

## Week 2 – Discussion Questions / Family Conversations

**1. Joel sees in the recent national disaster of a locust invasion a foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord, when God will judge the wicked and deliver the righteous. His exhortation to the people of Israel is to repent before it comes.**

- We see here Joel’s response to natural disaster and calamity. What is your typical response to it?
- What do you believe would be the most biblical and faithful way that you (as an individual) and the church (as a people) could respond to disasters, cultural problems, and wide-spread trouble, in so far as they are a foreshadowing of final judgment?
- Is your natural response less or other than you believe it should be? If so, why do you think that is? What keeps us from responding like we should to what is going on in the world around us?

**2. Israel tended to make the mistake of assuming that because they had experienced God’s favor in the past, that they would experience his favor in the future simply because of their heritage, being Abraham’s descendants.**

- Have you seen those who identify as Christians make the same mistake today, wrongfully assuming that we are good with God simply due to our lineage, nationality, traditions, personal connections, etc.?
- How do we make sure that we don’t deceive ourselves the same way?

**3. What does it look like to “rend” one’s heart (v. 13)?**

- When have you experienced or done this yourself?
- What lead you to this kind of response?
- What was the result of your repentance and mourning over the sin that you faced?

**4. How have you experienced and seen the gracious, merciful and loving character of God (v. 13) in the face of disaster?**

**5. How does the gospel help you to be honestly aware of the tragedy and brokenness in the world without it leading you to despair?**



**The Book of Joel** – (Prophetic Poetry – to stir the hearts of God’s people as they looked toward future works of God toward sin and righteousness.)

*Week 1 Follow-Up* - Joel is calling the people to redemptive conversation.

Have you used the pain of sin to point to judgment of God and the promise of a Savior? (dinner table, work lunch, phone, social media)

*Let the sovereign providence of God on earth direct your eyes, ears, and voice toward His place in heaven!*

Even though chapter 1 is an introduction, the answer is clearly given. – vs. 14, 19 – “Come to God!”

*Trouble should cause us to blame sin and run to God, but we often blame God and run to sin.*

Joel gives us an essence of the Gospel.

Chapter 1 – “You have nothing to offer.”

Chapter 2 – “So, God will offer it for you.”

Luke 22 – The bread which is given or “offered” is the body of Jesus Christ. The drink which is spilt or literally “poured out” is the blood of the Savior.

## Chapter 2:1-17 – These Days Point to That Day

The “Day of the Lord” is a theme we find used throughout the Bible, especially in the prophetic books. In the Old Testament, the “Day of the Lord” most often refers to specific events or circumstances that convey imminence, nearness and expectation of God’s judgment of sin. Each of these days point to the final “Day of the Lord” when sin will be eternally vanquished from the God’s kingdom and the universe will be ruled in righteousness. Each “Day of the Lord” should be considered in our minds and hearts.

Vs. 1 – “...for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.” – This shows us that Joel is speaking of the current day and a future day.

### Verses 1-11 – Further Description of the Locust Destruction

Vs. 2 – Darkness / gloominess / clouds – describes the overwhelming, oppressive nature of the locust plague. Picture them flying above and creating a dust that would spread all over.

Vs. 3 – Fire / flame – describes the consuming nature of the locust. They would destroy even the most fertile landscape (Eden). “Nothing shall escape them.”

Vs. 4-5 – Horsemen / chariots in battle – describes the chasing and overcoming nature of the locust. As in a battle, the horses and chariots always overcome those on foot. There was a daunting noise that would arrive before the actual doom.

Vs. 6 – They will bring pain and weakness.

Vs. 7 – They run, climb, march, and do not break.

Vs. 8 – They cannot be killed or fought by swords or normal methods.

Vs. 9 – They will come through the walls, houses, and windows. You cannot keep them out.

Vs. 10 – Earth, heavens, sun, moon, stars – there is no where to run or hide.

Vs. 11 – They are commanded by God alone. “Who can abide it?”

Joel presents a dark, overwhelming picture, but remember this all describes the coming day of the Lord and His judgment over sin. The judgment of God over all sin is just as overwhelming. Imagine the descriptions above and apply them to God chasing, devouring, and conquering all sin.

*Application: If “that day” is greater than “this day”, who will be able to escape the judgment of the Lord. When God comes to destroy all evil and you are on the wrong side, why would you think you’d be able to endure that? Like the locust, God does not seek permission, and He cannot be stopped.*

We often say that we are conscious of an almighty, righteous, holy God, yet we ignore Him, His Word, His Spirit, and His commands. - Amos 4

### Verses 12-17 – Judgment is Mingled with Mercy – God Calls to Repentance

In the final “Day of the Lord”, there will be no turning. However, each of these days of the Lord were designed to bring people to repentance.

Vs. 12 – God says “now... turn to me with all your heart.” His spirit toward their rebellion was that He hoped He would get to devour and destroy. Rather, he longed for them to repent and turn to Him.

*Even in judgment, He desired relationship!*

Vs. 13 – God tells them that He has had plenty of physical adherence, but He wanted heart repentance. Notice the descriptions: gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. *Your heart must change!*

Vs. 14 – God offers what they could not. He removed their ability to appease their conscience with “performative spirituality”.

Vs. 15-17 – We find a spirit of thorough desperation and urgency.  
- Elders, children, young bride and groom, priests – everyone.

*Why should this message matter? God displays through His people that, until the final day of the Lord...*

*In the middle of destruction, there is always deliverance.*

*In the middle of ruin, there is always rescue.*

*When you come to the Lord, you move from the crushed to the consecrated and from the oppressed to the liberated.*

*- Rahab, David at Ziklag, \_\_\_\_\_*

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The clearest example of this is the “Day of the Lord” when Jesus was crucified. Even like this passage with the locust, the skies darkened, Jesus body was consumed with pain and punishment for sin, the evil seemed unstoppable, there was pain and weakness, there was betrayal from within, the earth shook, the sun went dark... yet there was mercy! The question would be “Who can abide this?” JESUS CAN! “Who can escape this?” Now we can through the mercy of Christ.