



**The Disaster of a Locust Invasion: A Foreshadowing of the Coming Day of the Lord (His Terrifying Judgment),
February 20, 2022 / 19 Adar 5782**

Joel 1:1-20 (KJV)

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. **2** Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? **3** Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation. **4** That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. **5** Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth. **6** For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. **7** He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast *it* away; the branches thereof are made white. **8** Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. **9** The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn. **10** The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. **11** Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. **12** The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, *even* all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men. **13** Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. **14** Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD, **15** Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. **16** Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*, joy and gladness from the house of our God? **17** The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. **18** How do the beasts groan! the

herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. **19** O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. **20** The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Introduction:

This Sunday night series covers the hope and mercy found in the book of Joel and in his prophecies. This book highlights issues of repentance, judgment, and restoration of people who find a merciful God in the midst of their chaos. We should read the book of Joel knowing that the Lord may discipline us but will always forgive those who repent with genuine hearts.

We're never so far gone that God doesn't offer a way back to him.

Disasters happen every day of the week. People across the globe are experiencing one form of disaster or another at any given time, disasters such as...

- tornados
- hurricanes
- earthquakes
- floods
- mudslides
- traffic accidents
- plane crashes
- diseases
- bankruptcies
- loss of employment
- violent crimes
- assaults
- wars
- the death of loved ones

On and on the list could go. But the point for us to see is this: one day in the future, a barrage of disasters—one right after another—will strike the earth. Furthermore, these disasters will be the worst catastrophes to ever hit the earth. This barrage will be launched by God Himself, and the calamities will literally shatter and devastate the whole earth **Rev. 6:12-17; 8:6-12; 8:13-9:11; 9:12-21; 16:1-21**. The LORD even gives a name to this terrifying period of human history: the ***Day of the LORD***. **The Day of the LORD will take place at the end of human history, a period sometimes called the tribulation or the Great Tribulation, another name given by the Lord Jesus Himself.**

In the present Scripture, a large swarm of locusts had just invaded the nation of Judah and totally ravaged the land. The insects had consumed everything in their path. Consequently, the nation was facing economic collapse, massive unemployment and, worst of all, famine and starvation.

Thus, the LORD inspired the prophet Joel to look at the disaster that had struck Judah and to use it as the background for writing this great book.

While the prophet Joel was thinking through the crisis, the LORD revealed that the disaster was an *act of God*. It was a judgment that God Himself was executing upon the people because of their horrible wickedness. In addition, the locust invasion was a sign, a foreshadowing, of the coming *Day of the LORD*. Sometime in the future, God's climactic day of terrifying judgment will fall upon the earth for the final time.

Simply stated, Joel encouraged the people to look at the locust invasion and to see in it God's hand of judgment. In their suffering, they were to cry out to the LORD, repent of their sins, and beg God to deliver them and their nation. But they must realize the utter necessity of diligently following the LORD throughout the remaining days of their lives. They must continually walk with the LORD and obey His holy commandments, for one day in the future the great and climactic *Day of the LORD* would come. In that day of final judgment, every individual will give an account for his or her behavior on earth, whether good or bad.

The book of Joel is a prophetic book authored by Joel son of Pethuel (**1:1**) that is calling the nation of Israel to repentance. Interestingly, Joel doesn't acknowledge any particular reason or sin causing their judgment but seems to pull from various prophecies in other books.

His prophecy highlights a recent locust plague that is nothing compared to the judgment to come, but reminds the people judgment can be averted with genuine repentance and humility by the people of Israel.

His prophecy is also meant to give comfort to those who were following the Lord, giving them hope for the future salvation and blessings to come (**2:28–31; 3:18–21**). Overall, the book shows that God keeps his promises and we always have a reason to have hope and receive mercy. In **Joel 1**, we see a past "*day of the LORD*" explaining a recent disaster brought about by a locust swarm. In light of this destruction and judgment, Joel calls the nation to repent and seek the Lord through a variety of means, like prayer and fasting. He calls the people to take notice of their situation and to tell their children about it (**vv. 1–3**). The agriculture has been destroyed (**v. 4**), resources have been cut off (**v. 10**), and the state of the nation is in turmoil. The Lord's exhortations to the people to weep, wail, and lament (**vv. 11, 13–14**) shows us that it is

important for us to acknowledge the Lord's discipline in our lives. When we are experiencing the repercussions of our sin, it is normal to feel grieved and to express our emotions.

Sometimes, we feel as if there is no turning back after we've drifted away from the Lord. The Enemy can make us believe that there is a point of no return. However, we see in **the book of Joel** that there is always room to repent and seek God so that he would stop his judgment. **Verse 13** says, "*Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God.*" In the culture of the day, these were the natural, normal acts of people who are mourning a great loss. And yet, repentance should be a time of hope for us, knowing that God extends mercy to those who engage in it. We don't have to feel hopeless about the outcome; repentance is provided as a way back.

1. The _____ of the locust invasion: **commissioned by God v. 1.**

2. The _____ of the locust invasion: **to arouse people to turn and seek the Lord vv. 2-14.**

3. The _____ of the locust invasion: **pictured the *Day of the Lord*—His terrifying judgment and destruction vv. 15-20.**