

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

Today we are going to learn that when we call upon the name of the Lord we can be saved. God is ready and eager to forgive us when we 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 a 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.

This 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. This is an illustration of what God will do when we invite Jesus into our hearts. In our lesson today we will learn more about turning to the Lord.

LESSON TIME!

Joel is our prophet, and not much is known about Joel except his name and the name of his father, Pethuel. It is thought that he was one of the earlier prophets because his warnings and prophecies do not mention or refer to the later conquerors of Israel, such as the Assyrians or Babylonians. Rather his references seem to be to the Philistines, the earlier enemies of the Jewish nations.

Joel’s focus is on the judgment, repentance and the restoration of God’s people. His theme is “the day of the Lord.” Here is how he describes it; “it is coming; it is close at hand; it is great; it is dreadful; who can endure it?” These seem like rather gloomy prophecies, do they not? And so they are for people whose god is not the living God of the Bible. Our God created the universe. He

owns the heavens and earth and will bring events to pass according to His divine purposes. His plans are in line with His holy, righteous, loving, sovereign, merciful, gracious, longsuffering, beautiful character.

When the Bible speaks of the day of the Lord it refers to God's special interventions into the course of world events to judge His enemies and accomplish His purposes in His sovereignty. We will learn today that in the midst of all that gloom and judgment, God says also that **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 speaks of judgment. He sees what is coming. The day of the Lord is near. Joel speaks of a vast army coming to destroy the land. He is talking about the land of Israel when he sees this horrible

destruction. He sees an army of locusts that devour everything in their path: fields, vineyards, trees, and graying grass.

Animals die because they will be left with nothing to eat. “The day of the Lord is near,” he says. Judgment, destruction and calamity have to fall on the unrighteous. In times past God used men and war to bring about this judgment. Assyria in the 700’s BC (Amos 5:8, 20); Babylon 600-500 BC (Lamentations 1:12, 2:1; Ezekiel 7:19, 13:5; Zephaniah 2:2-3) and Medo-Persia to judge Babylon (Isaiah 13:6,9). God also judges this world with natural disasters. You hear in the news about floods and earthquakes, hurricanes, and other calamities and we wonder if they are just chance or purposed by God.

The unrighteous have to learn the hard way that there is a living God in heaven and He is sad that they have ignored Him. The Bible says that God wants everyone to turn to Him, but some people will not. Jesus mentions Joel in Matthew 24:21,29 and repeats that the day of the Lord is a time of great distress, the hardest time anyone on earth has ever seen. Some prophecies we read may make us nervous or seem a little scary because of God’s great power, but how good to have His heart of love speak to us through the same book. He is faithful to remind us that **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

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. Explain that they must have their eyes closed to play. If anyone opens their eyes they have to start over from the beginning. The first player will close their eyes, reach into the bowl and feel for a safety pin (closed of course!). When they find one they are to pull it out and quickly pass the bowl to their neighbor. The next child will then close their eyes and do the same. The bowl should go to the end of the line and back. When each child has two safety pins and the bowl has returned the first team to do so 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?

Joel speaks of repentance. Here Joel says, "The day of the Lord is great." He says it is hard to endure. So the Lord calls out to one and all, "Even now, you can return to me. Confess your sins. See that you have turned away from me. Weep and mourn over your bad decisions and meanness and disobedience." We should return to Him. Why? Because the Lord describes Himself as gracious,

compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love (see also Psalm 103). He relents from sending calamity. To relent means to stop.

We who are getting to know God better with each passing season will grow to understand that along with His compassion and grace is holiness and righteousness. He is a just God. He is slow to anger, but cannot let wickedness go on forever. He can be very patient for a long time, but there comes a time when it is enough. Enough people have been hurt because of sin, enough lives have been destroyed it is time for Him to step in and cause it all to stop.

When people repent, or turn from their evil ways, He always turns away from His anger and has pity. He always leaves behind a blessing. He loves to bless His creation. Some other verses also mention the pity He takes on His people and that He will be jealous for His land and that never again will His people be shamed (2:18, 21, 25-27). How wonderful to be reminded that **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

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.

Joel speaks here of restoration. "For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." There are a lot of people living their lives there. It's not a real valley. It's one in your mind. Picture yourself in that valley of decision. If you already love Jesus then you will say, "Will I choose to follow God's ways today? Will I obey my mom? Do my homework and my chores without being told? Have I given God my love, thoughts, words, and actions today?" "A lot of people have not even decided between eternal life and eternal death. How sad to live day after day, not making any decision to live and love their Creator.

The Lord promises to be a refuge. He promises new vineyards, new wine, and lots of water. In some other verses He promises to restore all that the locusts have eaten; He promises that His people will have plenty to eat and that they will praise the name of the Lord their God (2:25,26). Joel also says God will pour out His Spirit on His people in the time of restoration. He says they will dream dreams and see visions (2:28).

He loves to restore, to make new again. **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.** We will be saved from judgment. We will live on a restored earth after judgment. What a blessed hope! Thank you God for your grace, your compassion, your relenting from calamity, your blessings, and your righteous judgment.

“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 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 a “Jesus” from the provided template and color Him. Glue Him onto the front of the yarn so that He can move up and down. Next finish your picture by drawing and coloring the background with markers.

The Bible describes the Day of the Lord, the time when the Lord will return to the earth. He will descend from the clouds and set up His kingdom here. This craft will help the children to remember that Jesus is returning soon.

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 to do so.

Template - Day Of The Lord

