

• *The day of the Lord is drawing near*

Joel has called the whole nation to prayer. The leaders of the land, in Jerusalem, and especially the priests are to see to it that the people turn to God. Joel sees this terrible plague of locusts as a time when ‘the day of the Lord’ is drawing near.

1. Any crisis in life is a foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord

1. **Any crisis in life is a foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord.**

*‘Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD is near.’ (1:15)*

What is this ‘Day of the Lord’? We must remember that we are looking at a section of the Old Testament. We know about the Second Coming of Jesus, mentioned in the New Testament. In the Old Testament the teaching about the Second Coming of Jesus was not fully revealed. God revealed things in stages, a little at a time. If we are well-taught Christians we know of the teaching concerning the Second Coming of Jesus, the day when every eye shall see Him. But the Old Testament does not use the name Jesus. It does not describe in such detail everything we have in the New Testament. It is not as full as Matthew 24, 1 Thessalonians 4–5; 2 Thessalonians 2. The Old Testament believer has a less fully detailed glimpse of the Day of the Lord.

• *God reveals things in stages*

They had a conviction that there was so much wrong with the world that God would just have to step in, in some special way. They did not know much about how God would do it but they knew that God would step into history in some special way. They called that the ‘Day of the Lord’.

• *God’s intervention to judge sin and save the righteous*

There were in their understanding two aspects to God’s intervention, two things that God would have to do. He would have to judge sin, and He would have to save the righteous.

• *An undated expectation*

There were no statements of time about this. It was an undated hope, an undated expectation.

• *The Old Testament gives a panoramic view*

This vision was a total vision. It was a ‘panoramic’ vision. A ‘panorama’ is a seeing of everything at the same time. Imagine standing at the top of a very high building and being able to see the whole city below.

The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament takes in everything God will do beginning from where the prophet lives. So in Joel the Day of the Lord takes in at least four things.

(i) It includes the locust plague in his own day. The Day of the Lord is right there in Joel’s time. Joel’s description in chapter 1 is the Day of the Lord.

(ii) It includes the gospel age, and the outpouring of the Spirit.

(iii) It includes things that would happen along the way. Joel 3:6, 8 refer to events that took place in the fourth century before Jesus.

(iv) It includes the end of the world.

• *The New Testament shows the stages*

When the New Testament comes along you see more, and the stages are able to be seen. You see the distinction between the first Coming of Jesus and the Second Coming of Jesus. But in the Old Testament this is all seen in one sweep.

The end of the world can be foreshadowed. Consider this locust plague. It was a foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord. Joel sees the Day of the Lord in the locust plague. Now this is a very important biblical principle. Let me give you some other examples of it.

• *Other events that foreshadow the Day of the Lord*

In the prophecy of Joel, the plague of locusts foreshadowed the Day of the Lord. In the prophecy of Obadiah the destruction of Edom foreshadowed the Day of the Lord. In the prophecy of Isaiah the end of Babylon foreshadowed the Day of the Lord. In Matthew chapter 24 the fall of Jerusalem foreshadowed the Day of the Lord.

Any crisis in life is a foreshadowing of the Day of the Lord. The principle is that of Obadiah 15. The Day of the Lord is near upon all the nations.

2. A crisis gets us to see what the Day of the Lord is like

2. **A crisis gets us to see what the Day of the Lord is like.** This is the point of Joel 1:15–20. The people cry ‘Alas for the Day!’ It is right there. The characteristics of the final Day of the Lord are present.

There will be destruction of sin.

‘And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.’ (1:15)

• *It is sudden*

It will be marked by suddenness. Suddenly there was no food, no grain for the temple service.

*‘Has not food been cut off before our eyes?
Is not joy and gladness cut off from our house of God’ (1:16)*

Everything is affected by God’s coming.

• *Everything is affected*

*‘The seed shrivels under the shovels.
The storehouses are desolate;
the barns are broken down.
For the grain is dried up. (1:17)*

*How the animals groan!
The herds wander aimlessly.
Because there is no pasture for them.
Even the flocks of sheep are suffering. (1:18)*

*To you, O LORD, I call,
for fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.
And the flame has burned up all the trees of the countryside. (1:19)*

*Even the wild animals pant for you;
the streams of water have dried up,
and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’ (1:20)*

Every aspect of life is affected, the worship¹, nature, agriculture², the animals³, the countryside⁴.

¹ 1:16
² 1:17

• *The final judgement day leaves no room for repentance*

• *Whereas crises in our lifetime give an opportunity to get right with God through Jesus*

There is one difference between the final judgement day and any anticipation we may have of it. The final judgement day will leave no room for repentance. But when we experience God's judgements now, in our history, God leaves opportunity for repentance. When we get these crises in our lifetime God is calling upon us to seek Him and get close to Him through Jesus. God may give us a glimpse of the end of the world – before the end of the world. Yet God gives room for us to turn to Him to call upon the name of Jesus, to confess our sins, to admit anything God is saying to us. Then we are able to get right with God through Jesus – who died upon the cross for our sins.

1:18
1:20

		<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p> 
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