

THE DAY OF THE LORD

TEXT: JOEL 1:15—20

Introduction:

1. We started a series in the book of Joel last week, and I mentioned that the theme of Joel's prophecy is "the day of the LORD" (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14). This is not a 24-hour day.
2. The "day of Christ" refers to the rapture. First Corinthians 1:7, 8 says we are "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
3. Philippians 1:6 says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."
4. Philippians 1:10 says, "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."
5. Philippians 2:16 says, "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ."
6. Second Thessalonians 2:2 says, "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."
7. After the day of Christ comes "the day of the LORD" with "destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15). This refers to the coming tribulation period.

I. THE LOCUST PLAGUE WAS A FORESHADOWING OF THE FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD.

1. "Alas for the day!" (Joel 1:15) means, "Alas, What a day!"

2. The term “day of the LORD” refers to God’s final intervention to punish both Israel and the nations.
3. The prophet Joel used the locust plague of his day to illustrate the future judgment of Israel and the nations (cf. Joel 2:31; 3:14ff).
4. The great surging armies gathered at the battle of Armageddon will be like the locusts covering the land for as far as the eye can see.
5. Joel sees the nations assembled in innumerable (“multitudes, multitudes”) hosts in the valley of decision (3:14). God will decide in the valley of decision, not the multitudes.
6. The valley of decision refers to the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12). This is a picture of the Battle of Armageddon.
7. The day of the LORD “represents the full fruition and acme of man’s rebellion under Antichrist” (Merrill Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the OT*).
8. The day of the LORD will be “as a destruction from the Almighty” (Joel 1:15b).

II. THE LOCUSTS REPRESENT NATIONS.

1. The locusts are referred to as “a nation” in Joel 1:6 and a great people” in Joel 2:2.
2. In Joel 1:15-18 we see the lament of the people. In Joel 1:19, 20 we see the prayer of the prophet Joel as he intercedes for the nation Israel.
3. Joel vividly describes the devastating locust plague, but he looks beyond the locust plague to the future day of the LORD (2:1).
4. Once again, the word of God reminds us of our total dependence upon God. He sends the rain. He feeds us every day. Our Lord instructed us how to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11).

5. Americans are upset (and they ought to be) because the price of gas has gone up. But were it not for the blessings of God, we would have no oil, no water, no gas, no food, no home, no shelter, no money, no job, etc.
6. These prophecies could be fulfilled very shortly. Christians need to get their priorities right (Joel 2:31; 3:15; cf. Rev. 6:12-17).
7. Most of the so-called necessities here in America are luxuries. There could be a day coming soon when Americans will trade their big plasma televisions for a bottle of water. They may have to trade their car for a basket full of groceries.
8. Just like the locusts took away everything from Israel, we may lose everything here in America as we draw closer to the day of the LORD (Joel 1:15-20).

III. THIS FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD IS UNPARALLELED IN ANY AGE (2:2b; cf. Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21, 22).

1. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (Joel 2:2) and the quaking of the earth (2:10) are referred to throughout the Bible as signs preceding the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:29-31).
2. The Jews often say, "Never again," but the coming tribulation will be far worse than the Nazi holocaust.

CONCLUSION:

1. In the book of Joel, the locust plague represented an invasion of a fierce army from the north (Joel 2:20).

2. Locusts would normally invade from the Arabian Desert in the south.
3. This northern army refers to Assyria (cf. Isa. 10:5, 6; Zeph. 2:13).
4. However, in Bible prophecy, Assyria prefigures Russia and her allies, who will invade Israel during the tribulation (Ezek. 38 & 39; Daniel 11:40-45)
5. The defeat of Russia described in Joel 2:20 is very similar to Ezekiel's prophecy (cf. Ezek. 39:11).
6. "Because he hath done great things" (Joel 2:20b) refers to this northern army's pride and arrogance.
7. The other day, the Russian army invaded Georgia. When the Russians invade Israel, they will come down from the north through Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria, and then into Israel.
8. So from a logistical stand point Georgia is right in the way for the flow of troops and supplies to the Middle East.
9. Georgia is an ally of the USA and they have troops in Iraq. Georgia decided to join the EU and allow the U.S. to build a missile defense system on its territory. This would hinder Russia from invading Israel, so this could be why they invaded Georgia.
10. Russia has major energy interests in Iran, an implacable enemy of Israel and all Jews. Reports are out that Israel is threatening to attack Iran over its nuclear weapons.
11. Israel is sending humanitarian aid to Georgia.