

Week 8

Joel 2 Lifestyle

Hear and Take Heed!





Joel 1:2–4

“Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.”

What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.”



Something monumental and shocking has just taken place! An unprecedented national disaster has hit Judah, and in the aftermath, the prophet Joel seizes the moment - he draws the nation into the urgency of the hour through a bold opening question:

“Has anything like this happened in your day, or even in the days of your fathers?”

A locust plague has just swept through the land, and Israel finds herself in the peril of the aftermath. The chewing locust, swarming locust, crawling locust, and consuming locust had devastated the nation. Joel’s description of the post-plague landscape painted a bleak picture. The crops were destroyed, the trees stripped, and next year’s seeds were in danger. Drought compounded the problem and herds were dying of hunger and thirst.

The land experienced a catastrophe.

The agricultural engine of their financial system was destroyed. In a short time, the locust plague had brought the nation to her knees through financial collapse, and brought the people to a crisis of survival. This was clearly described in Joel 1:16, “Is not the food cut off before our eyes?”

The prophet then exhorted everyone from every strata of the society to wail and cry out to the Lord over the loss of the crops. In the aftermath of a national disaster (Joel 1:5-13), Israel must awaken and sober up. The crisis was just beginning. The front edge of the storm may have passed, but the aftermath of the hurricane would follow with greater severity.

A religious crisis was also upon the nation. The grain and drink offerings were cut off from the land, severely disrupting the temple worship practices. The priests were called upon to mourn and wail as the very core of their religious expression had been stripped from them.





RESPONSE

The only appropriate response is to “lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.” Their response must commensurate with the severity of the crisis.

They must mourn as a virgin who suddenly loses her husband even before the consummation of the marriage can occur. This is an unthinkable tragedy.

**This is an URGENT crisis
that demands a
NATION - WIDE response.**



Fast forward to 2016, we read and hear of news of crises and potential crises; from natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and blizzards resulting from extreme weather conditions to the terrorist attacks in Paris, to threats made by ISIS to government leaders of various nations through their videos and websites.

Financial markets began the year in an extremely wobbly fashion. The economies of most nations remain weak or even anemic.

Doesn't this sound all too familiar? We are not far from what the people of Israel were facing in the time of Joel.

Joel makes it clear that we need to have understanding of the events taking place. We must be able to interpret these events through the lens of Scripture.

Are the crises we are facing of unprecedented nature? Did Scripture speak to us of such times? What insight can we glean from Joel so we can respond according to what God wants?



The call “to hear and give ear” is the call to understand the book of Joel. It is the call to hear God’s heart as we prepare ourselves in the midst of testing times. We must press in for understanding. We must search out Scriptures for the truth. We must invite Holy Spirit, the divine escort, to guide us into all truths.

Even if it seems hard going at the start, keep pressing in to God for understanding, because Jeremiah 23:20 says that, “*In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.*”

Let us bathe our study with prayers. And let the Lord birth forth revelation and understanding through prayer even as we meditate on the scriptures!



Readings and Prayers for the week

Readings for Week 8

No one group was excused from hearing and responding. How can we respond to this message?

Take time to read through and study the book of Joel. Go beyond head knowledge.

Pray with an open heart and press in for understanding until our hearts burn at the opening of the scripture, just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Prayers for Week 8

Seven times in the book of Revelation Jesus warned the seven churches, *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”* Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

Pray that the Church will hear what the Spirit is saying even in the midst of the noise and chaos.