

SOUNDING THE TRUMPET: STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JOEL

— GARY WIENS

SESSION 3: ESTABLISHING A JOEL 2 SPIRITUAL CULTURE

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? 3 Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. (Joel 1:2-3)

I. HEAR AND LISTEN

Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! (Joel 1:2)

- A. The first exhortation is to pay close attention to the ***Joel 2 end-time message***. The overall message of Joel is that the glory of God in revival is coming along with the crisis of the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation and that wholeheartedness (fasted lifestyle) can make a difference because God is kind and releases blessing in the midst of crisis (Joel 2:12-14)
- B. The call to “hear and give ear” is the call to study the Book of Joel. It is the call to hear God’s heart as we prepare for future disruptions. It takes the work of the Holy Spirit for our hearts to really get the message.
1. Jesus made this same appeal to the seven churches in Revelation, saying, ***“Let him who has ears, let him hear” (Rev. 2:7, 3:6)***. Jesus was saying, “Pay close attention because it takes God’s help to really hear God’s word.” It takes the grace of God to fully hear God’s message with clarity. Be careful with the information you receive because if God does not help us hear it, then we will end up explaining it away or just soon forget it. If we experience an initial stirring by the end-time message, we must pursue it until our hearts are gripped with revelation. Just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we want our hearts to burn within us at the opening of the scriptures (Lk. 24:32).
 2. God’s call to hear or to cultivate understanding is essential because the message is offensive to our flesh; we naturally resist what challenges our comfort zone.
- C. ***This listening does not come automatically because we love God.*** It requires an intentional, deliberate cultivating of revelation of the Joel 2 end-time message of the Day of the Lord. This process of revelation begins with diligently studying the Book of Joel. We cannot settle for the initial stirring of our minds. That instruction must become a living understanding in our heart. Another way to say it is that we must “eat the scroll,” digesting its truth until it becomes part of us (Ezek. 3:1; Rev. 10:9). If we do not feed our spirits on the message, the initial inspiration we experience by hearing it will quickly evaporate away. *We pray, “Lord, I will not be content until my heart is burning with revelation so that I live differently!”*

II. THE COMING CRISIS IS VERY UNFAMILIAR TO OUR MINDS

Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? (Joel 1:2)

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- A. Joel begins by emphasizing the ***unprecedented magnitude*** of what was happening in their day. He asks, in essence, *“Have you seen anything like this? Do you think this is normal?”*
- B. The significance of this is the very fact that the message is unprecedented, makes it unfamiliar and, thus, not easy to hear. We are entering a new season on the divine calendar that will result in much change on the earth. His glory and judgments will shake everything that can be shaken. We are in a unique time period which we have no frame of reference for. Its very unfamiliarity is part of the difficulty of being prepared for it. Most people do not really think about living through the events recorded in the Book of Revelation. As of today, the great crisis has not begun. We only see small tokens of what is ahead.
- C. We must not yield to a scoffing spirit of unbelief about the Jesus’ coming.
- Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” (2 Pet. 3:3-4)***
1. These scoffers that Peter foresaw will be both inside the Church and outside of it. Their worldview will not come from the revelation of Scripture but according to their lusts or their wishful thinking. Not wanting their money, pleasure or power to be disrupted, they will deem the lifestyle God prescribed in His Word to be extreme and unnecessary, and the message of the end times as false or unbiblical.
- Mark 4:18-20 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word (word of the Kingdom – Matthew 13:19), (19) and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (20) But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”***
2. They will say, “Where is the promise of His coming?” In other words, “Where is the coming revival or where is the coming judgment?” Peter said, in essence, “They will be motivated by their own lusts, by their own agendas instead of God’s.”
 3. These scoffers will perpetuate the lie that everything will continue as it always has. They willfully forget that God rules His kingdom and the universe by His Word (2 Pet. 3:5). In other words, what His Word says will surely come to pass.
- D. The Church in the western world is not yet convinced of what is coming. We are like the proverbial ostrich—putting our heads in the ground and hoping it will all just go away. We hope God will change it all if we remain ignorant.

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- E. What is written in the Word of God is not going to go away. It will come to pass whether we are prepared for it to or not. If the locust plague of Joel 1 and the military crisis of Joel 2 is unfamiliar, what about the Book of Revelation? The things that are approaching the globe, as recorded in Revelation, are so unfamiliar to us. Has anything like this ever happened? It is totally new ground for all of us. The greatest revival and the greatest disaster that the world has ever known are around the corner. Our best days and our worst days are swiftly approaching.
- F. Noah is one of the greatest examples of embracing a prophetic message that was totally unprecedented and unfamiliar to him. God told him it would rain for forty days. However, it had never rained in history at that point. Up until that time, God watered the ground from below not from water (rain) descending from the sky. When Noah told people that water would come from the sky, they undoubtedly laughed as they informed him, as everyone knew, that the water came upwards from the ground not downwards from the sky.
- G. However, when Noah heard this strange message from God he was ***“moved with godly fear”*** (Heb. 11:7). Noah followed through with a radical lifestyle change in giving his time and energy to cutting wood and building an ark—for over one hundred years. Over one hundred years! Imagine, eighty years into building his boat, his friends must have said, “Noah, are you sure you heard right?” Noah was so convinced of the word of the Lord that it changed everything about his life. The way he spent time, money and energy was never the same. Like Noah, we are in the generation when something unprecedented is coming; and; it also must dramatically change the way that we live today. Jesus likened the last days to the generation of Noah (Matt. 24:37-39).

III. THE LEADERS MUST LEAD – PEOPLE FOLLOW WHAT LEADERS DO

Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! (Joel 1:2)

- A. The mandate to “hear” begins with spiritual leadership. Joel challenges them to hear, which means lead by a lifestyle that enhances hearing. Leaders must “give ear” or give themselves to this message! It is not enough for leaders to get together and write papers about a particular crisis in the nation.
- B. The leaders themselves must get on their knees before God with an open Bible and begin to study what the prophets say will happen in the generation that the Lord returns. Then they must go to the next stage of cultivating the grace of prayer and fasting.
- C. When leaders enter into fasting and prayer, leading by example, “the inhabitants of the land” tune in (Joel 1:2). The blessing of God arises when leaders lead.

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- D. The greatest gift that God can give a nation is to raise up men and women in leadership with a spirit of revelation and the grace of fasting and prayer. One of the greatest crises in the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001, was that the Body of Christ was not being led by many leaders with the spirit of revelation and fasting and prayer. America's greatest crisis is not what is happening in Washington, D.C. It is not what is happening in the sin-centers of our major cities. It is not what is happening in Hollywood.
1. As horrifying as abortion is, that is not the major problem in this country. The major problem is that the Church is being led by leaders without a spirit of revelation and without a spirit of fasting and prayer.
 2. When that problem is answered, all of the other things will be addressed by leaders who walk in the anointing of God.

IV. TELLING THE MESSAGE – THE NEED TO PROCLAIM THE MESSAGE

Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children. (Joel 1:3)

- A. We must not only hear and be gripped by this message, we must also proclaim it (Joel 1:3). The price we will pay for boldly standing for the truth can be seen in the persecutions that the Old Testament prophets received. They were criticized, ostracized, imprisoned and killed.
- B. God will give us more revelation and authority if we faithfully use what He entrusts to us. The Lord honors the courage and faith that it takes to proclaim the Joel 2 end-time message.
- If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." (Mk. 4:23-25)***

V. TELL THE CHILDREN – ESTABLISHING A DYNAMIC SPIRITUAL CULTURE

Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. (Joel 1:3)

- A. Prayer and fasting is to be the permanent spiritual culture of the end-time Church.
- B. After calling the elders to hear and all the inhabitants of the land to listen, Joel says, "Tell your children about it." Joel gives a four-generation mandate, expressing the necessity of making this part of what the children learn and understand.

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- C. Every child must hear this message continually so as to understand end-time realities. It should be as normal for them to hear about the end of the age as it was for Noah's children to hear that a flood is coming. We must tell the children about the coming Day that is both great and terrible and how we participate with a kind God in it through lifestyles of prayer with fasting.
- D. A child's spirit is like wet cement; that is, they are moldable and teachable. Whatever we write on these open spirits, this wet cement, they will receive as true and normal. One reason adults struggle for years with wrong paradigms of God is that they were taught them in their youth. Then thirty years later, we still struggle to get free from wrong paradigms because the cement dried long ago, locking lies into our understanding.

We want the pliable hearts of our children to be cement that dries with truth in it. They will consider as true both the great glory and the crisis coming to the earth. They will believe fasting and prayer is normal for God's people. They will remember what their moms and dads did—they gathered together for fasting and prayer. We tell the children that God is very kind and may relent of judgment, if His people will cry out to Him (Joel 2:13, 14). Children will learn to confidently approach a God of kindness to change their city.

- E. There is a spiritual environment, a spiritual culture that God wants us establish in the midst of the Church. It is best formed when we "tell" our children (*model the lifestyle in front of them*) and they tell their children. When four generations understand this, a new spiritual environment emerges that believes in the normality of this kind of lifestyle and message.
- F. Establishing a dynamic spiritual culture according to the Joel 2 message drives out the scoffing spirit that is filled with complacency (2 Pet. 3:3-4). This will not take root in our children.
- G. The spiritual culture in the Body of Christ is filled with a scoffing and complacent spirit. The complacent spirit has so taken root in the leadership of the Church today that it is considered strange and bizarre to actually believe the Word of God for the end-times. We must in faith take what God says in His word at face-value.
- H. We want to raise children in the midst of a spiritual atmosphere of faith and wholeheartedness. This is what God is after in commanding all to, "Tell the children..." (Joel 1:3). He wants a spiritual culture established where the children are raised up in believing faith according to the Word of God. Imagine how different a day of calamity would look if the young and old together were filled with understanding and might in the inner man!
- I. Prayer and fasting is to be the permanent spiritual culture of the end-time Church.