

God is Faithful

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[0 : 00] I should have ran down there. All right. Okay.

Today we are in Joel! I'm going to go ahead and monitor on there just a little bit.

The monitor, the monitor, test, test, done. Close enough. Fine. Thank you. We'll work on it later.

Where am I? I said I was going to be finishing up the book of Joel, talking about the day of the Lord.

Joel happens to be after Hosea. There it is. Found it. Next week, we will be digging into the book of Amos. So during this week, if you want to read the book of Amos, that would be great.

But as a reminder that last week, as we were studying the beginning of the book of Joel, he was using current events. Do you remember what the big current event was? The locust swarm.

[1 : 11] That's right. The locust swarm and how it came through. And it wasn't just one swarm, but it was swarm after swarm after swarm, absolutely devastating the land and leaving the people in a bad place.

And he was using that as an example of the coming day of the Lord. And he talked about this incoming invasion. And if you remember, it was bad, which led to the call to repentance, which led to repentance.

And if you repent, the Lord will restore the land. But we're picking this back up in Joel chapter 2.

We're going to be picking it up in verse 18.

But, oh, dang it. But before we do that, I want to talk about Joel 2.31, which is where it mentions the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Verse 31 says, A couple of things to note about the great and awesome day of the Lord.

[2 : 16] Doesn't that sound fun? It's great. It's awesome. Well, you need to understand, great and awesome don't mean good. All right?

Something can be very great and be very, very bad. Great just means large, huge, big. Awesome. Awesome are those things that make you just stand there with your jaw on the ground. You know, a car getting run over by a train can be awesome.

It can be the sort of thing that you just go, wow. Awesome. Awesome could be getting caught in an avalanche while skiing downhill.

That's awesome. Not in a great way, just in the sort of thing that it's bigger than we are and it drives us to awe. And so when we think of the great and awesome day of the Lord, we're not talking about a party.

[3 : 19] Okay? Another thing, day. Day can mean 12 hours. Day can mean 24 hours. Day can mean a period of time. This, the day of the Lord, is a period of time where God acts unilaterally.

Meaning, it is a period of time where God is moving. Okay? So, basics. Great and awesome don't mean good. The day, in this case, it's referring to a period of time.

And the day of the Lord is a period of time where God acts unilaterally. Okay? Just wanted to get that out there. Our key idea today, God is faithful.

I know, that's nothing new. It's, but it's awesome. God is faithful. And we're going to spend some time on that.

But, when I think of the faithfulness of God, and especially in light of the day of the Lord, a couple of passages get triggered.

[4 : 27] Daniel, chapter 2, verse 21. Speaking about God and His power and His authority. It says that He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and He sets up kings.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. That is God. God sets kings up. He takes kings down. He changes the seasons.

If you're smart, it's because God gave you the wisdom. Because all wisdom comes from God. All right? And then also in Isaiah, chapter 46. Remember this and stand firm.

Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things of old. For I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is none like me.

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things not yet done. Saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish my purpose.

[5 : 30] When we say God is faithful, God is going to bring about His purpose. He is going to see it through to the end. He has the wisdom.

He has the power. He has the authority to get things done. And so, that's what we're talking about when we're talking about the faithfulness of God. All right. Having said all that, let's turn to Joel. If you've got your Bibles open to Joel, it's on page 850 in my Bible. Anybody? 14? I don't know. Well, you know, you're smarter than I am. Either that or else you've got bigger letters. Big print. All right. Let's start off by looking at Joel, chapter 2. And I really want to start with verse 18.

Then the Lord became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. That's the foundational statement there.

[6 : 26] The Lord became jealous for the land and had pity on His people. Everything that we talked about last week with the locust swarm, with the swarm of soldiers from the north, and the call to repentance, and the repentance of the people, and the Lord having mercy.

All of this is going on and it's leading through history. And there comes a point in time in human history where it says this, the Lord became jealous for His land and had pity on His people. And so we're going to take a look at those two things. We're going to take a look at the land and we're going to take a look at the people. And we begin talking about the restoration of the promised land.

And first of all, God gave the promised land, a good land, to Abraham's descendants. And you can turn with me if you like or you can just follow along.

It's the way it is. But Genesis chapter 12, verse 7, we say this, The Lord appeared to Abram and said to your offspring, I will give this land.

[7 : 40] And so Abraham there built an altar to the Lord who appeared to him. So that's where we get the declaration that God gave to Abraham and his descendants the promised land.

And if you turn over to Leviticus chapter 20, verse 24, you get this really nice description of it. Chapter 20, verse 24.

I have said to you, you shall inherit their land and I will give it to you to possess a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God who separated you from the peoples.

So Abram, who was the founding father of the faithful, he's the father of all the faithful. God came to him and he said, look, I'm going to give you this land. And in Leviticus, it was described as a land flowing with milk and honey.

And the idea is not that that was really a sticky land, but that it was a land that was fruitful. That things prospered there. That it was a land of blessing. And so we see that God had given the promised land to the children of Israel.

[8 : 48] But if you read through all of the history of Israel, how well did Israel obey God? Not so well, right?

And so God allowed invasion. God allowed hardship. God allowed trouble. And in fact, it's still going on today, isn't it?

Hardship and trouble in the land of Israel. But God promised that there will come a day when he will be jealous for his land.

And he will restore it. Verse 18, the Lord became jealous. Verse 19, the Lord answered and said to his people, behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied.

And I will no more make you approach among the nations. In Joel chapter 2, 19, and then look down at verse 22 through 25. Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green.

[9 : 55] The trees bear its fruit. The fig tree and vine, their full yield. Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the early rain for your vindication.

He has poured down upon you abundant rain. The early and the later rain as before. You can even go over to chapter 3, verse 17 through 19. And it says, so that you will know that I am the Lord your God who dwells in Zion on my holy hill, Jerusalem, shall be holy.

And strangers shall never pass again through it. And in that day the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah shall overflow with water. And a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim. So, in early Joel, we get this picture of the locust devastation.

We get the picture of the invading army coming and just tearing it all apart. But in the end, Joel looks forward to a day when God is going to fix everything that has been destroyed.

[11:07] The locust and all the devastation that he did will be remembered no more. Because the land will be green. The hills will flourish. All of the wartime devastation, it's not only going to be erased, but God says they will never come again.

That's pretty sweet, right? It's good news. So, God has promised that there is going to be a day when he restores the promised land.

When we changed the slides, it lost all of my animation. So, everything's coming up at once.

I'm heartbroken. I like it to come up slowly so it builds drama. I'm very disappointed right now. All right. So, having...

Verse 18 says, The Lord became jealous of his land, and he had pity on his people. God promises to deliver his people. And we know who his people are, right?

[12:11] Exodus chapter 6, verses 6 and 7. Right when they were coming out of the promised land, and God says to them, I will be your God, and you will be my people.

He called the nation of Israel. By the way, before coming out of the land of Egypt, do you know what the nation of Israel was before they came out?

They were what we would call a really extended family unit. Remember, when they came to Egypt, it was one family. Jacob and his sons and their families.

And while they were there in the land, they began to grow and build. And they still were a family structure. Then they entered into slavery, and for 400 years they were slaves.

They really had not developed any sort of an identity as a people. Until they came out, until God chose Moses. And Moses led them out of Egypt, and they came to the mountain where God chose them as his people.

[13:19] And it was there at the Mount Sinai, when they got the law, that they developed from a family into a nation. And so God chose them to be his people.

Now take a look at Joel chapter 2, verse 20. I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land.

His vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea. If you think of the land of Israel, what's the...

Well, this ought to be fun. Think of the United States, all right? What is the eastern ocean?

All together we say the Atlantic, right? What's the western ocean? Okay, believe it or not, people get confused on that. But it's the Pacific, right?

[14:22] Now let's think of the land of Israel. What is the western body of water? The Mediterranean. The Mediterranean.

This says that it's going to drive a bunch of the people into the western sea. If the Mediterranean's on the west, what's the eastern sea? What?

Ooh, like that Jordan River? It's the Dead Sea. When we're down near Jerusalem, the one to the east would be the Dead Sea.

You're right about the Sea of Galilee also being to the east of the Med. But I think in this case, what it's talking about is they're going to drive them, and it may be to the Sea of Galilee. It could be.

Because it's taken the northerners to a desolate land. I'm not certain. But I know which one's on the west. That's the Mediterranean. And I've got options on the east. I've got the Sea of Galilee to the north, and I've got the Dead Sea to the south.

[15:22] But the idea is that God is going to deliver His people from the invaders. There is going to be a day when the Lord God is going to stop, and He is going to become jealous for His land and His people, and God will act.

And when He does, the land will flourish. All of the invaders will be driven away. And take a look, if you will, in chapter 2, verse 31, would you?

Joel chapter 2, verse 31. Verse 31. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

Verse 32. God has promised that on that great and awesome day, all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Anybody here read this book, the book of Joel, in the last couple weeks? It is, there is something in here that as I was studying, it gripped me and shook me.

[17:09] And it made me sit down and stop and think. And it has a lot to do with all who call on the name of the Lord. Okay.

God has promised that all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. And all of this is going to occur on the great and awesome day of the Lord. Look at verse 28 of chapter 2, and we'll just read it all together.

It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and on earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.

Well, I just thought he said wonders. Again, remember, great and awesome doesn't mean good. Wonders doesn't mean yay.

[18:06] Wonders can be like, whoa. Right? I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.

The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, there shall be those who escape. As the Lord has said, among the survivors shall be those who call on the name of the Lord.

When you read that, you should be going, wow. That should be eye-popping.

That should be, did you read columns of fire, blood, smoke, darkness? And I will save those who call on the name of the Lord.

[19:09] Lord, I, okay, okay, okay, okay. Chapter 2, verse 18.

Chapter 2, verse 18. Notice. It says nothing about the people turning to God in repentance.

Do you see that in there? It doesn't say, there came a day when the people of God cried out to God and God responded. That's not what it's talking about.

You don't see that in chapter 2, verse 18. It is not there. We don't see, after great suffering and huge tribulations, the people of God humbled their heart before the Lord, and the Lord in great mercy responded to their plea for not in there.

That's all in chapters 1 and early chapter 2. There is a gap between verse 17 and verse 18 in chapter 2.

[20:28] And in verse 18, the only motivation there comes from God. Let's see. Whoops. That's verse 3, chapter 3.

Then the Lord became jealous for His land. Why did God become jealous for His land? Because the wrong people were living in it?

Why did God become jealous for His people? Because they weren't responding to Him. They were far away. And God moves.

The great and terrible day of the Lord is coming when God unilaterally is going to act.

Why is God going to do this? Because He promised that the land would belong to the descendants of Abraham and that they would live in there without oppression. Those are promises of God.

[21:26] Those are promises that God has made that are not bound by the behavior of Abraham's descendants. God has said, This is what I'm going to do.

Now, He tried and He led the people. He wants them to turn to Him. He wants them to turn to Him on their own. God has done everything He can to draw people to Him.

And so many people stand there and say, Bugger off. I'm going my own way. There will come a day when God will say, Enough. I am going to act.

And what does He say? He says, On that day, those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How cool is that?

Now look at this. Verse 28 of chapter 2. And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.

[22:40] All right. Hold on. Hold on. King David said, Take not your Spirit from me. Right? There was a day in the past when God would bestow His Spirit or pull His Spirit back.

King Saul had been blessed with the Spirit of God. But as Saul lived a life of rebellion against God, God took His Spirit from him. Okay? We, as believers of Jesus Christ today in this time of grace, we are blessed and sealed with the Spirit of God.

And that will never be taken from us. But the Spirit of God rests upon believers, not every Tom, Dick, and Harry. But what did verse 28 say?

On that day, I will pour out my Spirit on only the good guys. Only the four-eyed preachers get the Spirit of God.

That's not what it says, does it? What does it say? On that day, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

[23 : 57] Even on the male and female servants, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit. What do you think it means when it says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people? It means that God's going to pour out His Spirit on everybody.

Everybody's going to have access to the Holy Spirit. They're going to have the access to the Word of God. They're going to have access to the understanding. God is going to pour out His Spirit on them so that nobody has any excuse.

But does it say everybody will be saved? Does it say everybody will be saved?

Not even close. It severely limits it to those people who call upon God. I think of a lot of people in our valley.

People that we interact with every day. People that we tell about Jesus. People who know that we're believers. People who we've shared our testimony with.

[25 : 07] People who we've shared the Gospel with. And we've said, hey, look, this is what it is. And they've said, that's great. Don't want anything to do with it.

Any of you know people like that? I talked to a bunch this week. It ain't funny.

While God will pour out His Spirit on all people, only those who call out to the Lord will be saved. When I saw that, I was stunned.

There won't be any excuse in the great and terrible day of the Lord. Okay, that's wonderful.

That's great. I mean, God promised that He's going to take care of His people. God promised that He's going to restore the promised land. And God promised that He's going to save those people that turned to Him. I don't believe you. Why should I?

[26 : 19] What evidence is there? Israel is still occupied. Anybody seen the Dome of the Rock or whatever it's called? Do you know how difficult it is to raise crops in Israel right now?

I tell you, they are incredible in their use of water and fertilizer. They are phenomenal because it sucks to try and grow a crop there.

Why should I care or believe what Joel says? There is no evidence here, right? Right? God is faithful.

God is faithful to His Word. God has been faithful to His Word, and God will be faithful to His Word. I think I've just got two things that I want to share with you.

Number one is Cyrus. Cyrus is one of my favorite, favorite Bible stories. Okay? Cyrus was not even born.

[27 : 24] Over a hundred years before Cyrus was born. Think about that. That would be a long time ago. Some dude said, hey, there's this guy Cyrus, and he's going to rebuild.

He's going to send my people home, and they're going to rebuild the temple. For a hundred years, people were like, did you read what that moron wrote? And then one day, what happens?

Cyrus becomes king. And one day, he's busy digging through the records, and he says, you know what? I'm going to send the people of Israel home, and I'm going to give them a boatload of cash and say, hey, go build a temple.

I love that.

Adam and Eve have sinned. God has confronted them. Get out of the bushes and come here. No, I know what you did. No need. Quit trying to hide.

[28 : 43] I'm God. Adam, from now on, good luck earning a living, buddy. And Eve, whew, home life's going to be hard.

Especially that baby thing. That's going to be brutal. And Satan, come here, get over here. My son will come. Yeah, you're going to bruise him on the heel, but he's going to crush your head.

Genesis chapter 3, verse 16. At the right time. At Romans chapter 5, verse 8.

At the right time. While we were still sinners. While we were still enemies. Christ died for us. Thousands of years ago.

Really close to 6,000. Years ago. God created everything. He made this garden. It was perfect. Put man and woman in there.

[29 : 45] And they screwed up. And God promised on that day. That he would send someone. To rescue them for their sins. And thousands of years later.

Approximately 4,000 years later. At just the right time. Fulfilling prophecy after prophecy after prophecy. He would be born here.

He would be a descendant of this person. He would live in Egypt. He would come home. He would die on a cross. All of these things prophesied and fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

Because God is faithful. We can trust him.

We can trust his word. Not saying it's going to be easy. Check this out in Joel. Chapter 2.

[30 : 42] Verse 30. Understand. Everybody's had the spirit poured out upon them. Everybody has had the spirit of God poured out upon him. The great and awesome day of the Lord is upon us.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and on earth. Blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness. And the moon to blood. Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

Got the picture? Got the picture? And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape.

As the Lord declares. And among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. Look people.

Being a Christian isn't always easy. Can I get an amen? Living for the Lord is hard sometimes.

Because we live in a fallen world. And it's going to get worse.

[31 : 54] In fact, on the day, the great and awesome day. The great and awesome day of the Lord. When there's going to be these huge signs in the skies. There's going to be all sorts of things that make you go, oh my word.

Did you see that? Those who turn upon, who turn to the Lord. Those who are called by his name. They are going to walk that journey.

They're going to be the ones on the sideline with the popcorn going, dude. Did that just happen?

And it's not going to be an easy road for him. Among the survivors will be those who call on the name of the Lord.

God promises that he will watch over his children. God promises us as believers that he's gone to prepare a place for us.

He's promised us that our home is not here on earth but in heaven with him. We can depend upon him. Now I know everybody in this room trusts Jesus.

[32 : 56] Amen? We hope. My problem isn't you. My problem is my friends that haven't accepted Jesus.

My problem is the people who haven't turned to him. How do we reach them with the truth that God is faithful?

How do we reach him with the truth that God has promised? How do we reach them?

How do we reach them with the truth that God has promised us? That's my problem. That's my problem. Because as sure as the sun will set today and rise tomorrow, the great and awesome day of the Lord is coming.

and if they have not turned to the Lord, what can we do to reach the lost?

[34 : 07] Let's pray. Father, I thank you for the fact that you sent your Son. I thank you for the fact that you sent your Son.