

Joel 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

Analysis

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly" commands corporate repentance. The Hebrew *qadash* (sanctify) means to set apart as holy—the fast isn't mere hunger but sacred act of humiliation and seeking God. "Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God" requires universal participation—age, status, and occupation don't exempt anyone. Covenant community faces judgment together, must repent together. "And cry unto the LORD" uses *za'aq*, intense crying out in distress. This isn't polite prayer but desperate pleading. Reformed theology emphasizes that genuine repentance includes confession, contrition, and turning from sin. Corporate repentance requires leadership modeling humility, community acknowledging corporate guilt, and united seeking of God's mercy.

Historical Context

Fasting involved abstaining from food and water, wearing sackcloth, sitting in ashes, and prayer. Old Testament fasts occurred for various reasons: mourning (1 Samuel 31:13), repentance (1 Kings 21:27), seeking guidance (Judges 20:26), and averting judgment (Jonah 3:5-9). The "solemn assembly" (*atsarah*) was formal religious gathering, often at major festivals. Joel commands extraordinary fast—interrupting normal life to seek God.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When did you last engage in serious fasting and prayer over personal or corporate sin?
2. What would corporate church repentance look like in modern context?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	זִקְנִים	אָסָפֶת	לְ
Sanctify	ye a fast	call	a solemn assembly
H6942	H6685	H7121	H6116
gather	the elders		H3605
H622	H2205		
וְשָׁבָת	בְּיַתְרֹן	בְּאֶצְבָּעַ	אֱלֹהִיכֶם
and all the inhabitants	of the land	into the house	of the LORD
H3427	H776	H1004	H3068
			H430
וְיָבֹא	וְיָבֹא	וְיָבֹא	וְיָבֹא
and cry	of the LORD	of the LORD	your God
H2199	H413	H3068	

Additional Cross-References

Jonah 3:8 (References God): But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Leviticus 23:36 (References Lord): Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.

2 Chronicles 20:13 (References Lord): And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

Nehemiah 8:18 (References God): Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

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