, and the hail had left nothing. And Joel says in 1:17-20 and several times throughout this that everything is decimated. All of the plants, all of the animals are wondering where all the food is because it's all gone.

And finally, the filling of houses where it says of the locust in chapter 10 of Exodus that *"they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and all the Egyptians."* And then in verse 9 of chapter 2 of Joel it says, *"They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls, they climb into the houses, and they enter through the windows like a thief."* So, Joel once again is trying to prove the point here he's using the locust plague of Exodus to cast to say you know how bad that judgment was from God, well this new judgment that is already here in the exile and that will come one day is a lot like that except worse. But I think verse 6 shows us in chapter 1 that he's not actually talking about locusts because he says *"For,"* as in what I'm talking about is, *"a nation has come up against my land, powerful and beyond number; its teeth are a lions' teeth, and has fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree."* Which is to say Israel is his vine. Israel is his fig tree. They have completely laid waste the nation of Israel. Evidently Joel is using the imagery of this locust plague from Exodus to refer to and describe some kind of calamity that has already happened from an enemy nation coming in and destroying Israel.

You might think well, what could that be referring to? Well, we just read the book of Hosea and we saw prophesied over and over again this little thing called the exile that would come from Babylon and Assyria

who would come in and ransack the place and they did indeed. And Joel has lived through it as he exists on the other side of it and he's recounting the horrible nature of this judgment that they are presently living through in terms of the Exodus plague of Exodus 10. And you'll even notice the same descriptions of what that exile was like what we found in Hosea. If you remember in Hosea, he talked about how not only that exile isn't as a removal from the land but it's a removal of the abundance of the land, the good fruit of the land.

And it's also a removal of things like sacrifices and offerings in the temple service. Similarly in verse 9 & 13 of chapter 1 we see that there is the loss of *"drink offerings and grain offerings are cut off."* The priests are mourning because they've lost the ability to sacrifice to the Lord. Same thing in verse 10-12 and verse 16-20 where the abundance of the land and its blessings are completely torn away from them. This is obviously talking about the exile, and this is why the people are told to lament in verses 8, 13, and 14. They are to call all the people together to lament the state of the nation due to the judgment of God upon them they are presently experiencing. The present reality of judgment brings lament, crying out to the Lord in sadness and grief. That's a very important point we'll come back to that later.

The present reality of judgment brings lament. But notice also what else the present reality of judgment does in verse 15. He says *"The day of the lord is near. Alas for the day! The day of the lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes."* How can he say he thinks the day of the Lord is near? *"Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?"* In verse 16. He's saying in light of the fact that this present judgment is on me, but yet we're not gone yet tells me that there is a day coming near very soon that God will bring full and final judgment on this last and dreaded day.

The experience in other words of present calamity not only brings lament, but it brings a realization that the judgment of God on his final day is near. And he goes on to describe and predict that future judgment on the day of the Lord in chapter 2:1-11. Where he says in verse 1, *"Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near."* He goes on to describe this. He says, *"a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; unlike there has been before or will be again after them for the years of all generations."* And once again, this sounds a lot like Exodus 10 that we covered earlier. And as he moves to describing this great day of the Lord you see that he's now combining the Exodus 10 imagery with the imagery of the nation who ransacked the place in the exile.

And so, he's saying you know that Exodus 10 judgment pretty horrible, right? You know that judgment you just experienced in the exile pretty horrible, right? Well, how about you just combine those two and that's how bad the judgment on the day of the Lord will be. He goes on to describe the horrible judgment that is going to come. Just really cheery today guys judgment from the Lord. *"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses."* So, verse 3 he says, *"Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them."*

My Leviticus Sunday school class will have burning ears when they hear that. The land of God, where he dwells, is like a new garden of Eden and to be exiled from it is to be thrown into the wilderness. Well, this Earth, this entire earth that God created for his glory, is similar to the garden of Eden in this imagery, but it will one day become a desolate wilderness. Nothing will be left. God will completely destroy everything we see and know. This means of God's judgment, this army, his appearance is like of horses, like war horses they run. He continues to describe how they're *"like a powerful army drawn up for battle....They leap upon the city walls, they run upon the walls, they climb into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief."* This is a horrible ransacking of the earth by God's army. And then he ramps it up a notch in verse 10. He moves away from merely imaging it in the terms of exile and the locust plague. And he shows us that this is a cosmic judgment. This is including everything.

This is not an Israel only judgment that's coming. This isn't a nation's only judgment that's coming This is a whole world, all creation, all-encompassing judgment from God. He says, *"The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw they're shining."* This is a horrible fearsome all creation touching destruction. But notice how he still even after ramping it up continues with the theme of an army. *"The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful."* So, the Lord reaffirms here that the imagery of an army is not merely imagery but that there will be an army that belongs to the Lord that is led by one who executes his word powerfully who will bring the judgment that he is speaking of. *"For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?"*

Friends, this is the great, horrible, awesome, fearsome judgment of the Lord. It is worldwide. It is all creation touching. It is executed by an army of the Lord. By the power of God himself the Lord will judge sin and it is very very near to us. *"Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near."* It is exceedingly great. It is final and it is coming. So the question is what is our response? As we saw earlier the present reality of the judgment of God brings lament. Crying to the lord in sadness and grief. And while that is describing the exile, and it was very direct for the Israelites, we too live in a world under the judgment of God. We talked about this way back in Hosea and Hosea depicted it for us, but we do not merely live in a sin-cursed world friends. We live in a god-cursed world. Read Genesis 3. God has placed a curse on the world that brings about the destruction and death that we see all around us.

We see the outworking of that curse every single day. We see a world burdened with sin, with death, with destruction, natural disaster, all sorts of things. And we all can know that it is a result of that curse. Our lives, especially in the 21st century are so filled and so burdened and so inculcated with the knowledge of all these things that happen around us. We get on our phones, and we immediately know that a thousand people died somewhere, or a hundred people died over here, or this horrible thing happened over here. We are so burdened with this knowledge that we were never meant to have. Of all of the horrible nature that we see in the world. And how many times have we seen death and we've seen calamity and we've seen destruction in the world, and we feel this ache inside? We feel in our guts in our bones. We know in our hearts that something is wrong. We feel in that moment grief over what this world has become. Over seeing the world crushed under the curse of God.

And Joel tells us that is exactly what we're supposed to feel. Joel tells us that we are supposed to groan with all creation. We are supposed to lament the condition of this world realizing that it is still spiraling downward under the curse that God has placed upon it in his righteous judgment in Genesis 3. When hardship strikes, when someone dies, when natural disasters hit, Joel tells us it is good and right to lament. To cry out to God. To see the seeming injustice, but really the justice of God on the world. The Lord loosening his grip giving people over to their own sinful desires. So, lament friends. Lament this sinful world. Cry out to the Lord. Tell them what is wrong. But the reality of present judgment in the form of the curse is also designed to make the eminence and the reality of the final destruction of God more clear and more felt. The reality of past and present judgment from God on sin is meant to wake us up to the eminence of the final judgment of God and getting us to repent and to change and to respond.

We see this multiple places in the new testament. The most famous is probably in Luke 13:1-4 where Jesus is confronted and questioned by people asking about the Galileans who are killed by Pilate and his sacrifices. And so again, we have the real death of real people who are really affected, and their families were affected and it's horrible and it's bad and it's sinful. But Jesus says this, he says, *"Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, but I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* Jesus does exactly what Joel does here, and he says present judgment from God. The reality of the curse in the world should push us to look beyond it and let it be a pointer to the ultimate judgment that God will bring and cause us to repent to change to live our lives in a different way. Present calamity is a pointer to God's future judgment.

So, the next time you see death, the next time you experience horrible sickness, the next time you hear of a natural disaster, remember the words of Jesus. Remember the words of Joel, that disaster is but a glimpse and but a gracious appetizer from God of what the judgment will one day be on the world. And it should cause us to consider what kind of decision we need to make now before that day comes lest we likewise perish. And I want us to rejoice in that today friends. This is not something to be burdened by. This is something to rejoice in. That the Lord is so gracious to us to allow us to know that he is going to one day fully and finally deal with the problem of sin in the world and make everything right. And make a world in which righteousness dwells. That is a beautiful truth. He will prevail.

I read the back of the book and God wins. Praise God! But we also need to follow the words of Christ and Joel here and to repent. To respond in light of it. But the fact that God alone, that God is bringing this judgment, should cause us to ask the question of verse 11. Joel says, *"who can endure it?"* If this is how horrible the judgment of the Lord is, if it's like Exodus 10 locust plague plus or multiplied by exile equals this thing, who can endure that? If I told you that an earthquake was about to happen and the whole church would get sunk into the grounds and then a f5 tornado would come across and blow this church while we were all inside of it, you probably would say who could stand that? Who could withstand? If that is so powerful, then who could ever withstand the wrath and the judgment of God? Who could possibly endure?

Amazingly the Lord answers the question in the affirmative as in someone can endure. And he answers it in verses 12-17 where he tells us that the one who can endure is the one who believes in the Lord. As we see in verse 15 & 16 the Lord says to *"blow the trumpet,"* like verse 1. But this time it's not for warning, but it's a call to repentance. There's the command to call and assemble and assemble the elders like chapter 1:14, but this time it's not to merely wail. It's to not merely rend garments, but it's to offer up a word of genuine repentance and faith in the Lord. As the Lord says in verse 12 & 13, *"Yet even now, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, and weeping, with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments."* As we see in verse 17 the people express this repentance and trust in God by appealing to his love for his glory. *"Why should the nation say where is their God?"* They trust that God will characteristically act for the sake of his own name like Moses did back in Exodus 32. The Lord beckons sinners who are under his wrath to return to him. Why?

Look at the reason in verse 13, *"for he is gracious and he is merciful, he is slow to anger, and he is abounding in covenant loyalty, and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering a drink offering for the Lord you're God?"* The Lord who brings this horrible judgment is the Lord who is merciful and gracious to you. Is the Lord who invites you today to return to him. To find in him eternal, steadfast, covenantal love. To find in him eternal abundant grace, mercies every morning, slow to anger, relenting over disaster.

In light of the horrific message of judgment we can rest today in the comfort that our God and our Father loves us and now sheds upon us unfathomable grace freely bestowed on all who believe in him. And he demonstrated that love to you friends. He guarantees that grace to you that you escape that judgment day. How? Let's read wisely through his messiah, through the one Davidic king, the one Lord Jesus Christ the son of God, the lamb who takes away the sins of the world. And remember at the crucifixion of Jesus there's a few significant things that happen.

In Matthew 27:45 as Jesus hangs on the cross we hear this detail, *"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"* Complete darkness over the lands. And a man lamenting with the most famous lament in all the scripture of Psalm 22. And after Jesus died, this is what Matthew says, *"And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split in two."* The temple is affected. The earth shakes and quakes before the Lord. Darkness as Luke says in his account the sun losing its light. Lament, earthquake what does that sound like? Sounds like the day of the Lord. The Lord who is merciful and gracious and abounding and steadfast love has demonstrated that love towards us in Christ who took on the cross the judgment that we will one day deserve on the day of the Lord when God returns on the cross.

The Lord in that moment was pouring out on him the judgment that we deserve. The day of the Lord judgment that we were supposed to experience. And it's on the basis of that messiah doing that work. Taking on that punishment on our behalf that we have hope today and that we can come boldly to God and receive not judgment that we deserve but grace and mercy ever more. That we can sing His mercy is

more though our sins be many. And while we may lament that we may groan for what's to come we do not groan without hope. We do not groan with this creation without hope but rejoice in the hope of the God of our salvation and our glorious messiah who makes us endure and withstand the coming judgment because he took it on for us first. Beware of the judgment that is now evident in the world. And beware of the judgment that is to come and respond with trust in the Lord for his glory. Tell your children of it too. Let it be known from generation to generation that salvation belongs to the Lord. And he will by no means though leave the guilty unpunished.

I want to close with Revelation 6 & 7. Revelation 6 & 7 which I think purposefully mirrors Joel's text and gives us a picture of what today and what the future holds. Revelation 6 begins with the first five seals which include things like warfare, killing with the sword, economic despondency, the loss of oil and wine, the killing of beasts of the earth, and famine, the murder of God's elect. Sounds like today, doesn't it? *"But when he opened the sixth seal,"* verse 12, *"I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the cave and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,'"* why, *"for the great day of their wrath has come,"* and look at the question he asks, *"and who can stand?"* *"Who can stand?"*

And much like Joel who answered that question in the affirmative, look at chapter 7. He answers the question. John answers the question in the affirmative someone can stand, and it looks like people who have been sealed. Well, it sounds like people who have been sealed on their forehead. A perfect 144,000 from the sons of Israel. But it looks like people from every tribe tongue and nation. Read in verse 9 with me, *"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation and from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, clothes in white robes, and from where have they come?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' And he said to me, 'These are the ones coming out of great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'*

Who can stand? Everyone who washes their robes in the blood of the Lamb. *"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night and in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."* Believe in this Lord. What a glorious hope we have in the lights of present in the future judgment of God.

Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you that you are God, merciful and gracious. Lord, we tremble before the reality of your fierce righteous wrath. Father help us now to live as those in the already not yet. Help us now to live in light of our destiny and our future. Not only the judgment that is to come that we might turn and repent of our sins lest we face it. But Lord that we would also think of the future salvation that is ours. And to live in step with what Christ has made us in him. Father this week, let us glorify you through lives of reverent fear and joyful thanksgiving.

We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

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