

# Joel Part Three

## “Seeing The Cross of Our Own Death”

In September and October of 2013 I shared part one and two of “The Book of Joel” series in my Fire Ministries Newsletter. Now, a little over two years later, the Holy Spirit has continued this sharing, and so I will pick up where we left off. The first two parts of this sharing can be read and downloaded through the Fire Website from the Joel page that is located under the tab entitled “classes”.

**Joel 1:14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD...”**

Upon first glance this verse (Joel 1:14) sets the stage for a heartfelt solemn assembly of seeking the Lord and crying out to Him. If someone were to stop reading at verse 14 and simply begin fasting and praying they might miss the true import of these verses. As always, the context of all scripture is important. Even Satan pulled random scriptures out of context to craft them to suit his own purposes and say what he wanted them to say. Unlike the motivations of the enemy, a sincere heart seeking God could easily do the same thing unaware of the greater context of the verse. In order to focus our seeking in the right direction we must first take a deeper look at the context of these verses.

In the first half of chapter one, we find a great mourning happening based on the **lack of bread and wine.**

- Those who drink wine are howling: ***Joel 1:5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.***
- The priest are lying on empty altars and mourning because they have nothing to offer God: ***Joel 1:9 The grain/meal offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.***
- The farmers and vine-dressers are ashamed and sobbing for the lack of harvest: ***Joel 1:11 Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; Sob, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.***
- Every plant that flourishes through union is also mourning: ***Joel 1:12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.***

- Those whose very existence is connected to the altars are brought very low in their deep distress: ***Joel 1:13 Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the grain/meal offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.***

It is at this point that verse 14 surfaces; ***Joel 1:14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD.*** The general theme of this solemn assembly in Joel has to do with the lack of fruitfulness. The fields lie barren and destroyed by locust. The vines are in the same condition.

This lack of grain and grape has resulted in the lack of the elements that define the Old Testament fellowship offerings, or what the new testaments calls “communion”. Where has this lack of fruitfulness and communion come from? Why is Judah in such an impoverished state? How did things get to this point? To know how to cry out, one must first comprehend the real need, and in the following verses we will discover what the true need is.

Once again, at this point... between verses 14 and 15 it would be easy to assume the subject has changed from the solemn assembly to a devastating prophesy about the destructive day of the Lord.

**Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand,  
and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.**

To the reasoning of the natural man it would seem certain that an entire new focus is being presented in verse 15, but let us remember the Lord’s exhortation given through Isaiah, ***“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD” (Is. 55:8).*** Could it be possible that verse 15 is actually the proper progression from God’s view for how the solemn assembly should proceed?

Let us review; in verse 14 we have all of Judah being gathered together for a solemn assembly to fast and seek the Lord followed by verse 15 declaring that the destructive day of the Lord is at hand. This great and terrible day of the Lord is mentioned all throughout the Old Testament and signifies the time when ALL FLESH IS JUDGED. This great day of judgment happened in Christ when He was crucified as us on Calvary, bearing the judgment of all flesh. It is truly a great and a terrible day. It is a great day for those who love God because at dark Calvary God Himself was manifest in His divine Nature revealing His eternal Being like never before. It is a great day for those who love Christ and glory in the Cross of their own death. It is a great day for those who boast in the cross that removed our flesh and gave us Christ to be our life. It is a terrible day for those who love themselves because all flesh was judged, condemned and crucified in Christ. Those who reject Christ as their atonement must bear this judgment on their own.

Therefore verse 15 begins to gather the focus of the seekers in the right direction – towards the Cross of Christ. To seek the Lord apart from the Cross is an exercise in futility. Our field will remain barren and our altars will remain empty. Our only hope is in the crucified Christ. If we want our fasting and crying out to be effectual, it must begin with seeing the Cross of our own death. The carnal mind tries to push us into fasting and crying out as a method of earning God's favor and forcing God's hand. The only thing that moves God's heart is His Son. The only thing that has earned us God's favor is the death of His Son on our behalf. To try and move God on any other basis is to reject the Cross of Christ while placing confidence in our flesh (the very flesh that was judged in Christ).

Verse 16 continues to fine-tune our focus within this dark day of judgment by directing our eyes to behold the meal offering manifesting as a crucified Christ hanging on the tree.

### **Joel 1:16a Is not the meal cut off before our eyes?**

Before Jesus was crucified He gathered those closest to Him and celebrated His final Passover meal. During this meal Jesus took bread and broke it before the eyes of His friends telling them that this broken bread was a picture of His body that was about to be given for them (Luke 22:19). Jesus was about to be crucified. He who knew no sin was about to be made sin by taking upon himself our sinful nature (II Cor. 5:21). In bearing our flesh He was going to be cut off in the true circumcision of God (Col. 2:11). In this one fatal act on Calvary all flesh was cursed, cut off, and rejected as a means of serving God (no confidence in the flesh – Phil. 3:3). Not only was Jesus cursed as our sin offering, He was also cut off from His Father (Mark 15:34).

***“In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is cut off from the earth” (Acts 8:33).***

In the book of Joel, those gathering together to seek God during a time of famine were directed to behold the Day of the Lord (The Cross of Christ). Every eye was then directed to behold the true fulfillment of the meal offering, Christ Crucified. The day of our death with Christ needs to be so deeply revealed that it devastates our land that keeps trying to bring forth apart from Him. We who have put some hope in our flesh should now seek to put all hope in the Cross of Christ. If we are united into His death then there will be a union into His Life that brings forth fruit unto God through Jesus Christ (Romans chapter 6). In John 15 Jesus tells us that He is the True Vine and we are His branches and in order to bear fruit we must abide in union with Him. Throughout the bible from old to New Testament, you will find that the order to this vital union into Christ begins with coming into union with His death. If we are seeking fruit, then we must start by crying out to know our death with Him. If we skip this step and only seek life, then our flesh will begin trying to produce what only Christ in us can bring forth. Our famine will never be reversed if our eyes do not behold the Cross of our own death as the door into His fruitfulness through us.

Paul said it this way to the Galatians:

**Gal. 3:1b “Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth,  
crucified among you?”**

The Spirit of God is directing the eyes of every seeker, through the book of Joel, to behold Christ, who was Crucified AS them as seen in the meal offering that is cut off. Paul, the most fruitful Christian that I know, GLORIED in the Cross of His own death. In fact Paul said he was determined to know nothing save Christ and Him Crucified. Paul most certainly (by the Spirit) had “the meal offering cut off before his eyes”. Paul SAW by revelation the Cross of Christ. Paul was not there on the literal day Christ was crucified, but God revealed the Cross to Paul by the Holy Spirit and Paul’s eyes SAW Christ Crucified to such a degree that Paul could say with all certainty, “I AM CRUCIFIED with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). Paul saw that not only was Jesus cut off from the earth at the Cross, but so was he. Paul saw His death with Christ to such a degree that Paul said, “it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me”. The fruit that came from Paul’s field was the result of Christ living in Him. Paul was a man in famine before He saw the Lord. He was killing Christians and riding on his high horse while all the time full of pride and religion. Once Paul saw the Cross of His own death He became a devastated land that could bring forth nothing from its own resources. Christ became his all,... the Seed in his Soil, the Fruit of his harvest, his Life,... Christ all and in all. Paul understood the wisdom and power found only in the Cross.

To see the Cross of our own death frees us from continually plowing and grooming our flesh to try to look and act like Jesus. Let’s face it, locusts and bugs continually eat away at that which the flesh produces because it is full of self, pride, and other things that bugs attach to. We can fast and pray over that which God has already rejected, or we can seek the Cross of Christ and have Him revealed to and in us as our ALL.

**Ps. 22:26 “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”**

*(The context of Ps 22 is the Lamb of God hanging on the Cross and bearing the sufferings of crucifixion).*

*We are the devastated field - He is the Life giving Seed*

*We are the unfaithful - He is the perpetually pleasing*

*We are the rejected offering - He is the Lamb of God*

***Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus***

**May we so partake of His death that an offering of the Son arises to God through us, bringing sweet communion to the Father.**