

Fasting Part 12

“12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: 16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. 17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” (Joel 2:12-17 KJV)

The prophet Joel here in this passage is bringing the message of the Lord to His people. He is calling the whole nation for repentance. God is telling His people ***“turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments.”*** (Joel 2:12-13 KJV) Repentance is to return from sin 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 towards God. ***Fasting here is not a ritual or traditional thing the people do, but to express their true repentance and grieves for the sins they did against God.***

In the same way examine now your ways, turn to God in repentance, renounce all your sins, the hidden and the exposed and cleans yourself and come back to God.

God’s anger and God’s wrath will be sent when the people live in sin and despise the Word of God and despise the repeated warnings that God is sending to His people. Joel the prophet was appealing to the mind of the people to truly repent, so the Lord will pardon and forgive and relent from sending calamity; ***“and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?”*** (Joel 2:13-14 KJV)

“14 Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?” (Joel 2:14 KJV) The prophet Joel tell the people if you will truly repent the Lord may change His mind and return back to you and leave a blessing that may sustain you and may enable you to bring an offerings to the Lord. ***In the same way when you truly repent of your sins, the Lord may change His mind and He may bless you and bless your income and release your salary and the rest of the resources that can sustain you and enable you once again to bring your tithes, your offerings and your first fruits unto the Lord.*** Many people after they respend of their wrong doing, they will find

themselves once again blessed by the Lord in the way that revival in their finances and material wellbeing are restored.

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: ***“1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; 2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. 3 A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. 4 The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. 5 Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. 6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. 7 They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: 8 Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. 9 They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. 10 The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: 11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?”*** (Joel 2:1-11 KJV) Here the Word of God speaking truly the coming judgment of the Lord against those who disobey His Word and His commands and refuse warning. Here the judgment of God is by sending the locusts on the cities and the fields of the disobedient. The locusts will come with a loud voice, the voice of the swarms of the locusts, and with darkness because of the thick swarms of locust the sun and the moon will be covered and their lights will be hidden from the sight. The swarms of the Locust will come like the army of the enemies to destroy and they are like fire that will devour all the green fields and the trees. Before they reach the earth in front of them like the Garden of Eden but behind them they will leave desolate wilderness. They have the appearance of horses and horsemen and they give noise like the noise of chariots. Before them the people shall be much pained because of the destruction that they will inflict upon the crops and the trees and the big harm that they may inflict on the economy and on the daily income of the people. The locusts will go and climb the walls and no one can stop them. They will climb up upon the houses; they will enter through the windows like a thief. and they can reach anywhere. They fall on the sword but they will not die. Such an enemy that cannot be resisted, will sure bring destruction, because it is sent by God to discipline His people and to bring them back to Him. ***The same what God will do even today to His church and His people to direct them to repent and bring them back to Him.***

“10 The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: 11 And the LORD shall utter his

voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel 2:10-11 KJV) Here the Lord is showing that the size of this army is between Heaven and earth and their noise is the voice of God before His army for He is strong that will execute His Word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible against sinners; and who can able to stand against it.

The same is the situation now when the Lord will send famines, droughts, plagues and pandemics that will eat up all the income of the people and destroy the economy of the land. The Lord will inflict such economic calamities in order to force the people to bring them to repentance.

Joel when he received such prophecy and the coming destruction he called upon the whole people to repent in order to escape the divine judgment. ***"15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:" 16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.***" (Joel 2:15-16 KJV) He called all the people of the congregation, the old and the children, those who suck milk, and no one was exempted even those who are newly married, the groom and the bride, to announce a fasting for this purpose.

"17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17 KJV) Joel here called the priests, those who serve God. In the New Testament, according to Apostle Peter we who believe in Christ are royal priesthood as we read here, ***"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" (1 Peter 2:9 KJV)*** So in such a situation every one of us is responsible for the calamities that God would send to discipline His people. *Our responsibilities as priests of God not only that we will not sin against God but we need to warn others and correct them and help them to return to God in repentance.* As well as we are called to pray and intercede as we read here: ***"and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17 KJV)*** *We need to cry to God to spare His people and keep them from troubles so His name will not be reproached by the heathen, who will rule them and reproach them and say to them, Where is your God?*

"1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;" (Joel 2:1 KJV) Joel spoke here about the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord it can refer to the intervention of God in history and bring changes with His judgment. Also, it can mean the second coming of Christ as we can read in ***1***

Thessalonians 5:2 "2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

Joel's message to the people was one of wholehearted repentance. Therefore from that prospect, then the day of the Lord has two components: *1. Punishment for sin 2. Peace and prosperity for repented God's people.*

In the same way now for you: The judgment of God may bring punishment for your sin or peace and prosperity in reward for your repentance.

Joel was telling them and telling us today, ***"15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:" (Joel 2:15 KJV)*** to prepare the people of God, His church to be at God's presence including the elders, and all the members including the children, and those nursing at the breast. God is calling them to consecrate the assembly that everyone should repent and return to the Lord. To ***sanctify a fast*** mean true repentance is at the bottom of their fasting.

Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet: No one to be excused or excluded even the newly wedded, they need to go into weeping and crying to God. ***Let the priests,*** the church leaders who minister before the LORD, weep and 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 thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17 KJV)***

True repentance will bring once again the blessings of the Lord as we can read here:

"18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. 19 Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: 20 But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. 21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. 22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. 23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. 24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. 25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. 26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. 27 And ye shall know that I am in the midst

of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. 28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.” (Joel 2:18-32 KJV)

“18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.” (Joel 2:18 KJV) The Lord will once again have jealousy for His land and have pity on His people who repented and bring back to them His blessings. “19 Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:” (Joel 2:18-19 KJV) 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, He will restore you and He will restart to rebuild you again with His love and His grace and you will not be reproached by others.

“20 But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.” (Joel 2:20 KJV) God announced here that He will take away the armies of the swarms of the locusts that had harmed His people. As you repent and come back to the Lord, then He will take away from you those pests and the plagues that harmed you and keep hurting you, and God shall put them far away from you. Trust God and have confidence on Him that He will save you from such economic troubles as you repented. God will truly deliver you from your enemies miraculously. “21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.” (Joel 2:21 KJV)

“22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.” (Joel 2:22 KJV) God here is sending back the blessing, the food, the fruits of the tree, the grains, and the green pastures. As you repented God is sending to you what you had lost before.

“23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.” (Joel 2:23 KJV) God is instructing His people here to rejoice and be glad for He has given them the rains to water their lands and once again to have the harvest that they need to support their lives.

“24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.” (Joel 2:24 KJV) God is restoring to them the wheat that they need for their bread. The wine and the oil is the Holy Spirit in their lives. God will restore to you as you repent your daily bread that you need for your daily living and strength. God also will give you wine and the oil, and that is the Holy Spirit in your life.

“25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.” (Joel 2:25 KJV) God here promised that He will restore to them the years that they suffered losses and He will restore these losses back to them in full. God will restore to you in full all the losses that had afflicted you in the past.

“26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.” (Joel 2:26 KJV) God promised here that He will send them plenty to eat and to be satisfied, and out of their joy they will praise the name of the Lord God who did miracles and wonders for them. In the same way God will send plenty to you to eat and to be satisfied and you will praise God for the miracles that he did in your life. 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.

“27 And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.” (Joel 2:27 KJV) God promised here that His people who return to Him they will never be put to shame. In the same way God will uphold you as you come to Him in repentance and you will not be put to shame.

“28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” (Joel 2:28-29 KJV) 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 and He will give you the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve God and to reach new people and to tell them about God.

“30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.” (Joel 2:30-32 KJV) 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.

Let us pray: *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 thank you for your Word that shows me clear things in my life.*

Confess and renounce all your sins and disobedience. 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.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who came back to you and who surrendered to your will. Lord restores to them all the blessings that you have ordained in their lives. Lord fill them with the Holy Spirit and give them the Spiritual gifts that they need to go and serve you.

Lord I pray for us as a church to be doer of your Word and to accomplish the tasks that you had called us to do for you. Lord answer our prayer and fasting. Lord protect us and deliver us from the evil one and go before us and fight our battles. Lord as we repent and come back to you, restore to us the blessings in full and return to us all what the locusts have taken away from us. Lord refill us again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in our lives. Lord enable us to evangelize and reach new people with the Gospel and the message of Jesus Christ. Lord enable us to plant more Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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