

Call to Repentance

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[0 : 00] They call them necromancers in the Bible. That's what those people sort of do, where you're all worried about, and so you go to a fortune teller to God's people for right relationship with God.

Prophecy is not trying to tell you, look, this is what's coming. The purpose of biblical prophecy is for God's people to be in right relationship with the Father.

And so they use prophecy to encourage you, or the recipients of the prophecy, to encourage them to get right with God. So when we take a look in here, and we're reading biblical prophecy, and we're like, I am not exactly certain what it says, that's okay.

You're not supposed to be able to go, oh, on December 2nd, 2028, this is going to happen. And on December 12th, this is going to...

That's not what it's about. The purpose of prophecy is to call people to relationship with God. Now, they do, in times, reach into future events and use them for that call, but that's not their sole purpose.

[1 : 39] And that's really important, because as we open our Bibles to the book of Joel today, we're going to take a look at how Joel uses the events of today and the events of tomorrow to call God's people into right relationship with him.

So let's start off with this. Number one, in all of Joel, there is no specific sin lined out.

You just, you know, if you read the other prophets, you find idolatry, you'll find, you know, improper relations, you'll find, you know, they're building coalitions with the wrong people, you'll find that they've abused the sacrificial system, there's all sorts of things.

But you can read Joel all the way through, and there is no specific sin listed. Unique among the prophets. Secondly, Joel compares current events or things that have just happened to prophesied future events.

And so we're going to take a look at this. The first thing is invasion. Dun, dun, dun. Follow along with me. We're going to read the first four verses of chapter one.

[3 : 03] The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethul, hear this, you elders, give ear all inhabitants of the land. Has such a thing happened in your days or in the days of your fathers?

Tell your children of it and let your children tell their children and their children to another generation. Something huge is going on, right? I mean, let's be honest.

How many of you have heard of COVID? Don't laugh. How many of you have heard of September 11th?

December 7th? How many generations does that go back? Right? We're talking something has happened that is huge.

Verse four. What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten.

[4 : 09] What the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. Okay. So what's just happened is that they had an invasion of locusts.

Locusts are grasshoppers that have been born in such numbers that as they were growing, they touched each other all the time.

You see, a locust is a grasshopper that spends its days touching other locusts, other grasshoppers. And because they are in such proximity, there's physiological and mental changes that change them from being a grasshopper to a locust.

That's how you make locusts. You take a bunch of grasshoppers, you put them together and they rub on each other and it causes changes in their behavior and they become destructive. And it's amazing how it happens.

By the way, I was doing a little research on locusts and it was talking about where they're found, what they do, where they come from, what circumstances bring about a locust invasion.

[5 : 26] And do you know what number one is? Rains after a drought. Just think about this. You've been in a drought. What does a drought mean? It means the crops haven't been doing well.

You're kind of struggling. What have you been praying for? Rain, right? Suddenly here comes rain. And you know what? That is the number one indicator that you're going to have a locust swarm. Just thought I'd throw that out there. I thought that was really, yay, it's raining. Oh no, locust. But this locust swarm was so bad, it wasn't just one swarm.

Did you catch that? It was swarm after swarm after swarm. The cutting locust, the swarming, the hopping, and the destroying, four different swarms. And it so devastated the land that it just destroyed their economy that year.

There were hungry people. There were starving people. There were people that died because of it. And it was so devastating that it was to be reported on and on and on.

[6 : 32] That had just happened. Now if we turn to Joel chapter 2, we read about the invasion that's going to happen. 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 mountain a great and powerful people.

Their like has never been before nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

Fire devours before them and behind them a flame burns.

The land is like the Garden of Eden before them and behind them a desolate wilderness and nothing escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses and like war horses they run.

[7 : 39] As with the rumbling of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble like a powerful army drawn up for battle.

You see the locust invasion there is not much you can do.

Like I said I did a little research you know they see pictures of all these locusts coming in and people are walking around and they are making noise and they are kicking them up and they are lighting smudge pots one guy was talking about them lighting tires on fire to hope to drive the locusts away.

Oh that's great you've got locusts so let's just burn tires. By the way it didn't stop the locusts they came. And there is an invasion coming very similar to the locust invasion and it's going to destroy everything in its path there will be no escape.

Praise the Lord. Isn't it fun reading the Bible sometimes? So anyways Joel uses the locust invasion that has just come and destroyed the crops and made this a terrible year and he's using that to illustrate the day of the Lord which is coming in which an army will come down from the north and destroy everything in its path.

[9 : 15] That's the invasion. But then there is a call to repentance. Job chapter 1 verses 13 and 14 put on sackcloth and lament oh priests wail oh ministers of the altar go in pass the night in sackcloth oh ministers of my God because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God 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.

You have to understand what's going on here. we're talking about the nation of Israel God's chosen people we're talking about the beloved ones that God set up in the promised land and he said if you will obey my voice if you will follow my word if you will do what I ask you to do you will live in a land flowing with milk and honey you will always be victorious over your enemies I will allow none of the diseases and none of the none of the plagues that I sent to Egypt to come upon you you will be blessed beyond all people what is the fact that they just got ran over with not one not two not three but four different swarms of locusts in one year what does that indicate maybe God's not real happy with them right and so that's why there's a call to repentance for whatever they've been doing that has brought upon them this plague take a look at chapter 2 verses 15 through 17 remember this is in response to this horde this army that is coming down that will destroy everything in its path and he says blow the trumpet in Zion consecrate a fast call a solemn assembly and gather the people consecrate the congregation assemble the elders gather the children even the nursing infants let

the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber between the vestibule and the altar let the priests the ministers of the

Lord weep and say spare your people oh Lord and make not your heritage or reproach a byword among the nations why should they say among the people where is their God look the nation of Israel was in a unique position among all the nations of the world because they were God's chosen people God had made a covenant if you do what I ask you to do I'm gonna bless you if you don't do what I ask you to do I'm gonna hurt you it was pretty pretty blatant straight up do good get good do bad get bad so bad has happened to the nation of Israel what should they do they should repent and stop doing bad look this is what's happened look what's going to happen repent and so then Joel wraps it up with actual acts of repentance in chapter 1 verses 19 and 20 we read to you oh lord I call for fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness and flame has burned all the trees of the field even the beasts of the field pant for you because the water brooks are dried up this is an actual time of repentance where the author Joel comes before the lord on behalf of the people look at chapter 2 verse 17 that was I read that earlier I missed did I miss that oh I did I read the wrong question the lord made me jealous anyways verse 19 verse 17 is the actual coming together and spare your people wow I totally bollocks that I've even got it written on the wall don't I anyways Joel chapter 1 you've got an invasion a call to repentance and acts of repentance chapter 2 up to verse 17 you've got the warned invasion you've got the call to repentance and you've got the actual repentance there it's a real nice parallel boom boom boom boom boom boom okay any questions on that why would

God allow this I kind of got into this a little bit but let's work on this remember first of all God wants all God guides the events of the world right what do we know about God God claims to guide all things work together for good for those who love the Lord and called according to his purpose God claims that he turns the hearts of kings and dictates the actions of nations God claims to be good and loving right I am good I am loving Israel is God's chosen people he picked Israel out of all the nations of the world right so why would God allow this to happen to his special people if he knows what's happening and has power over him if he is a good and loving God and if he is talking about his special people why would he do oh bummer I'm not

[15:16] I'm you'll have to all right first of all God wants all people to be saved 1 Timothy chapter 2 1 through 4 1 Timothy 2 1 through 4 I'm in 2 Timothy and that's the wrong one I said 1 Timothy three times for you yourselves know brothers that our coming to you is not in vain but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi as you know we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict for our appeal does not spring from error or impurity what am I doing I'm in Thessalonians how did I go from

Timothy to Thessalonians this has been not enough I have found the correct passage those of you who have been waiting for me to get there thank you for your patience 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1 first of all is that right first of all then I urge that all supplications prayers intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people for kings and all who are in high position that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life godly and dignified in every way this is good and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth so why would God allow this why would God allow devastation why would God allow hardship why would God allow these things we got to start with the heart of God he wants people to be right with him he wants people to get saved he wants people to turn to him we're going to be in the next in Amos we're going to be talking about though I did this you did not turn to me though I did this to you you did not turn to me God uses discipline God uses difficulty God allows circumstances to happen so that people will turn to him we're going to be talking about that in the next book but the idea is God wants people to turn to him so he allows difficult things and then number two number two I am having a hard time with this today people what's going on there we go God had a covenant relationship with Israel we talked about this earlier they went to the mountain I will be your God you will be my people if you do this I will do this it was a covenant it was a contract if the people did good

God blessed them if the people did bad they got what was coming how many of you have ever raised a child you want to know what a beautiful thing is to teach your kid natural consequences natural and logical you tell your child if you don't clean your room you can't go to the game and by clean your room I don't mean your standard I mean mine and if they don't clean their room and they don't go to the game whose fault is it did it catch them off guard no you told them if you want to

borrow the car you have to mow the grass don't mow the grass can't or with little kids you want a cookie take out the trash that's what my wife says you want a cookie take out the trash I take out the trash because

I like cookies God had a covenantal relationship with the nation of Israel so it was exactly appropriate for bad things to happen to them when they did poorly God wants people to be saved so he allows challenging things for the nation of Israel they had a covenantal relationship take a look at Psalms chapter 5 this is not what most people expect to hear when they go to church let me let me let me tell you what people want to hear you ready

[20 : 46] God loves the sinner but hates the sin isn't that a comfortable thing to hear God loves the sinner he just hates sin what a what a what a easing thought doesn't that make you feel like God loves me I know I've got things to work on but God loves me isn't that comforting I dare you to read Psalms 5 1-5 honestly give ear to my words oh Lord consider my oh this is a song we sing this it's beautiful right keep reading give attention to the sound of my cry my king and my God for to you do I pray oh Lord in the morning you hear my voice in the morning

I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch for you are not a God who delights in wickedness evil may not dwell with you the boastful shall not stand before your eyes you hate all evildoers does that sound like God loves the sinner but hates the sin be honest does that sound like God loves the sinner but hates the sin you hate all evildoers why would

God allow devastation in a land filled with people doing evil could it be because he hates evildoers what a horrific thing to say seriously that is gut wrenching to me it bothers me I have friends up and down this valley that I have been trying to reach with the gospel for the last 15 years and they are running from God willy-nilly and God hates all evildoers why would God allow destruction why would God allow a locust swarm why would God allow an invading army because he hates evildoers don't get me wrong

God wants all people to be saved that's why I started with that one God wants all people to be saved but for the nation of Israel he had a contractual relationship a covenantal relationship you do good I do good you do bad look out this begs the question what can we take from this story how does this speak to my life today I got to start off by telling you that first Timothy God desires all people to be saved and Psalms chapter 5 God hates all evildoers both of those are still true today God still wants all people to be saved but

God still hates workers of evil while the Jews had to rely on sacrifices to cover their sins we can have our sins forgiven this is one of those things that is just awesome I in chapter 2 verses 12 through 13 we read this how about Joel I am doing great today I was in Hosea that was two weeks ago remember God is in a covenantal relationship with Israel he has sworn!

[25 : 50] a covenant with them that by his own self he has declared this is what I will do you obey me I will bless you you disobey me I will curse you good bad God's in a covenant God will not break his covenant but look at verse 12 in chapter 2 yet even now declares the Lord return to me with all your heart with fasting with weeping with mourning and rend your hearts not your garments return to the Lord your God for love and he relents over disaster God's in this covenantal relationship with Israel and it says if you will do good I will bless you and I will keep you at top of the heap and you're going to have money you're going to have food you're going to have authority and power in the world obey me live before me honor my word and

I will hold you up to all nations to see the blessing of God almighty but if you don't I will crush you that's his contractual obligation because of his covenant even so he says when you do wrong if you repent if you return to me with all your heart with fasting and weeping I relent how many times do we see as we read through the especially the kings the king would be leading the people all wrong and then he would repent you know who the biggest one of this is Ahab I'm not talking about Moby Dick Ahab I'm talking about the king of Israel the most I mean the guy was pretty warped he married Jezebel right let's be honest the man had issues but late in life he repented and

God blessed him he always stood even in the midst of his covenantal relationship when the people turned to God he would withhold but they could only cover their sins they couldn't get forgiveness we can have forgiveness forgiveness they were in this special relationship with God and they would have to bring their sacrifice in every year bring their sacrifice in to cover their sins you and I because of the death of Christ on the cross can actually have our sins forgiven if God was merciful to people whose sins were just covered over just paint over that for a little bit put another sacrifice on that there it is again covered over if

God was merciful to people like that how will he treat people whose sins are forgiven the difference is for them their sins kept popping up popping up their guilt kept popping up they had put another sacrifice on it another sacrifice when we turn to Christ our sins are forgiven and they are taken away from us separated as far as the east from the west God no longer holds them in any relationship to us we can be forgiven if he was merciful to people whose sin just was! under the! surface barely covered by a sacrifice how is he going to treat people whose sins are forgiven and so I just want to end with this let today be a day of worship let today be a day of worship if you are a Christian if you've come to that point in time where you've turned to God and you've said Lord forgive me I am a sinner and I need that celebrate rejoice!

[30 : 12] exult! You don't have to worry God is gracious and merciful and he loves you if you haven't come to that re-read Psalms 5 especially verse 5 and take it to heart God and read 1 Timothy well God wants you to be saved it doesn't matter how far off the track you are Lord knows you've got a ways to go before you get as far as I was it doesn't matter how bad your life has been how deep your sin goes Christ paid the penalty on the cross you can turn!

turn to him today and make today a day of celebration so whether you are a believer or if you become a believer let today be a day of worship as we give honor to our God and Father let's pray if you're not a believer turn to Jesus and ask him for forgiveness trust him because he