

Joel 1**1-31-02*****“Locust Plague...a mini-version of The Day of the Lord!”*****1. Intro:**

- 1.1. **Bill Welsh** – Prayer/Praise report. 1st Granddaughter was born(Emi Starr) [daughter is Shnannon] Had an infection from the cord being wrapped around her to tight. She’s out of intensive care into extended care.
- 1.2. **Next Week - Yossi Weiss** – Tour guide 3 years ago in Israel.
 - 1.2.1. Here to give us a 15min. update on what’s taking place in the land!
- 1.3. **Loren & Jeanna Combs** – Missionaries we support now in York!
- 1.4. **Story** - When I was 5 years old standing in my backyard in Whittier it happened...
 - 1.4.1. A large grasshopper landed on my left shoulder! He was the size of a small Mack truck. He had armor plating all over his body. He was huge, mean, & he was going to eat me alive. I hate them still to this day. I’ve grabbed a rattle snake by his tail once(explain) but I don’t do grasshoppers!
 - 1.4.2. **An old Arabian proverb** claims(picture this), “In the locust, slight as it is, is the nature of 10 of the larger animals – the **face** of a horse, the **eyes** of an elephant,” the **neck** of a bull, the **horns** of a deer, the **chest** of a lion, the **belly** of a scorpion, the **wings** of an eagle, the **thighs** of a camel, the **feet** of an ostrich, the **tail** of a serpent.”
 - 1.4.3. Ok, Joel’s only dealing with their cousin, the **locusts** here, & not a black Momba, or a spitting cobra, or the 2 step snake!
 - 1.4.3.1. But were not talking about 1 locust in a jar but billions swarming & devouring!
- 1.5. **Joel is writing in-between invasions:** Between a **locust plague** recently past & future judgments of a **military invasion**, & ultimately “**The Day of the Lord.**”
- 1.6. **Joel is writing to** Judah & writes to the **old men/elders**(vs.1-4); to the **drunkards**(5-7); to the **worshippers**(8-10); to the **farmers**(11,12); & to the **priests**(13,14.)

2. **The Locust Plague! (1-14)**

- 2.1. **To the Old Men!** (1-4)
- 2.2. (2) We often remember major events by dates:
 - 2.2.1. **Let's see how you do:** Nov 22,1963?(JFK); June 6,1944(D Day); May 14,1948(Israel becomes a nation); January 30,2002 [*yesterday*] (snow in Murrieta!); & now "Sept 11,2001"!
 - 2.2.2. Here we have an unprecedented event! – Nothing for Israel to compare this devastation to.
- 2.3. **Q:** Have you ever stood at a site of "**complete devastation**"?
 - 2.3.1. **Maui Volcano** – spilled all the way down to the water.
 - 2.3.1.1. **Congo Volcano** - on the news.
 - 2.3.2. **Ground Zero** – Pictures can't show it all.
- 2.4. (3) This is "our" verse that speaks directly to you & I!
 - 2.4.1. **Q:** Do you pass "lessons" you've learned on to your kids?
 - 2.4.1.1. Both successes & failures! (Mical asked me about my very 1st time I dated) [*I didn't treat her like a lady...yes too young also!*]
 - 2.4.1.2. Kelly & my 1st date(Seafare Inn).
- 2.5. **We have here 4...**
 - 2.5.1. **4 stages of growth** of locusts(baby, adolescent, adult, etc.)
 - 2.5.2. **4 species** (there are 80-90 in the east)(i.e. crawling, swarming, hopping, stripping locusts).
 - 2.5.3. A clustering of **synonyms** (there are 9 usable Hebrew words for locusts)
 - 2.5.4. Or, not really a locust plague at all but spoke to a coming **local invasion**.
 - 2.5.4.1. I believe 4 age stages.
 - 2.5.5. Charles Feinburg said, "**Locusts have been rightly called the incarnation of hunger!**"
 - 2.5.5.1. They have been known to devour an area of almost 90 miles of every green herb & blade of grass.
- 2.6. **Example** of things being "eaten up"!
 - 2.6.1. Some years ago my back lawn was completely eaten up by some orange virus.

- 2.6.2. Lately my nice back lawn was starting to get “eaten up again”!
 2.6.2.1. This time, by Mr. Gopher. – Dead Center of my lawn...1 hole...then another, till a few weeks ago when he met Mr. Daisy BB gun.
- 2.6.3. See, every problem has a solution!
 2.6.3.1. Their **problem** of **judgment** was because of sin, there **solution** is **turning back to God**. (see 2:12,13)

2.7. **To the Drunkards!** (5-7)

- 2.7.1. They weep & howl because their vineyards have been ruined & their supply of “Boones Farm” is dried up!
- 2.7.2. (3) Their moral senses were dulled, which made them oblivious to sin.
- 2.7.2.1. It's sure is easy to stand back & look at someone else's sin & wonder how they can be so dumb though, isn't it?
- 2.7.2.2. Sometimes our friends just need a good dose of...“**what are you doing?**”
 2.7.2.2.1. **God can use us to help them to “wake up & smell the coffee!”**
- 2.7.2.3. **Q:** What do you do when you see a friend in sin? Do you adopt **Cain's theology**, “Am I my brother's keeper?”
- 2.7.2.4. Or do you listen to **James** instead, “**Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.**”(5:19,20)
- 2.7.2.5. Paul warns us, “**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**” (1 Tim.6:10)
- 2.7.2.6. Peter said, “**You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;**” (2 Pet.3:17).
- 2.7.3. (7) The locust had basically bleached the land white.

2.8. **To the Worshippers!** (8-10)

- 2.8.1. Who now must go to the Temple empty handed, for there are no sacrifices to bring.
- 2.8.2. (8) Mourn like a young bride who just lost her husband.

2.9. **To the Farmers!** (11,12)

- 2.9.1. They are wailing because their crops are all ruined.

- 2.9.2. (11) **Wheat & Barley** – 2 basic types of bread in the Holy Land, the grain of richer & poorer families.
- 2.9.3. (12) Striped all the trees bare.
- 2.9.3.1. There are 10 verbal terms used(in vs.10-12) to express the havoc triggered by the locusts.
- 2.10. **To the Priests!** (13,14)
- 2.10.1. So, not only the **profane**(drunkards) are effected but also the **sacred** were effected by this plague.
- 2.10.2. So, what are they supposed to do?
- 2.10.2.1. Joel now speaks to them & tells them to “**fast & pray**”.
- 2.10.2.2. Here we reach the **heart** of the matter, for it was because of **sin** that God was punishing the nation.
- 2.10.3. **It was asked of me does the NT ever command us to fast?** (I finally was able to do my homework regarding this) {Here are my finds!}
- 2.10.3.1. **No**, the NT does not specifically require that we must fast...**BUT!**
- 2.10.3.2. Jesus certainly assumes we will fast. He says, “**Moreover, when you fast,**” (Mt.6:16 – assuming we will); “**Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.**” (Mt.9:15).
- 2.10.3.3. Paul told the NT church of Corinth “**Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**” (1 Cor.7:5)
- 2.10.3.4. The church at Antioch was before & after they sent out their 1st missionaries. “**As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.**” (Acts 13:2,3)
- 2.10.3.5. Also, whenever Paul & Barnabas raised up church leaders they would “**So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**” (Acts 14:23)
- 2.10.4. **When did people in scripture fast, & why?**
- 2.10.4.1. Usually it was during times of calamity, disaster, or catastrophe.
- 2.10.4.2. The purpose was to **focus their attention** on God & to **demonstrate** their change of heart & true devotion.

- 2.10.5. **What are the benefits of fasting?**
- 2.10.6. [1] Fasting increases our **dependence** on the Lord.
2.10.6.1. For our hunger & physical weakness continually remind us how we are **not really strong in ourselves** but **need the Lord**.
- 2.10.7. [2] Fasting allows us to give **more attention** to prayer.
2.10.7.1. For we are not spending time on eating.
- 2.10.8. [3] Fasting is a simple **sacrifice of personal comfort**.
2.10.8.1. Which reminds us we must continually sacrifice all of ourselves to Him.
- 2.10.9. [4] Fasting is good exercise in **self-discipline**.
2.10.9.1. As we refrain from eating **food**...it also strengthens our ability to refrain from **sin**, to which we would otherwise be tempted to yield.
- 2.10.10. [5] Fasting also heightens **spiritual & mental alertness**.
2.10.10.1. As we focus less on food, the energies of our body are freed from digesting & processing food. So, we can focus on eternal spiritual realities that are much more important.
2.10.10.2. We are saying **no** to the **physical** & **yes** to the **spiritual**.
- 2.10.11. [6] Fasting expresses **earnestness & urgency** in our prayers.
2.10.11.1. If we continued to fast we would die. Therefore, in a symbolic way, fasting says to God that we are prepared to lay down our lives that the situation be changed rather than continue.
- 2.11. There society revolved around an agricultural economy. **Q: How might God get our attention in our day & age?**
- 2.11.1. A world wide Computer Virus seems to do a great job in shutting most down (this is when the web guys are at their holiest...Please God!)
- 2.11.2. Attacking the world trade center – the shutting down of air travel.
2.11.2.1. Not saying that that was Gods wrath, but looking at what effects us today.

3. **The Day of the Lord! (15-20)**

- 3.1. Deal with vs.16-20 1st.
- 3.1.1. Agriculture(16,17) – Animals(18) - Agriculture(19) – Animals(20)
- 3.2. Here is the 1st of 5 references in Joel to “**The day of the Lord**”.
- 3.2.1. **Q: What time period does this day cover?**
- 3.2.1.1. Not a 24 hour day – because many verses on it describe different events that take place on different days.
- 3.2.1.1.1. Paul uses the phrase, “**day** of salvation”(2 Cor.6:2) not referring to one day.
- 3.2.1.1.2. **For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.** – if that was the “only” **day of salvation** “our goose is cooked”!

- 3.2.1.2. 1] I believe it is speaking of **all of the tribulation**(Zeph.1:14-18)
- 3.2.1.3. 2] **Jesus return** after the Trib.(Zech.14:1-4)
- 3.2.1.4. 3] To the **end of the Millennium** (2 Pet.3:10 “But **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night, in which the **heavens will pass away** with a great noise, and the **elements will melt** with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be **burned up.**”)

3.3. **Q: What is Joel’s main message?**

- 3.3.1. Turn back to God before an even greater judgment comes!
- 3.3.2. **God is coming to settle accounts!**
 - 3.3.2.1. If you didn’t pay your landlord for your monthly apartment fee, wouldn’t you expect Him to come & pay you a visit, to “settle up!”
 - 3.3.2.2. **Be assured the Lord will return & settle all of His accounts.**
- 3.3.3. When he settles up His punishment for sin it will be **overwhelming, dreadful, & unavoidable!**
 - 3.3.3.1. One day we must all reckon with Him! {Are you ready?}
 - 3.3.3.2. My aunt Bearnie died when I was in India. I called my dad when I returned. He explained how she said goodbye to all her siblings.
 - 3.3.3.2.1. My Aunt was ready to go! (I got to share with my dad about her peace)
- 3.3.4. **This locust plague was only an “appetizer” to the meal the Lord will one day serve up!**
- 3.3.5. **1st be warned yourself!** – Make your peace with God!
 - 3.3.5.1. Rom.5:1,2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- 3.3.6. **2nd warn others!** – Tell them these 4 things!
 - 3.3.6.1. God’s desire is for your repentance!
 - 3.3.6.2. Forgiveness comes by turning from sin & to God.
 - 3.3.6.3. With his justice comes mercy!
 - 3.3.6.4. It’s not too late!
- 3.3.7. Paul told the Thes. church, “Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything..., and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus **who delivers us from the wrath to come.**” (1 Thes.1:8-10)
- 3.3.8. Ps.30:4,5 “Sing praise to the LORD, You saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. For **His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping** may endure for a night, But **joy** comes in the morning.”