



Joel 1:13-15

(13) Gird yourselves and lament, you priests;
Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth,
You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.
(14) 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.
(15) Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand;
It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 2:1-2

(1) Blow 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 is coming,
For it is at hand:
(2) A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.
A people *come*, great and strong,
The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after them,
Even for many successive generations.

Joel 2:12-16

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

(13) 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.

(14) 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?

(15) Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;

(16) Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.

New King James Version

The warning has gone out to the church. [God](#) has said, "Get ready! Prepare for the worst." We are right on the threshold of the greatest period of testing and trial ever to come on mankind, and we must have something to sustain us if we are to endure it.

Jesus said to His disciples that love will wax cold ([Matthew 24:12](#)). But "he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved" (verse 13). He hints that some of His brethren will go through that terrible time. If God permits us to escape it, then great. This is why [Joel 2:14](#) says, "Who knows? Maybe He will leave a blessing behind." We do not know for sure if that will be the case with us.

In the past, many in the church of God played an incredible game of being prudent agnostics, of believing but not being truly committed, as shown by their conduct. They were *acquainted* with God, but not really seeking to *know* Him. They were just hanging

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loose, hedging their bets, floating around, ready to go in any direction that offered the most comfortable, *non-sacrificial* solution. In that circumstance, the church often merely became nothing more than a fraternal organization.

But this is reality: [Jesus Christ](#) is our Lord and Master. He owns us. He redeemed us, bought us with a price, and He can do whatever He wants to do with us—and we committed ourselves to Him. Wholehearted commitment is part of the deal. We do not want to be like the Israelites who prostituted themselves in faithlessness, forsaking their covenant with the government of Almighty God.

We in the church are not without warning. God expects us to use the warning to be both comforted and prepared.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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