

Sermon Series: Minor Prophets

Sermon title: Book of Joel

Scripture reading: Joel 3:14-16

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

September 30, 2018

Pastor, S.C. Brown

We are in the Minor Prophets. 12 smaller books at the end of the Old Testament. They are called 'minor' not because they are not important but because they are smaller in length than the big books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel.

We are doing an overview of each book; just scanning them to try and understand what God wants to say to us through them.

I would encourage you to be reading through the Minor Prophets on your own as we go through this very important part of the Bible.

Let me remind you of a few things about the minor prophets:

1. **The time period** of the prophets in the Old Testament **is pretty small.** It's a period of about 300 years. From 8th century to 5th century BC.
2. The prophets were *reminders* more than they were *foretellers* of the future. **They reminded Israel of the**

old covenant, while pointing them to the new covenant and Christ.

3. Be careful trying to apply the meanings of their prophecies to our time today. **Most of their prophecies were of their near future** and not 9/11 or the current trade war or something like that.
4. **There are layers of meaning in the prophets.** As we will see today...one layer is the past, one layer is the present, one the near future and one the distant future.

We come today to the book of Joel.

From the rest of the Bible we know what was going on.

The tribe of Judah, which encompassed Jerusalem had turned away from God and turned to idols. They broke the covenant with God. So, God is going to get their attention with locusts and warning them to repent before he has to do something worse.

And if all of this seems harsh to you, remember in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-32 (about a thousand years earlier) that God warned them to keep the covenant or this is exactly what would happen.

Joel is a book that gives them & us a wake up call; a wake up call to the reality of the coming judgement of God. It's called the **Day of the LORD**. You may have heard about the *Day of the LORD*. Well, what is it?

“The Day of the LORD is when God unmistakably intervenes for judgement or salvation.” So, it can be a good thing or a bad thing...it all depends.

Turn in your Bible to Joel chapter 1.

Let's read **Joel chapter 1 verses 1-7.**

I. the Day of the LORD is coming.

What we have in Joel chapter 1 is a natural disaster, some might call it. Joel calls it an act of God.

Devastation by locusts. Everything is gone. There is no grain, no vines, no fruit trees...they have eaten everything. It's something they'll never forget.

And It's a wake up call from God. The locusts are the beginning of the Day of the LORD. They're a road sign saying, "Something worse is coming." A shot across the bow. A chance to return to the Lord before it's too late.

So, God is trying to get their attention but what is their response? Look at **verse 5. "Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail.."** They're asleep! No sadder state than to find God's people asleep while judgement is at the door.

"Wake up", God says! Like in the days of Noah when people were eating and drinking and marrying...and suddenly destruction came. Like in the days of Sodom when people were playing and enjoying life and building homes and suddenly destruction came.

In the wake of the locusts horde, drought follows and desperate times call for desperate measures. What are they to do? They are at the end of their rope. **The Day of the LORD is coming.**

Look at verse **14-15**

“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 the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.”

Look at **chapter 2:1-2**

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 of 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 will be again after them through the years of all generations.

So, what is worse than locusts?

It's a locust-like army that will come and devour your land, your homes, and take everything you have, even your life. Invasion.

Look at **2:10-11**. 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?

But whether it's an army of locusts or an army of men, the answer is still the same. Change your ways and call out to God to have mercy. Look at **2:12-14**

12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 13 and rend your hearts and not your garments."

So, there is a kind of repentance that isn't repentance. You can do some outward things to look like you've changed your ways. You can do some things on the surface but your heart is still not broken. God wants brokenness from them and that's what God still wants today.

Here we see the character of our God.

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. 14 Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a

blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord your God?

And though he did punish them for their idolatry in the short term, he was faithful to his people and won't forget them in the long term.

chapter 2:18-19, 25-27 [READ]

Now, I told you there were layers of meaning in the prophets. He did have pity on them and he did restore them but not totally. He speaks of a day when he will restore them fully.

Look at **chapter 2:28-32 [READ]**

We know this is quoted in the New Testament in Acts chapter 2, when the Spirit came at Pentecost and in Romans 10...where the scriptures tell us that 'whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved' meaning....whoever trusts in Jesus Christ.

So, there is a near-future element to it and a distant future.

*

But the main point for Judah is this:

Wake up! the day of the LORD is coming. Repent and turn to the LORD.

Which brings us to point number 2. the Day of the LORD did come and yet THE Day of the LORD is yet to come.

II. THE DAY OF THE LORD.

There will be another day (which is spoken of in Joel) called **THE** Day of the LORD. Much worse than a locust plague. Much worse than Typhoon Mangkhut. Much worse than Typhoon Trami, which is hitting Japan today.

Joel tells us about this in chapter 3 and he is speaking about the future. It sounds a lot like the book of Revelation.

Verse 2 says, **“I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgement with them there”**

Verse 14- **“Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.”**

Jesus tells us a lot about THE Day of the LORD; which is the day he returns.

Luke 21:25-36

25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

34 “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

1 Thessalonians 5

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, [a] you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come

upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children[b] of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Revelation 20: 11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then

Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Unbeliever:

Wake up! the day of the LORD is coming. Repent and turn to the LORD.

Today is the day of salvation. Choose you this day home you will serve. God or not? God is merciful and gracious and abounding in steadfast love. Turn to him. Give your life to Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead. And he will return to judge the world and all those in it. Let him pay for your sins or you will pay for them...forever.

Believer: It'll be worth it to follow Jesus. Eternity in heaven with him.

But are you awake? Are you asleep? Stay awake! Oh, may we never loiter on our heavenly journey.

In just a little while, our Lord will return. Cast off the things of this world and labor in the fields of the multitudes who are perishing.