

## God's Great Consistency

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Dale McIntire / General

"There's Something to Think About" Minor Prophets / Joel 2:12-14

Joel's prophecy of a coming natural disaster foreshadows an imminent national calamity in response to which God calls His people to genuine repentance and renewed covenant faithfulness.

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It must be the day after the much anticipated 2020 national election in the US. I can tell because I went to my PO Box this morning, and there was not a single slip of paper or postcard warning me that if I did not cast my vote for this candidate or that candidate, life as we know it would end in apocalyptic grief.

Much of the campaign propaganda that came my way throughout this election cycle incorporated fear and anxiety to motivate the desired voter response. There's nothing like using fear to create a crisis in order to make people think and react, especially when the crisis is real and the need for a reaction is crucial.

The prophet Joel prophesies a decimating plague of locusts that foreshadows the future devastation of Judah at the hands of their enemies. Though the catastrophic swarm is a natural phenomenon, it is, in fact, a tool of judgment in the hand of God; the result of Judah's covenant-breaking sin.

Joel describes God's punishment as vast and complete:

***“What the locust swarm has left, the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left, the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left, other locusts have eaten.”***

There is nothing left.

The appropriate response to any warning that God offers any people at any time, but especially when it announces an impending crisis, is godly fear and eager repentance. Despite the severity of the coming crisis and judgment, God in His mercy extends an invitation:

**“‘Even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning.’”**

But, think about this for a moment. Here you have the all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present sovereign God threatening to wipe out your life and your livelihood using an unrelenting, unappeasable, unconquerable natural force, and He calls you to return to Him! If He was that threatening, why in the world would you repent in humility and rebel in rage? Why would you run to Him and not run from Him?

Listen to what Joel says,

**“Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing.”**

Joel calls the people of God to repentance because of God’s great consistency, because God always acts in the world according to all that He is in Himself. What God is and what God does are always, absolutely in accord. Is God just, and righteous, and holy, and awesome deserving all honor and obedience? Yes, of course He is. But He is also gracious and compassionate, slow to anger (that means He is patient and longsuffering) and abounding in love.

We may rightly expect judgment from God on account of our sin, but we may also apply to Him for mercy on account of Who He is. That beautiful, glorious truth is the basis for Paul’s assertion in [Romans 5:8](#) that **“God demonstrates His love for us in this, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”**

Christ, in love for the Father and for us, satisfies God’s demand for a holy life, and, in His death on the cross, also satisfies God’s righteous demand for justice for those who do not live a holy life. Through faith in Jesus, with Whom God is infinitely satisfied, God expresses His satisfaction to us as mercy, grace, and love.

Bring your hearts and lives to God through faith in Christ. Trust God’s forgiving grace and transforming mercy. Relinquish old sins and new guilt. A day of

judgment is most certainly coming for each of us, as it is coming for the nations. The Bible says, ***It is given unto every man once to die, and then comes judgment.***”

Return now to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love. Before the crisis comes to you, come to God.

Until next time, there’s something to think about.