

2. Joel – “The Day of the Lord is at Hand!”

Reflect: What do you think of when you hear the phrase “The Day of the Lord is at hand”? Should this evoke excitement or dread, happiness or terror, hope or despair? In the days of Joel, the people were experiencing the Day of the Lord through a great famine brought on by locusts. These locusts also are used to picture greater disasters such as war. All of this points us to the great and final day of the Lord. Think about a natural disaster that you have witnessed in your life. What was it like? How did the images and stories affect you? What questions does this raise about God? What is your response to God’s role in disasters? What do you suppose that these events teach us about God?

The Prophet’s Calling:

1. **Encounter** the Lord and receives a personal message directly - 1:1
2. **Enforce** the Torah Covenant - 1:13
 - Pledge your allegiance to God alone (1st Comm)
 - Remember the Commission to Adam, Abraham, Moses
 - Repent and Return to the Lord
3. **Employ** Consequences for Behavior and Hope for Lord’s Salvation - 2:1-2
 - Cosmic Imagery - “The Day of the Lord”
 - The Lord will come through with deliverance for those who hope in Him

“It is the task of the prophet to stand up at such moments of catastrophe and clarify who God is and how he acts. If the prophet is good – that is, accurate and true – the disaster becomes a lever for prying people’s lives loose from their sins and setting them free for God. Joel is one of the good ones: He used a current event in Israel as a text to call his people to an immediate awareness that there wasn’t a day that went by that they weren’t dealing with God. We are always dealing with God.” – Eugene Peterson, “The Invitation”

The Day of the Lord - 1:15; 2:1; 2:11; 2:31; 3:14 (compared to 13x in 7 other prophets)

Setting of Joel: Invasion!

1 - The Day of the Lord is Here: The Invasion of Locusts (1:1-4, 15)

The Actual Event

2a - The Day of the Lord is Coming: The Invasion of Locust-Army (2:1-2, 4-5)

The Prophetic Interpretation of Devastation and Hope

2b - The Day of the Lord is Dark: Events Before the Great Day of the Lord (2:28-32)

The Prophetic Anticipation of the Great Day

3 - The Day of the Lord is Restorative: The Results that Accompany the Day of the Lord (3:14-21)

The Day of the Lord is...

The current disaster (Locusts)

The confrontation with God that happens through Jesus Christ (Pentecost)

The final judgment (Return of the King)

Think about how the news reports and government agencies deal with great disasters, economic plagues, or health crises. What is your impression of their response compared to the “news report” of the prophet Joel? (2:1-2)

What is the Lord’s purpose in such times? (2:12-14)

How do these visions and experiences of the Day of the Lord change the way that you view your day to day life in this world? (See 1:5)

What particular agency does the Prophet Joel call on to respond to this disaster? (1:13-14)

The Valley of Decision - Does the idea of “Judgment” = Bad? (See 2:32)

In the words of Eugene Peterson, the Prophet Joel shows us how in big ways and small ways God needs to “disrupt our daily routines.” What do you think he means by this? (Look up 3:16-17)