

"Consequences"

Sooner or later sin will bring about its fruit in your life, the consequences of your actions. God is a good God. He allows us to make our own choices but He also tells us what the right choices are and what the wrong ones are. He does not let us choose our own consequences. He gives those to us but He does warn us of the consequences ahead of time so that we can factor that into the decision making process. What can we learn from the children of Israel during the days of the prophet Joel? **"Hear this, O elders, And listen, all inhabitants of the land. Has anything like this happened in your days Or in your fathers' days? Tell your sons about it, And let your sons tell their sons, And their sons the next generation."** (Joel 1:2,3) These consequences are to be a testimony to every generation that follows of what happens to a nation that forgets God and lives in the momentary pleasures of sin. This is a lesson for you and for me. We are to learn from it and pass it on to our children and our grandchildren.

"Why Does God Allow Destruction?"

God is in control of all things and He may allow natural disasters to happen to awaken us from our slumber. Many times we get content and forget about God's blessings that got us to the place of contentment. We begin to trust in ourselves and settle into a routine of contentment doing what we can to stay comfortable. If we forget God during this time then He may allow something to happen to wake us up a bit so that we will turn to Him. In Israel, there was an invasion of locusts that destroyed the crops and led to famine. They had been living high on the hog and become so content that they had forgotten about God. He was about to change all of that, for their own good of course. They needed to see that their spiritual lives were in shambles. Not only did the locusts invade, so did another nation to conquer them. Why does God do this? Being blessed and content is useless if your spiritual life is falling apart.

"The Results When a Nation Repents and Turns Back to God"

(Joel 2:26-27) **"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you. And My people shall never again be put to shame."** Chapter 2 of Joel gives a detailed description of what it means to return to the Lord with all of your heart.

- God will have mercy on His people.
- He will heal them and their land.
- He will send rain and cause fresh crops to grow.
- Everyone will have enough to eat.
- The invaders will be defeated and driven out.
- People will rejoice in their relationship with God once again.



"Return To Me"

"We Shall Never Forget"

"Time is passing.

Yet, for the United States of America, there will be no forgetting September the 11th. We will remember every rescuer who died in honor. We will remember every family that lives in grief. We will remember the fire and ash, the last phone calls, the funerals of the children." President George W. Bush

For those of us who were old enough at the time can still remember where they were on September 11, 2001. It was a day that will remain frozen in time for us. The September 11 attacks killed 2,996 people and injured more than 6,000 others. The fear that stuck the heart of America can still be felt by many today, especially for those who lost loved ones that day. We remember our fallen heroes. They were the first responders who gave their lives for the sake of others. September 11, 2001 is a part of our history and we must never forget how vulnerable as a nation we were and still can be.

"Seek The LORD While He May Be Found; Call On Him While He Is Near." (Isaiah 55:6)

In the weeks after the terrorist attacks, Americans packed churches, synagogues and mosques. Some wanted to find answers for evil. Others sought solace among family and friends. But experts say attendance quickly dwindled; pews thinned within two months. For the most part today, it's worship as usual. The increase "did not hold true," said Robert Wuthnow, director of the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University. **"It lasted for a few weeks and**



that was it." At one time during the history of the USA, there was a very healthy fear of the Lord. Somewhere along the way, people stopped seeking fellowship with God. It did not happen overnight. It happened little by little until social/secular life became separate from spiritual life and many just completely moved away from spirituality.

"Remember Our Nation Was Founded In Christianity"



Children used to pray at school even if they did not come from families that were faithful to God. Many children learned how to read using the Bible as their guide. Bible stories were once the bedtime stories that children heard from their parents. As a nation we must listen and pay attention to the Word of

God. Our modern age is an age that likes to boast of its development and advancements. Even with all of our modern technologies, if we do not pay attention to the Word of God, we will suffer the consequences. As leaders in the community we need to pay attention to and live by the Word of God so that we can pass this knowledge on to the next generations. (Deuteronomy 11:18-21) "You shall put these Words of Mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth."

"We Have A Biblical History To Remember"



The Prophet Joel

We live during days that are very similar days to the days of the prophet Joel, even though many centuries separate us, our cultures are very similar. Today our nation is a mirror image of what happened in Israel during the life of the prophet Joel. Society was falling apart then as it seems to be doing now. Joel chapters 1 and 2 give us 4

important truths to learn for our own times. God always shows us our problems with the purpose of making us aware of the consequences so that we will be more open to receiving His solution. If we follow His plan then the results will always be positive for us.

"Israel's Problem"

"Put on sackcloth and lament, you priests; wail, you ministers of the altar. Come, pass the night in sackcloth, you ministers of my God! Grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD. Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes. Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?"

"The seed shrivels under the clods, the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are ruined because the grain has failed. How the animals groan! The herds of cattle wander about because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are dazed. To you, O LORD, I cry. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flames have burned all the trees of the field. Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness." (Joel 1:13-20) The people no longer had time to meet with their God. They were either upset with Him (because of the consequences of their sin) or they were too busy trying to survive, trying to ride out the bad times so they did not place their relationship with God as a number one priority. The problem was, for a long time, their relationship with God had not really been a priority. They were faithful to God in the past and He greatly blessed them. At the height of their blessings, they became proud and began to trust in their position and possessions and forgot about the One who gave the two things to them, God. They were paying lip service to God yet their hearts were far from Him. He called them out on it and they were suffering. Instead of returning to Him, they occupied themselves with "survival" and things just went from bad to worse. We can see the devastations of the fires in California, the floods, the droughts, and the many unprecedented storms we have encountered as a nation. As Joel's relates Israel's condition to us we can see that our nation is running parallel to Israel.

Has Israel's Problem Become Our Problem?



There was a time when we needed God so much that we walked with Him like children do with their fathers when they are in a strange place. As God began to bless, we began to trust in those blessings more than in the One Who gave them. For a while we still continued to give lip service to Him yet our hearts were moving further and further away from Him. We have reached the point now that many are just in survival mode and do not have time for God or spiritual things. If you get to that stage, then that is when you need God the most and instead of digging your own pit deeper and deeper, you need to return to your Creator and watch how He will put you back on the right path. If we do not come to our senses on your own then sometimes God will help you out

by pressing you with the consequences of your own sin, desiring that this pressure will drive you to your knees so that you will look up to Him. This is what He did to Israel during the days of Joel, the prophet.