

Fasting

Part 12

“¹² Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” ¹³ Rend your heart 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. ¹⁴ Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God. ¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. ¹⁶ Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. ¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” (Joel 2:12-17)

The prophet Joel is bringing the message of the Lord to His people. He is calling the whole nation for repentance. God is telling His people **“Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”** ¹³ **Rend your heart and not your garments.**” Repentance is to return back to the Lord with all your heart. The fasting and weeping here is to express the people true repentance from the depth of their hearts toward God. The fasting here is not a ritual or traditional thing the people do but to express their true repentance and grieve for the sins they did against God.

Joel was appealing to the mind of the people to truly repent so the Lord will pardon and forgive and relent from sending calamity; **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.** ¹⁴ **Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.**

The word of God in **Joel 2:1-11** it describe the disaster that the Lord will send to discipline and punish His people if they will not repent as we can read here: **“Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds**

and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. ³ Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste—nothing escapes them. ⁴ They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. ⁵ With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle. ⁶ At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. ⁷ They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. ⁸ They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. ⁹ They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. ¹⁰ Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. ¹¹ The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?” (Joel 2:1-11) Here the word of God speaking truly the coming judgment of the Lord against those who disobey His word and His commands. Joel called upon the elders, the priests and the whole people to repent in order to escape divine judgment.

Joel talked about the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord, Hebrews used it to refer to the decisive intervention of God in history. Also, it can mean the second coming of Christ as the consummation of history as we can read in **I Thessalonians 5:2** **“For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”**

Joel’s essential message to the people was one of wholehearted repentance. From that prospect then the day of the Lord has two components: *1. Punishment for sin 2. Peace and prosperity for God’s people.*

Joel was telling them and telling us today, ¹⁵ **Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly** to prepare the people of God, His church to be at God’s presence including the *elders*, and all the members including *the children, those nursing at the breast*. God is calling to **consecrate the assembly** that everyone should repent and return to the Lord. To **declare a holy fast** mean true repentance is at the bottom of things.

Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber: No one to be excused or excluded even the newlywed, they need to go into weeping and

crying to God. *Let the priests*, the church leaders *who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar*, let them repent and ask God forgiveness of their sins and the sin of the people under their care.

This shall be the outcry of the priests and that what the church leaders should pray and cry to God: *Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"*

True repentance will bring once again the blessings of the Lord as we can read in *Joel 2:18-27*

1- ¹⁸ *Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.* ¹⁹ *The LORD will reply to them: "I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations."* (*Joel 2:18-19*) The Lord will once again have pity on His people who repented and bring back to them His blessings. He will restore those who repented. As you decide to come back to the Lord, there is a good plan for you from the Lord, and He will restart to rebuild you again with His love and His grace.

2- ²⁰ *I will drive the northern army far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land, with its front columns going into the eastern sea and those in the rear into the western sea. And its stench will go up; its smell will rise." Surely he has done great things.* ²¹ *Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD has done great things."* (*Joel 2:20-21*) God will take away the armies of the nations and all the enemies that threaten and harm His people. As you repent and come back to the Lord, then He will take away from you those people who harm you and keep hurting you and put them in a hard and difficult atmosphere. God will truly deliver you from your enemies miraculously.

3- ²² *Be not afraid, O wild animals, for the open pastures are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.* ²³ *Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.* ²⁴ *The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.* ²⁵ *"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you.* ²⁶ *You will have*

plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. ²⁷ *Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed."* (*Joel 2:22-27*) God here is sending back the blessing, the food, the grains, the green pastures and the rains that He had promised and bestowed on His people. As you repent and turn back to the Lord, He will supply what you need and you will live once again in plenty, and will compensate you back what the enemy had taken away from you. God will do wonderful and miraculous things for you.

4- ²⁸ *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.* ²⁹ *Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."* (*Joel 2:28-29*) Joel describes here the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the people of God. As you turn to God in repentance He will fill you with the Holy Spirit.

5- ³⁰ *I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.* ³¹ *The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.* ³² *And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls."* (*Joel 2:30-32*) Joel describes here the event of the second coming of Christ. When Jesus will come then that will be the time of final judgment. As you repent and return to the Lord by obeying all His commands and degrees then you are ready and prepared to be with us at the second coming of the Lord. We will escape the tribulation that the Lord will allow to come on the disobedient and the Lord will take us away from all the terrible time that will come on earth and we will be with Him forever.

My Dear and Beloved: Fasting should be the manifestation of true and meaningful repentance. That is what the Lord is looking to see in your life, so you will be fully restored to God's blessings, God's plan and be ready with us at Jesus' coming as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died for my sins on the cross and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I repent from the following sins _____.* *I am returning back to you, take me back Lord and restore me to your good plan and prepare me to be ready at your second coming, this is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*

