




MAKING SENSE OF THE GLOBAL CRISIS AND **HOW THEN** **SHALL WE LIVE**





In light of the COVID-19 crisis that is affecting many nations around the world, it is crucial for God's people to correctly interpret what is happening and to understand what the Lord wants from His people in this time.

The world has entered a new normal. However, are we as God's people hearing Him correctly and responding rightly to Him? Or are we simply waiting for this to blow over so that we can go back to our lives business-as-usual?


God's everlasting Word provides the answer as to what we need to do in such a time as this. It gives us the grid through which we can make sense of this global crisis, and the answers to the question, "How then shall we live?"

In this day and hour, we invite you to join us for corporate Joel 2 sacred assemblies of seeking God in prayer. Check out our meeting schedule at bit.ly/prayerroomschedule. Our sessions are open to the public.

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**WE ARE LIVING IN SERIOUS
TIMES. WE ARE LIVING IN
UNPRECEDENTED TIMES.
TODAY WE STAND AT A
CRITICAL JUNCTURE OF
HUMAN HISTORY!**

The September 11th terrorist attacks came and went in 2001. SARS came and went in 2003. The Asian tsunami came and went in December 2004. In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina followed suit. Without much of a respite, the world then plunged into a global financial crisis in 2007 lasting two years, followed by the H1N1 flu pandemic close on its heels. Between September 28 to October 4, 2009, there were unprecedented natural disasters and calamities that took place within a week – a typhoon swept through Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan; a tsunami inundated the Samoan Islands; and two earthquakes rocked Indonesia. Today, we are facing an outbreak of still-unknown proportions of a new coronavirus (COVID-19) and the world is on the brink of another financial crisis!

Are these just mere coincidences? What is really happening and what should we make of all these events? Are these judgments of God? What does the Bible say?

As people of God, we must only draw our answers and conclusions from the very Word of God!

There are many questions that need to be answered, but the questions that I will seek to answer here are twofold – *“Have we understood the times and known what to do like the sons of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32? Have we heard the sound of the trumpet and responded with a commensurate burden like what Joel 2:1 and Joel 2:15 call for?”*



The Church is way past the hour of having conferences on how to make our walk with God better and how to become more effective in ministry.

Developing a REAL, DEEP and AUTHENTIC history in and with God in this season is instead THE matter of utmost importance!

IN THE COMING CRISES, IT WILL BE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!

An individual and corporate history in God that can bear the weight of the global crisis that is about to come must be cultivated, even as we witness rogue nations with nuclear capabilities, outbreaks of flu pandemics, water shortages, biological threats, terrorist attacks, virtual perversion, the dullness of humanistic society and the coming judgment of the LORD bearing down upon the world at this time.

In fact, Jesus emphasized in Matthew 24:6, Mark 13:7 and Luke 21:9 that **ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS!**

JOEL'S CRISIS

"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."

(JOEL 1:2-4)

In the aftermath of a national disaster, Joel attempts to draw the nation into the urgency of the hour through his opening question, *"Has anything like this happened in your day, or even in the days of your fathers?"* Before any rebuilding and replanting strategy kicked in, the prophet wanted to seize the moment to ask this deeper question.

Something monumental and shocking had taken place that affected all who lived in the land. **Did Israel even realise?**

Locust plagues had swept through, and Israel found herself in the peril of the aftermath. The chewing locusts, swarming locusts, crawling locusts, and consuming locusts had devastated the nation. While locust plagues do not always destroy an economy, Joel's description of the plague showed that this was otherwise for Israel. The crops were destroyed, the trees were stripped, and the following year's seed was in danger. Drought compounded the problem as fire spread throughout the barren land, and their herds were dying of hunger and thirst.

The land was experiencing a financial catastrophe. The agricultural engine to their financial system had been destroyed. In a short time, the locust plagues had brought Israel to financial collapse and the people to a crisis of survival: *"Is not the food cut off before our eyes?"* (Joel 1:16)

Temple worship was not spared. The priests could not perform their religious duties before the Lord as grain and drink offerings were cut off from the land.

HOWEVER, THE CRISIS WAS ONLY JUST BEGINNING.

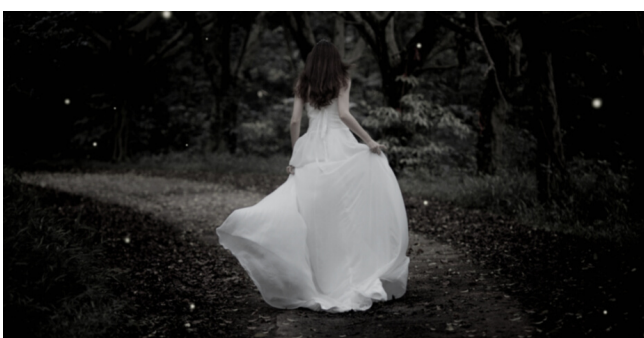
The front edge of the storm had passed, but the rear of the hurricane would follow with greater severity. **Another impending crisis was upon the nation**, this time in the form of the Babylonian army's invasion (Joel 2:2-11).

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a denim jacket, with their hands clasped together in a prayerful or contemplative gesture. The background is dark and out of focus.

JOEL'S CALL TO RESPOND

How should Israel have responded? The prophet exhorted in Joel 1:5 – 13 for every class of society in Israel to awaken and wail over the aftermath of the locust plagues. **The entire nation had to awaken and sober up.**

The only appropriate response was to *"lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth."* Their response must equate the severity of the crisis. They must mourn like a virgin who has just lost her husband suddenly before the consummation of the marriage could occur. This was an unthinkable tragedy.



THE CRISIS WAS URGENT!

In Joel 1:14, Joel gave the only answer to the crisis. The priests must move beyond their individual travail. Joel instructed them to consecrate a corporate gathering of prayer, fasting, and repentance. At the forefront of the relief and recovery effort had to be corporate repentance through gatherings of prayer and fasting. **A corporate disaster called for a corporate response.**

Joel's call to Israel was: shut everything down and bring the nation together for prayer and fasting.

WHY SUCH EXTREME MEASURES?

The prophet gave the explanation in Joel 1:15 - it is the Lord who has done this! *"Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty."*

The Deuteronomic curses were operating in the land. The drought and locust plagues had been sent from the hand of the Lord. Joel announced to the people that it was the Lord who directed the wind and the plague, and who brought this destruction upon the nation.

When God's judgments are evident among the people of God, what is our proper response? When the Day of the Lord is at hand, how should the people of God respond?


When God delivered and formed the nation of Israel, **He set forth a clear path for returning to Himself, which would turn His judgments into blessings.**

Moses instituted this path, Solomon solidified it, and the prophets, including Joel, called the people to it in seasons of compromise and judgment.

The nation must respond in the way God had prescribed in Deuteronomy 28 - 29 and 2 Chronicles 7:14. Joel simply called the people to return to the biblical prescription for crisis as set forth by the Lord to both Moses and Solomon.

Their response would be a matter of life and death, for the prophet would soon proclaim in Joel 2 of another Day of the Lord that was coming. The locust plagues were but the precursor. If the people did not respond to the locust plagues, God would send a military invasion. **The people of Joel's day were at a crucial juncture between two crises. They needed to discern the season rightly and respond biblically.**



A close-up photograph of two hands, one from a person with a dark blue sleeve and the other from a person with a dark green plaid sleeve, held out palms up in a gesture of prayer or offering. The hands are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the fingers slightly spread. The background is dark and out of focus.

*At this juncture, I would like to emphasize that I **am NOT implying that COVID-19 is a judgment of God.** I am fully aware that many have given a quick and simplistic answer to this outbreak. I would further address this question pertaining to the judgment of God in the coming weeks.*

*However, the same principle applies regardless of whether the COVID-19 outbreak is or isn't the judgment of God – **God wants His people to turn to Him in the place of corporate prayer!***