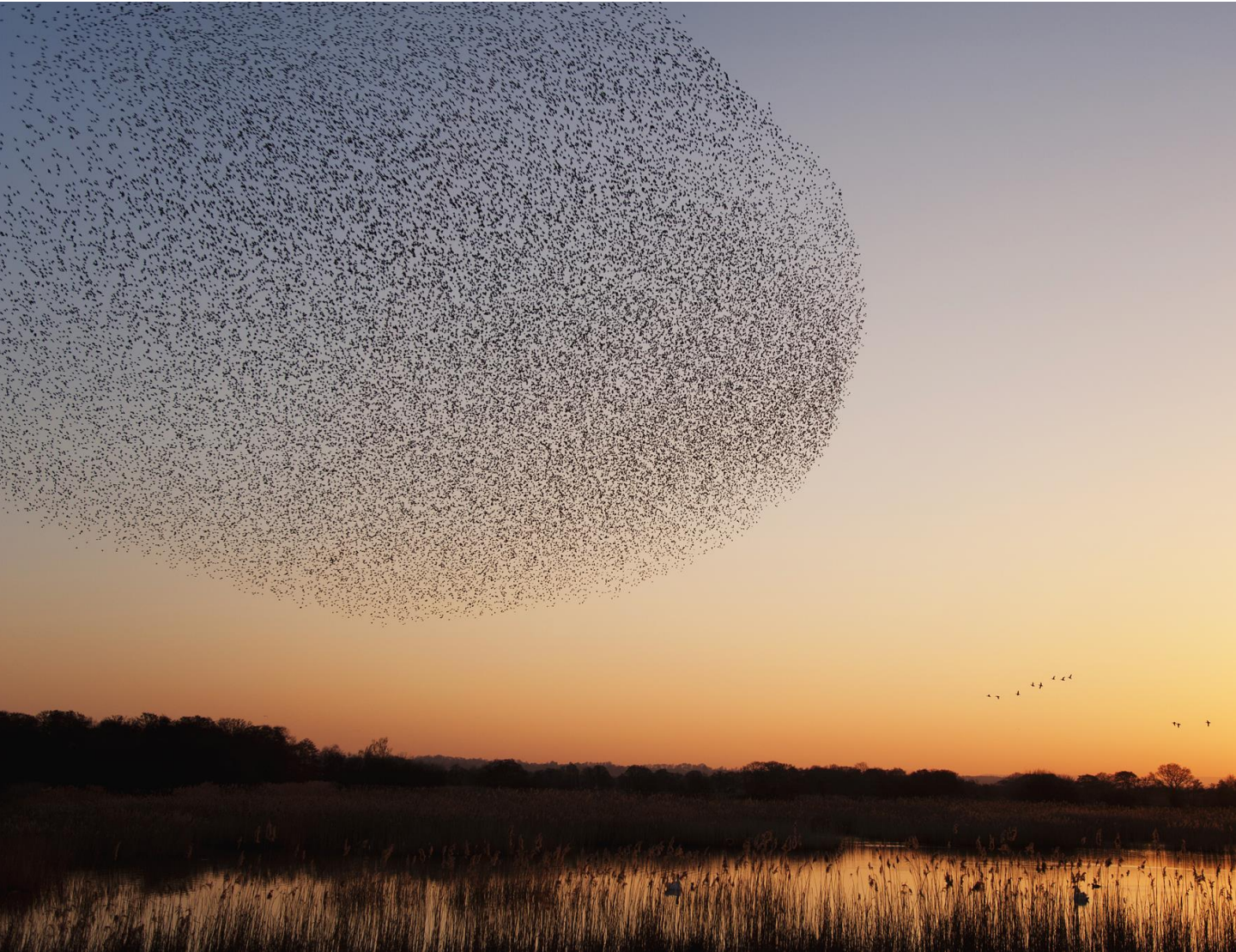


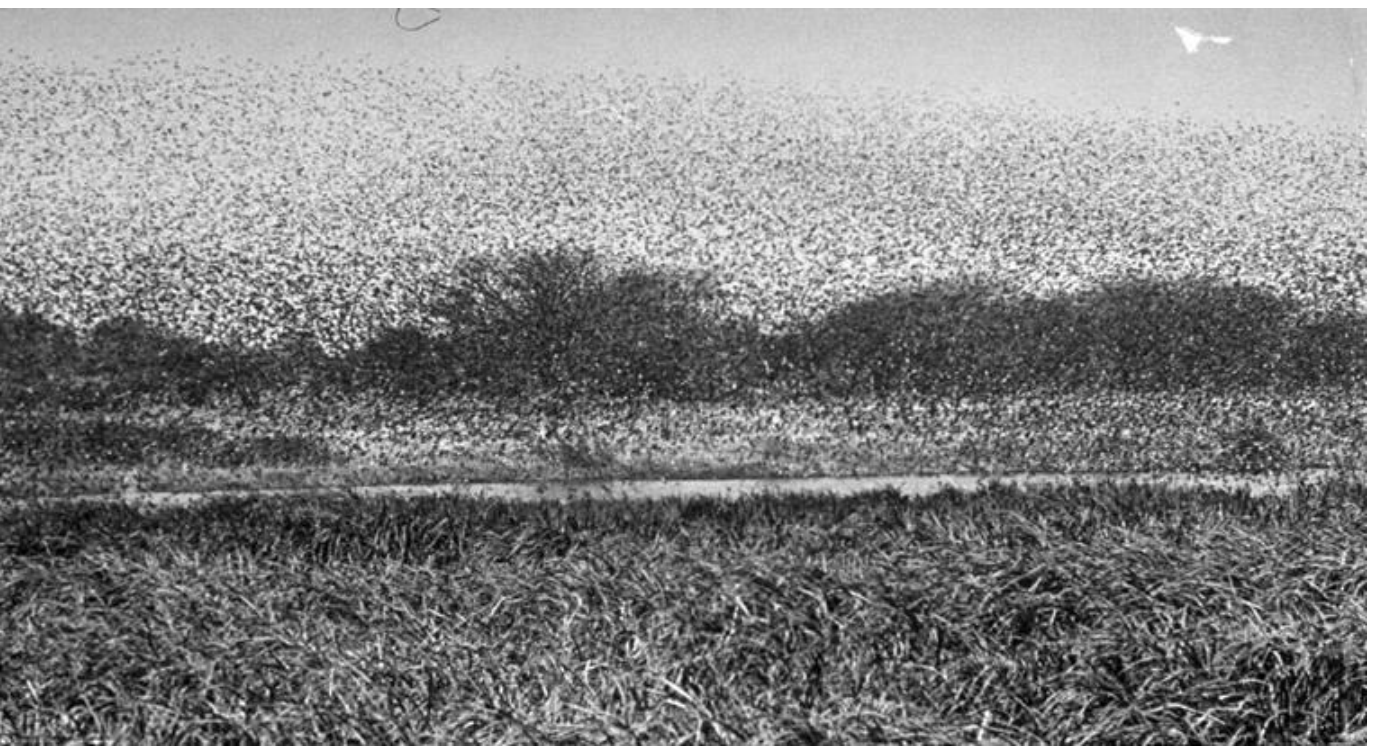
Week 13

Joel 2 Lifestyle



*Understanding God's Role in
Natural Disasters*

Joel 1:4 *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*



Every so often, we will hear of news of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, bush fires and drought resulting in famine. Natural disasters will be common worldwide in the generation of the Lord's return. The intensity and frequency of occurrence of these events will build up as we approach the End-of-the-Age.

Does God have a role in natural disasters? Is it even possible?

In the time of Joel, the natural disaster came in the form of four successive waves of locust invasion.

God did not give us the Book of Joel for us to know how much damage the locusts had caused in the nation of Israel.

He wants us to study it to have an understanding of the magnitude of what is coming and how to respond to God in the midst of shakings

When we read about the locust plague and devastation, we must not view it from a mere intellectual perspective. We must understand the heart of Joel's message.

The locust plague was not primarily about the locusts, but about the reality of how God will use disasters to awaken nations or regions.



We must know that God's heart is tender and merciful. His desire is always for us to turn to Him and have our ways aligned to His. If He sends shakings, it is for our good so that we will walk close to His heart and in His righteous ways. If we humble ourselves, seek His ways and turn from our wicked ways, He will heal our land.

A few observations can be made regarding the locust invasion in the time of Joel, and principles can be gleaned from these.

1

First, disasters and crises can come in waves. The locust plague was not just a one-time occurrence but came in four different waves, with each wave increasing in intensity over the previous one. Just when the people thought it was over, another wave appeared, and these waves eventually wiped out all the remaining crops.

Second, there is an element of surprise each time a new wave hits. One moment, the people will be standing in the field, working as usual. The next moment, as they looked up, they would see a horrifying cloud of darkness swarming over the horizon.

2

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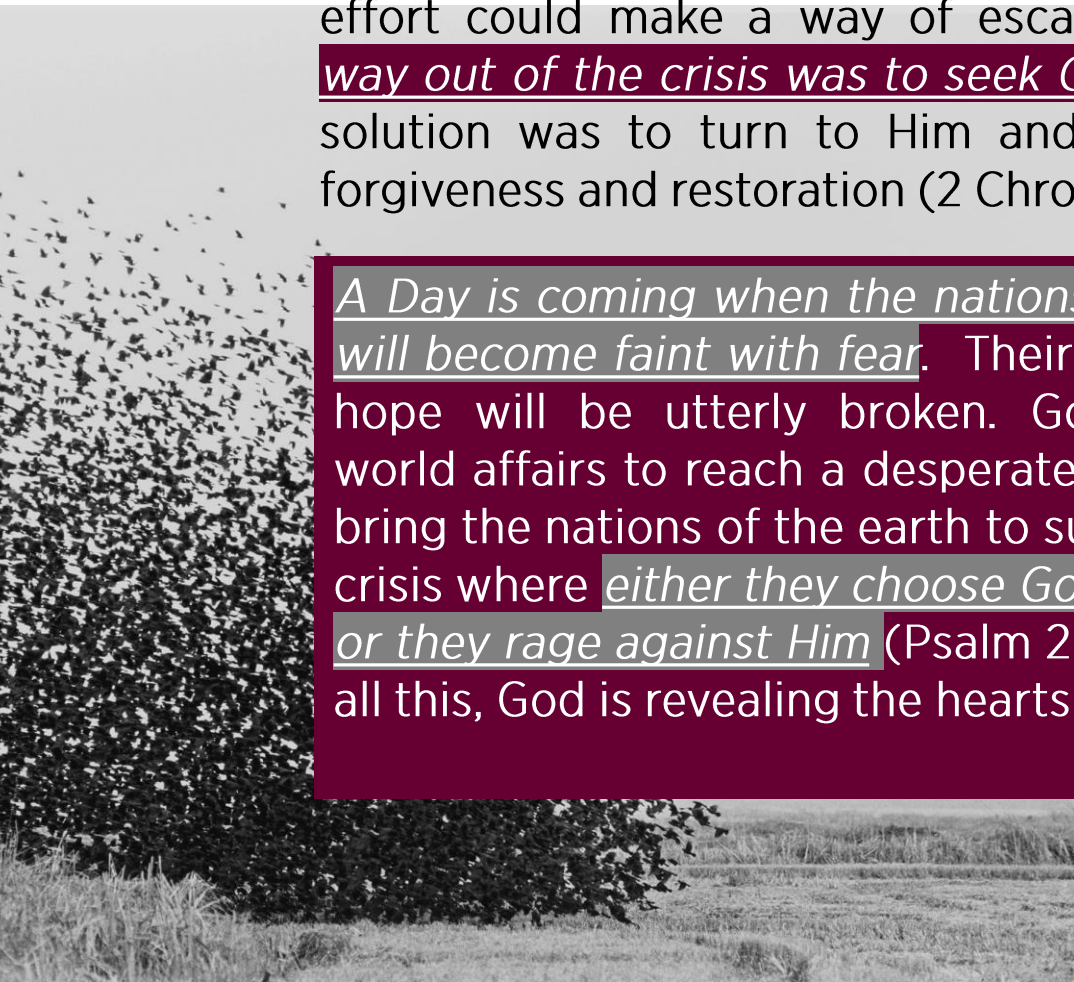
Third, natural disasters can result in drastic consequences. A locust plague was one of the most crippling economic crisis causing severe poverty leading to starvation, widespread sickness and death.

With the successive waves of locust invasion, the nation's strength was totally stripped off. The situation was so bad that the nation was filled with hopelessness and her spirit broken (Joel 1:12). God left them in a position where human wisdom, strength and power were useless in bringing deliverance. Their only hope and solution was God!

There was, however, one main problem that stood in Israel's way.

Israel did not realize and understand that the plagues were sent by God. As such, she did not repent. Instead of crying out to God for help, she attributed it to natural causes and remained in a place of compromise and complacency. If the Lord had sent the locust plague, no human effort could make a way of escape. The only way out of the crisis was to seek God. The only solution was to turn to Him and cry out for forgiveness and restoration (2 Chronicles 7:14).

A Day is coming when the nations of the earth will become faint with fear. Their strength and hope will be utterly broken. God will allow world affairs to reach a desperate level. He will bring the nations of the earth to such a place of crisis where either they choose God as deliverer or they rage against Him (Psalm 2:1-3). Through all this, God is revealing the hearts of man.



The Lord gave us prophetic demonstrations in Joel's time of how He will shake the earth at the End-of-the-Age. More than that, He has told us clearly what we are to do and the response He is looking for when these shakings happen.

He is giving us the same invitation He gave His people in Joel's time -

"If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

*May
we truly
hear
and
respond
to His
call!*





Readings and Prayers for the week

Readings for Week 13

- Take time to study the significance of the locust invasion in the book of Joel (Joel 1:4-12). What do you think God is teaching you when you read these verses? How do you think understanding this will help you and the Church in the days before Jesus' return?
- Do you see similar natural disasters happening today? Ask Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and counsel you on what these mean. Ask Him to show you what He wants you and your church to do.

Prayers for Week 13

- Pray Col 1:9-10 that the Church in Singapore and in Asia will see the things that are happening all around us, have understanding of its implications and know what we ought to do.