

Life-Study of Joel – Messages 5-7

The Four Factors in the Book of Joel

- Consuming of the Locusts
 - Locusts denote the **human government** which has existed and continues to exist.
 - The governments of the nations have been and are still **being used by God** to consume Israel.
- Suffering of Israel
 - On the one hand God allows Israel's suffering to continue; on the other hand, He does not allow Israel to be utterly consumed.
- The **suffering factor** is the factor which produced the **incarnation**.
 - Through incarnation the almighty, eternal, infinite God was brought **into** humanity and mingled with humanity.
- Both the consuming and suffering factor have been **useful** to God.
 - Through the means of the suffering Israel and by all the facilities provided by the consuming locust, the Roman government, God poured Himself out upon all flesh.
- The Beneficiaries
 - We in the church life today are the **beneficiaries** of both the Jews and the nations.
- The Principle of Restoration
 - Today, we are experiencing the restoration as we participate in and enjoy the **manifestation** of Christ.

The Universal History

Two Histories – The History of Man and the History of God

- We may liken the history of man to the **shell** of a walnut and the history of God to the **kernel** within the shell.
- The divine history began with the eternal God and His **economy**.
 - According to His economy, God wants to work Himself into man to be one with man, to be man's life, life supply, and everything, and to have man as His expression.
- The divine history continued with the **incarnation** and **human living** of Christ.

- At the end of His life and ministry on earth, the Lord Jesus went **willingly** to the cross. His death ushered Him into **resurrection** where He was begotten to be the firstborn Son of God, and became the life-giving Spirit.
- **Through** Christ's resurrection millions were begotten, regenerated, by God to be sons of God and to be members of the Body of Christ, the church.
- At the end of this part of the divine history, Christ will **come back**, descending with His **overcomers** as His army.
 - The Figure in the divine history will defeat the figure in the human history and then cast him into the lake of fire.
- We were all born in the human history, but we have been **reborn, regenerated**, in the divine history. In the church life God's history is our history. Now God and we have **one history**. This is the church life.

The History of God with Man and the History of God in Man

The Bible Being the History of God in Two Portions

- God's history is of two portions—the history of God *with* man (Old Testament), and the history of God *in* man (New Testament).

The History of God with Man

- God created man in His image and according to His likeness.
- After God created man, He was **with** man, but He was still **outside** of man.

This History of God in Man

- The incarnation of Christ accomplished two things.
 - The incarnation brought God **into** man.
 - The incarnation made God **one with** man.
- As believers, we all have become involved with this wonderful person, this One who is both God and man.

Man Not Taking God's Way

- God was with man with the **intention** of coming into man and being one with man.
 - Although God had such a purpose in creating man, man has another, **subtle purpose**.
 - As a result, in the sight of God man has become sinful, corrupt, and abominable.

- God comes in to chastise Israel, His chosen people, and to punish the nations, for taking their **own way**.
 - This chastisement and punishment affords a way for Christ to be manifested.
 - The manifestation of Christ has a goal—to **restore** the fallen universe.

The Lesson for Us Today

- The history of God in the Bible shows us that though God created us with the intention to gain us that He could come into us and be one with us, we do not care for God or we care for God according to our own way.
- Because we are a failure and our situation is miserable, we need God's chastisement.
- The goal, the purpose of this chastisement is that Christ would be manifested in us for the restoration of the universe.

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