

Remnant Life Church
March 3, 2024
The Day of the Lord – Joel
Joel 1:1-7

We said last week that the books of the Bible are divided into multiple segments.

- Two primary divisions of the OT and the NT
 - What distinguishes those writings are those written before Jesus came and after
- But those two different testaments are themselves divided into types of writings
- Old Testament
 - The first 5 books from Genesis through Deuteronomy are known as the LAW
 - The next 12 books from Joshua through Esther are the books of HISTORY
 - The 5 books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are the books of POETRY
 - We then have the 5 books of the MAJOR PROPHETS from Isaiah to Daniel
 - And then the final 12 books known as the MINOR PROPHETS from Hosea to Malachi
 - 39 books in all
- New Testament
 - The first 4 books are THE GOSPELS also called the BIOGRAPHY
 - The book of Acts stands alone as HISTORY (specifically the history of the first church)
 - The bulk of the NT, 21 of the writings are known as LETTERS or EPISTLES
 - 6 men contributed
 - Paul, James, Peter, John, Jude, and the unknown author of Hebrews (I believe Apollos, the very educated and eloquent Jew from Alexandria, Egypt is a strong candidate)
 - Finally, the book of PROPHECY; the book of the revelation to John
 - 27 books

Naturally, certain books and sections are preached more often than others

- In the OT the books of history and the major prophets probably get most of the attention
- While in the NT it is the 4 Gospels and Paul's letters
- Numbers, Obediah and Philemon among some others are largely ignored as are a great deal of the Minor Prophets

Well, we are going to take a trip over the next many weeks, with Resurrection Sunday carved out, to look at the 12 books of the Minor Prophets

- Not minor in importance
- But minor in length as compared to the Major Prophets like Isaiah with its 66 chapters and 1292 verses or Jeremiah's 52 chapters and 1364 verses
- Haggai is 2 chapters with 38 verses, while Obediah is a mere 21 verses from start to finish

But don't let the brevity of these writings be misinterpreted as having little or no value

In the first book of the Minor Prophets, Hosea, we looked last week at how God called Hosea to perform an incredibly difficult assignment that required follow-through on his part

- The events were factual, but the story was also an allegory of the love of God for His sinful people who were unfaithful to Him in their worship
- It is a powerful picture of not only God's hatred of sin but His loving kindness and forgiveness

This morning, I would like to take some time to examine the second of the minor prophets – the book of Joel

- Very little is known about the man except what we read
 - He identifies himself as the son of Pethuel (1:1)
 - Joel does not make reference to a particular king or any datable historical events making the time of his writing difficult to identify with certainty.
 - However, his style of writing and his overall theme would suggest an early 9th century BC setting around the time of young King Joash
 - Joash ascended to the throne in 835 BC at the age of 7 under the regency of the high priest Jeh-hoy-aduh while waiting for Joash to come of age
- The occasion for the writing of the book was a cataclysmic invasion of locusts coupled with a severe drought that has wiped out the agricultural foundation of the land
 - Of course, this creates an incredible hardship on the people as famine takes hold
 - God instructs Joel to write of what is happening and what it means

READ – Joel 1:1-7

- This is a very intense visual picture written to the people of the southern kingdom of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem
 - Like many writers in these final 12 books of the OT, the focus is calling on the people to repent of their evil ways
 - If they choose not to, the wrath of God (or judgment) will come upon them
 - If they do repent, God will save and restore them
 - This theological truth still applies to the church and God's people today
 - If we do not obey God and His word, then the consequence of judgment will come
 - That is not a popular way to preach today
 - It is yet another example of how culture is influencing the church rather than the church influencing culture
 - We have become a society that will sacrifice anything so as not to offend or hurt someone's feelings
 - The problem has become that truth is what has been sacrificed in the greatest measure
 - From how people identify themselves regardless of their physiology
 - To how they refer to themselves, eliminating the truth of descriptive language
 - And that has come into the church
 - Too many are just making sure that everyone leaves feeling good
 - I'm sorry, but the Bible does not make that promise

- **James 1:2** - *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, when you face trials of many kinds*
- **I Peter 4:12** - *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*
- Jesus Himself did not make that promise
 - **John 16:33** - *I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*
- As a Christian we are not promised an easy life
 - But to be disobedient of God and His Word is to invite the righteous judgment of God to come upon you
 - That is what the nation of Judah was doing during this time of Joel
- Joel called for three changes in the people that we need to consider today

1. Penitence

- a. Def – the action of feeling or showing sorrow and regret for having done wrong
 - i. That definition in our culture today has been lost
 - ii. Showing sorrow or regret is no longer about having done wrong but about being caught doing wrong
 - iii. No different than a child being told they must apologize for something they have done
- b. Joel calls out three specific groups – the general citizenry, the farmers, and the priests
 - i. Those 3 sub-groups represented the entirety of the nation
 - ii. IOW – no one was exempt from the call to repent
- c. And he called them out to awaken from their drunkenness
 - i. That may have been a very literal call for them to stop getting drunk (many vineyards)
 - ii. But it was also about how they had become insensitive – in a stupor – about their own moral decay and declining condition
- d. The call for repentance was because The Day of the Lord was upon them and was also yet to come
 - i. The phrase Day of the Lord is used over 350 times throughout the Scriptures
 - ii. Joel uses it here to foretell of two specific times
 1. The first is the immediate future of Israel
 2. The second is regarding the last days before the return of Christ to set up His kingdom on earth
 - iii. To Joel, the disaster of the locusts and drought can mean only that the day of the Lord, God’s reckoning with His people and the nations, is at hand
 - iv. The situation they are in is dire, but it is not hopeless
 1. The way out is simple yet must be all-inclusive
 2. It is the wholehearted repentance of the entire nation

- e. To be penitent or remorseful requires a very specific posture
 - i. Not only emotionally and spiritually but physically as well
 - ii. i.e. - Indiana Jones film series
 - 1. in the first film they are searching for the lost Ark of the Covenant
 - 2. For the Shakara Stones in India in the second
 - 3. Then in the third, it is the Holy Grail or the Cup of Christ
 - a. Tests that have deadly consequences
 - b. One clue for a test reads – Only a penitent man may pass
 - c. Suddenly remember that a penitent man is on his knees in prayer
 - d. He drops and the blades flash spinning over his head
 - e. That posture leads us to what Joel tells the people next

2. They Must Pray

- a. Joel calls for a national sacred assembly
 - i. A sacred assembly was a time for the people to come together and renew their covenant relationship with Him
 - ii. They were a time to collectively worship Him, repent of personal and corporate sin, remember His special blessings to them as a people and anticipate future blessings (be encouraged)
 - iii. Sacred Assemblies played a role in the feasts and festivals God commanded His people to observe
 - 1. As a part of the Passover celebration was the Feast of Unleavened Bread (**Duet 6:18**)
 - a. On the seventh day, the people were called to a sacred assembly
 - 2. When the construction of the temple was completed Solomon called the people together for a sacred assembly (**2 Chron 7:9**)
 - 3. When Jehu became the 10th King of Israel he initially desired to follow God and ordered a sacred assembly of the people to purge the land of Baal worship (**2 Kings 10:18-28**)
 - iv. It was one of the most powerful times for the people collectively and was a sign of intense spiritual and national intensity
- b. Unlike many of the prophets' writings, Joel does not identify specific sin as the cause
 - i. The solution, not the cause, was the primary focus of his mission
 - ii. Today, too much emphasis is on what is being done wrong and not enough on the importance of repentance and change of heart and action
- c. Hosea's life and his actions were the blueprint of what we God's people need to do
 - i. Hear God's voice
 - ii. Set our hearts and minds to obey
 - iii. Act on what we are told

3. Finally, Joel called for Preparation
 - a. With the natural invasion of the locust having ravaged their land Joel then speaks of an imminent human army
 - b. It is the Assyrian army that will be coming to conquer the people
 - c. This prophetic warning is like the warnings we are in the midst of today
 - i. Whether or not there will be an army of people is unknown
 - ii. But we are certainly in the midst of an invasion of righteousness
 1. The preparation required for us today is not to stock-pile armaments and supplies
 2. It is to prepare our hearts

Because consider 2 final words this morning...

- **Joel 2:28** – *And afterward...*
 - God always desires restoration
 - We see it here as He gives Joel words to share of comfort
 - And we see it most vividly in His sending Jesus to die in our place so that we may be restored to Himself

The book of Joel speaks of a present time in Israel's history

- But also of a time in the not-too-distant future for the people
- And a time that is still yet to come when the end of this age will take place

We look this morning at how God utilizes all of His creation to accomplish His will

- It begins with obedience to God and His Word
- It is understanding that there will always be consequence to our actions
 - Both negative consequence
 - As well as good
- And it is the assurance that His love, just as we saw in Hosea's example, is never exhausted or withdrawn

The first part of our examination of Joel's message centers on something that they had to endure in the natural

The next part is what God then tells them is going to happen – and it is primarily because they refuse to give themselves fully over to God

The same rules, the same results, still hold true for us today.