

“Evangelism is Knowing God as Lord”

Joel 3:9-17

God’s people must demonstrate God’s authority over creation
in surrender to His will.

God is Never Intimidated
God is Never Threatened
God is Never Hidden

God is Never Intimidated

Joel 3:9-11, NKJV

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations:

“Prepare for war!

Wake up the mighty men,

Let all the men of war draw near,

Let them come up.

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords

And your pruning hooks into spears;

Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’”

¹¹ Assemble and come, all you nations,

And gather together all around.

Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord.

The Prophet Joel proclaimed devastating destruction and great hope throughout his ministry and what he was inspired to briefly record. The nations of the world are in open rebellion of God by their refusal to worship and obey Him. Unfortunately, many will reject God’s offer of salvation from His wrath and choose destruction because of their over-estimation of their power and under-estimation of God’s power. God welcomes honest questions and struggles as well as He does their anger and challenges to His authority and power. It is sheer arrogance to think or even imagine that the Creator could be intimidated by that which He has created.

Joel is told to proclaim to the nations, “⁹ ... *“Prepare for war!...”* The rejection of God as Creator and rightful Ruler over all things is truly a war cry among creation. Those who refuse to worship and submit to God in obedience are consciously choosing to set themselves up as gods. This is not uncommon; many have proclaimed themselves as lord of their life like the King of Tyre.

¹ The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, ² “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God:

“Because your heart is lifted up,

And you say, ‘I am a god,

I sit in the seat of gods,

In the midst of the seas,’

Yet you are a man, and not a god,

Though you set your heart as the heart of a god

*³ (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel!
There is no secret that can be hidden from you!
⁴ With your wisdom and your understanding
You have gained riches for yourself,
And gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;
⁵ By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches,
And your heart is lifted up because of your riches),” (Ezekiel 28:1-5, NKJV)*

There are many who lift themselves up in their understanding and knowledge above God on a daily basis. This is often done by those who claim to be worshipers of God and followers of Christ. The King of Tyre accredited his success and prosperity to his wisdom and abilities instead of praising God for the resources to reflect the glory of the Lord through service.

Abraham was a materially blessed man who accredited all his success to God and used his resources to reflect the character of God in how he used them. He was careful that the wealth that was acquired would also be attributed to God by others as well. One example of this was when Abraham refused to profit from what God had simply given him the strength to do.

²¹ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.”

²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’— ²⁴ except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.” (Genesis 14:21-24, NKJV)

Dependency on self before God is to proclaim through actions the lordship of self rather than the Lordship of God. Dependency upon other people or things above God proclaims the lordship of those things and people rather than the Lordship of God. This is demonstrated in the contrast between the attitude of Abraham and the King of Tyre who Ezekiel was inspired to prophesy against.

Abraham engaged in evangelism by his unwillingness to accept credit for his success or to give credit for his success to anyone else but to God who rightly deserved all praise and appreciation for it. The King of Tyre denounced God and His authority by attributing his success and influence to himself. Evangelism is more than speaking to others about who God is and what He has done; it is about living in a manner that clearly identifies dependency upon God for all things.

God challenges all those nations who have rejected Him to gather in their greatest show of force. *“⁹ ...Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. ¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, I am strong”* (Joel 9-10, NKJV). The nations in the peak of their performance are far weaker than God. Nations proclaim their superiority over their neighbors, their enemies, and even God in their boastful pride. They believe their cruelty towards, manipulation of, and oppression over those weaker than themselves proves their claims of power.

These things which often terrorize mankind are helpless to cause God to shrink back or reconsider His perfect will. Therefore, those who are children of God have nothing to fear from other people or the spiritual realm when they are in relationship and fellowship with God as Lord over their life. Apostle Paul was inspired to proclaim this truth this way,

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39, NKJV)

There will be many attempts made by those who are at war with God to hurt those who are at peace with God. This is reality due to the conviction that comes by way of evangelism that naturally happens whenever God's people draw attention to the Lord for their success and refusal to give credit to themselves or others as those of this world do. Yet, the world in all their attempts to intimidate and manipulate must never be able to truly threaten the joy and peace of God's children.

God is Never Threatened

Joel 3:12-16, NKJV

12 "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.

Come, go down;

For the winepress is full,

The vats overflow—

For their wickedness is great."

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!

For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

15 The sun and moon will grow dark,

And the stars will diminish their brightness.

16 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.

The nations will not be aware of the destruction they will walk into due to their blindness. They are blinded by their self-confidence and enamored by their own strength and wisdom. In God's sight they are nothing more than grapes in a winepress He will crush in His judgment or a ripened harvest that has matured and is time to be brought down. God used this same imagery in speaking with Abraham about the sin of the Amorites.

¹³ Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." (Genesis 15:13-16, NKJV)

Jesus used the same type of imagery in speaking about the scribes and Pharisees of His day.

³¹ "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. ³³ Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:31-33, NKJV)

There is a limit to the grace and mercy of God towards those who reject His Lordship over their lives. The Amorites were given generations to see the error of their ways and turn to God away from their rebellion. God desires people to turn to Him to receive His love and forgiveness (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9). Those who are in relationship with the Lord find God's grace and mercy is eternal and without limit in repentance of their sin.

The nations of the world are given time to turn to their Creator, but they are choosing to misinterpret the gift of God's longsuffering as their power and God's weakness. Therefore, multitudes upon multitudes will gather in the valley of decision to be overcome by Christ in judgment, while those who are in relationship with God are protected. Apostle John recorded this event in the Revelation of Jesus Christ this way,

¹⁹ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:19-21, NKJV)

The final battle will be over before it begins. The power of all the spiritual forces of evil and mankind are nothing in comparison to Almighty God. It is in the arrogance of mankind and fallen angels that they continue to fight against God who cannot be overcome.

God gave Joel His words to record the imagery of the Lord's voice in this way, "*¹⁶ The Lord also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake...*" (Joel 3:16, NKJV). The power of God over all things is far more than what any human can fathom. God's voice commands power when He speaks. Job was inspired to describe God's voice in this way,

¹ *“At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.*

² *Hear attentively the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling that comes from His mouth.*

³ *He sends it forth under the whole heaven,
His lightning to the ends of the earth.*

⁴ *After it a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.*

⁵ *God thunders marvelously with His voice;
He does great things which we cannot comprehend. (Job 37:1-5, NKJV)*

Light and life are created when the voice of God speaks (Genesis 1:1-25). The voice of God is destructive as well as life-giving depending upon how His Word is received (Psalm 29:3-9). There is no threat which mankind or spirit can bring against God that will cause Him to cower or withdraw. Therefore, since God cannot be threatened, neither can the people of God who are sheltered in His powerful hand. Apostle Paul was inspired to encourage Timothy by reminding him,

⁷ *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*

⁸ *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began (2 Timothy 1:7-9, NKJV).*

The world is powerless to intimidate or threaten the children of God for they are held by Him and protected in His limitless power. God is the provision and strength for His people now and throughout eternity. This God has made known throughout creation, through the lives of His people Israel, the revelation of Christ, and most recently in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is Never Hidden

Joel 3:17, NKJV

¹⁷ *“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.”*

The Lord is always revealing Himself to His creation and through His creation. Life and destruction alike proclaim the glory of the Lord. This is not the image of many who acknowledge only the aspects of His character which are acceptable to them instead of see all the character traits of God in perfect balance with one another.

The destruction of the wicked prophesied about hear through the Prophet Joel is so the people of God and the wicked alike will know for certain that the Lord is God alone;

there is no other god except for Him. Those who want to claim that God is all love, peace, and hope are purposefully ignoring God's righteousness, justice, and holiness. The love of God is much easier to accept for most people than God's righteousness. It is for this reason that many like Jesus in the New Testament, but fear the God of the Old Testament without realizing they are one in the same as Jesus said, "³⁰ *I and My Father are one*" (John 10:30, NKJV).

God is never hidden and has always been able to be found for those who are seeking Him. Seeking God means to find Him and not an image of who a person desires for God to be like. The Lord has called to His people repeatedly to, "¹² *...call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.* ¹³ *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart*" (Jeremiah 29:12-13, NKJV). Jesus made a similar claim when He spoke to the crowds.

⁷ *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"* (Matthew 7:7-11, NKJV)

The Lord's presence is always available if a person truly desires to see the Lord. The circumstances can be tragic or joyful, painful or pleasurable but God is continually revealing Himself to all people. God has proclaimed He will receive glory to His name in all circumstances regardless of how they affect people. This proclamation was made through the inspired writings of Solomon when he penned,

³ *Commit your works to the Lord,
And your thoughts will be established.*

⁴ *The Lord has made all for Himself,
Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.* (Proverbs 16:3-4, NKJV)

Those who commit their "*works to the Lord*" will find the fullness of His grace, peace, joy, and love. Those who are wicked will glorify the Lord in the execution of His righteous judgment upon those who have rejected His offer of grace, peace, joy, and love. Heaven and Hell alike vividly display the fullness of the character of God.

Heaven proclaims God's justice, righteousness, and holiness in the satisfaction of His wrath upon sin through the atoning of the shed blood of Jesus. Those who accept the sacrifice of Christ on their behalf are welcomed into the loving presence of God because Christ has satisfied the righteous requirements of the law of God. There is no special treatment towards those who are in heaven and those who are in hell. Both have had equal opportunity during their lifetime on the earth to accept the free gift of God's freedom from His wrath. The righteousness, justice, and holiness of God are put fully on display alongside the love, peace, joy, and grace of God through those who have entered into the Father's rest.

Hell proclaims God's love, joy, peace, and grace alongside His righteousness, justice, and holiness through the tortured souls in Hell as it is on display among those in heaven.

Those in hell suffer for their sins only because they have chosen to reject the offer of salvation from the wrath of God. There can only be one master over the heart of a person. If a person makes God the Master over their life, they will experience His righteousness through love, His justice through peace, and His holiness through grace and joy. If a person chooses to be their own master or seek another master over their life other than God they will experience God's righteousness through condemnation, His justice through never ending pain, and His holiness through eternal separation from all that is comforting.

Apostle John was commanded to record these truths in this manner,

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

⁶ And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:5-8, NKJV)

Those inside the gates of God's kingdom are those who have chosen to be like Him. They have turned to the Lord to become a new creation in Christ rather than remaining dead in their sin. Those outside of the gates of God's kingdom have chosen to remain in the death of their sins and forfeit the forgiveness offered by God through Christ Jesus. The Lord is not so cruel as to force a person to choose or deny Him; He allows everyone the opportunity to make an informed choice based on eternal truth He has provided through His continual revelation of Himself.

Unfortunately, there will be those who simply love their sin that they will reject God no matter what evidence He provides to prove He alone is God. Again, Apostle John was commanded to write,

¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:14-17, NKJV)

It has been debated whether the Gentiles will even be able to accept the forgiveness of Christ after the rapture of the Church in the Great Tribulation. The one way to avoid wondering if it is possible for Gentiles to be saved from God's wrath at that time is to turn to God and believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sins now.

God is calling to all people to come to Him whenever Jesus' name is lifted up through the obedience of God's children (John 12:32). The writer of Hebrews encourages believers and non-believers in Christ,

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:11-13, NKJV)

This should be an encouragement to the believer in Christ that we ought to strive to be like Christ in all things because we will all stand before Him and give an account of our lives. It is also an encouragement to those who do not believe on the name of Jesus to submit themselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God because they are going to be judged by it impartially one day for, “²⁷ ...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:27-28, NKJV).

God is calling all His people to know Him as Lord over their entire life in order to participate in evangelism through your daily routine rather than limited to a single event. Are we answering His call?