

The Day of The Lord

Joel

MEMORY VERSE

JOEL 2:11

“The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two small jars with tight lids, water, bleach, food colors, labels and markers.

Two medium sized bowls, 1 lb. of white long rice and small safety pins (2 per child).

White and blue construction paper, scissors, markers, cotton balls, yarn, glue stick, a hole punch and one “Jesus” cut out from the template provided.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Getting Our Sin “Cleared” Up

Those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. God is ready and eager to forgive all who come to Him through His Son Jesus.

You will need 2 small jars with tight lids, water, bleach, food colors, labels and markers.

Fill 1/2 of one jar with bleach. Place a label on the jar that says, “Jesus.”

In the other jar fill it 1/2 full with water and label it, “you and me.”

In the jar with the water, take one color at a time and place a drop or two into the water.

Explain to the children that this represents our sin. You can put a drop of red and explain that it represents anger, green represents envy and jealousy, yellow represents fear, and blue represents sorrow. Mix them all up and the solution should look black.

The color black represents our sinful hearts. The solution cannot change by itself just like we cannot do anything about our sin by ourselves; but when we add Jesus to our lives, our sins can be washed away.

Pour the jar labeled “Jesus” (bleach) into the “you and me” (colored water) jar. In a minute, the colors will be gone.

The Bible says the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). When we repent of our sin (wrong doing) and believe in Jesus Christ who took the penalty for our sins, we are made clean and righteous before God. Our sins have been forgiven and our heart has been made clean.

LESSON TIME!

Not much is known about the prophet Joel—just his name and the name of his father, Pethuel. Most likely, he was one of the earlier prophets, probably during the time of Elisha. The land had just experienced a terrible affliction of locusts (chapter one). Joel examines the present situation and then moves prophetically through time. He likens Israel’s experience with the locusts to what the land will experience in the coming judgment of God—a judgment that would bring a terrible army, similar to swarming locusts, which would cover and devour the whole earth.

Joel calls the people to repentance. Based on the character of God, Joel knows God does not desire to mete out judgment, but to show mercy. **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

JOEL 1:14-18

Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD.

Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?

The seed shrivels under the clods, Storehouses are in shambles; Barns are broken down, For the grain has withered.

How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, Because they have no pasture; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.

Joel points to a future day of great judgment in which the land will be devastated; he calls for a fast among the people and admonishes the people to cry out to their God.

Joel cries, “The day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.” There will be famine and plagues—crops and food supplies will be destroyed. A vast army will destroy everything in its path.

The “day of the Lord” coming as destruction from the Almighty is also known also as the time of Great Indignation (or “wrath”); in the New Testament, it is known as the Great Tribulation. (Note: The “day of the Lord” is also used to refer to end time events following the Tribulation including the Second Coming of Jesus). During the Great Tribulation, God’s wrath will be poured out on a world that has refused His plan of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Why must judgment come? God is holy. Sin cannot dwell in His presence. Man, born into sin and living in sin, is ripe for judgment. Yet, the Bible says God is not willing to judge. In 2 Peter 3:9, we read that God is not willing that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to repentance. Because God deeply loved and longed for man, He sent His only Son Jesus to take upon Himself the judgment due each man. In Hebrews 2:3 we read, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...?” The world that rejects God’s great plan of salvation through Jesus Christ needs to know that a day of judgment will surely come. Even during that time of great judgment, those who repent and call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (see Acts 2:21 and Joel 2:32). **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

Note: The Great Tribulation is judgment from God, “Destruction from the Almighty.” As Christians, we have received God’s free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ--we will not experience God’s wrath. The Bible says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). In 1 Thessalonians 5:9 we read, “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We, who are Christians, anticipate Jesus return for His bride before the Great Tribulation in an event known as the “rapture,” described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” After the “Great Tribulation,” when Jesus returns again to rule and reign on earth, we will return with Him. In Jude 1:14, we read of the return of Jesus to the earth with “ten thousands of His saints.”

Rice Bowl Relay

You will need two medium sized bowls, 1 lb. of white long rice, and small safety pins. The object will be for the first team to pass their bowl to the end of the line and back with each child finding two safety pins.

Divide the class in half and have them form two lines. Next, have the children sit on the floor side by side and each team facing each other. Before class, prepare the bowls by pouring rice into each bowl and at least two safety pins per child into each bowl. Give the first person in each team a bowl. The children must have their eyes closed to play. If anyone opens his eyes, the game must start over from the beginning. The first player will close his eyes, reach into the bowl and feel for a safety pin (closed of course!). When he finds one, he will pull it out and quickly pass the bowl to his neighbor. The next child will then close his eyes and do the same. The bowl should go to the end of the line and back. The first team to return the bowl (each child with two safety pins) is declared the winner.

JOEL 2:11-14

The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him—A grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?

Sadly, the people had become accustomed to offering God half-hearted worship, lacking sincerity. God desired that the people turn to Him with a whole heart—with fasting, mourning, and weeping. God meets those who seek Him with a whole heart, a desperate and passionate heart. In Jeremiah 29:13 we read, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." God exhorts, "Rend your hearts and not your garments." In Bible times, often people would tear their clothes to express deep emotion or grief. God does not want an outward show (outward motions and pretending); He observes our heart.

We should return to Him. Why? Because He is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm." (See, also, Psalm 103). God does not want to use judgment to get our attention, but He loves us too much to allow us to destroy ourselves. He relents from sending calamity. To relent means to stop. It is never God's desire to use harsh measures to deal with His children. Yet, He will and often does use calamity to get His people, who are refusing to listen, to turn around and wake up.

The prophet encourages, “Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him....” Who knows what great blessings God has in store for your life, as you turn to Him with a whole heart! You will never know unless you decide to do so. How thankful you will be if you decide to turn to God with a whole heart and allow God’s perfect plan to happen in your life. For, it is God’s desire to bless us with an abundant life, rich with meaning and purpose.

JOEL 3:14-18

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness.

The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

"So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

And it will come to pass in that day That the mountains shall drip with new wine, The hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Acacias.

The valley of decision is the valley of judgment. There is indeed coming the day when the nations will face God's judgment.

Prophetically, the prophet pictures the return of Jesus. What a great day when the Lord will roar from Zion. Revelation chapter ten describes the coming again of Jesus in which the Lord will cry out as a lion roars. (See also Amos 3:8). The roar is one of mastery, victory. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will proclaim His absolute mastery and victory as One who will reign over the earth, His foes subdued and defeated.

At that time, Israel will be restored; they will know their God. Jesus will begin His reign over the earth. What a glorious day! God will be a shelter and strength for His people. He will dwell among them. Jerusalem will be holy. The land will overflow with the abundance of God's blessings. A fountain will flow from the house of the Lord.

Again, where are we, the church, prophetically in this picture? We, who have believed in Jesus, will not be on the earth during the time of God's judgment. We will have been "caught up" to meet Jesus in the air in the glorious rapture of the church. However, when He returns, we, the bride of Christ, will return with Him to rule and reign upon the earth.

Are you prepared for the Day of the Lord? What will it mean to you? If you have asked Jesus into your heart, you will look forward to the end time events with great anticipation, knowing you will escape judgment and "forever be with the Lord." If you choose not to be a Christian, the future is indeed gloomy. While God is merciful, He is also just, and judgment will come.

Remember, it is God's desire that *all* should come to repentance. He desires that *all* receive the love and salvation He freely gives and experience the rich blessings of fellowship with Him. Do not delay. In 2 Corinthians 6:2 we are encouraged, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

"Day of the Lord" Craft

For this craft, you will need white and blue construction paper, scissors, markers, cotton balls, yarn, glue stick, a hole-punch, and one picture of Jesus cut out from the template provided. Begin with a full white sheet of construction paper. With the hole-punch, make a hole at the top in the center and at the bottom in the center. String enough yarn to go through the top and bottom holes and tie in the back. You will have a line of yarn running up and down through the center of your paper.

Next, cut a strip of blue construction paper to cover the top hole. This will form the sky. Leave enough edge on each side to fold over to the back and glue with a glue stick. Glue cotton balls onto the blue construction paper to form clouds. Next, cut out and color a picture of Jesus from the provided template. Glue on to the front of the yarn so that the picture of Jesus can move up and down. Finish your picture by drawing and coloring the background with markers.

This craft will help the children to remember that Jesus will indeed come, just as He promised.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for His salvation. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

Template - Day Of The Lord

