

Joel Chapter 2

Verses 1-17: With an increased level of intensity, Joel utilized the metaphor of the locust plague and drought as a backdrop from which to launch an intensified call to repent in view of the coming invasion of Judah and the Day of the Lord, present and future.

In this instance, it is to be used to “alarm” the people to the seriousness of the crisis that is upon them. A double figure of locusts and a future invading army may be intended (in verses 1-11).

Verses 1-2: The “trumpet” was used primarily for religious purposes to call the congregation together for meetings, to usher in the beginning of the month, and to note solemn days and festive occasions.

Joel 2:1 "Blow ye 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 cometh, for [it is] nigh at hand;"

“Blow ye the trumpet”: In the ancient world, horns were used to gather people for special occasions or to warn of danger (Exodus 19:13, 16, 19; 20:18; Num. 10:1-10; Isa. 27:13; Amos 3:6; Zeph. 1:14-16; Zech. 9:14; 1 Thess. 4:16). The term here refers to a ram’s horn.

“Day of the Lord” (see note on 1:15).

This is the call to worship with the blowing of the trumpet here. The trumpet blowing is an alarm that they must gather and repent of their sins. Zion, many times, symbolizes the church. I would say it is time today to blow the warning trumpet in the church. God will not always look the other way for the abominable sins that are going on in our nation today.

Homosexuality, which God speaks of as an abomination, is an accepted lifestyle in our land. Profanity is so commonplace, even little children know the words. I could go on and on, but you get the picture.

Their trembling was because of the sins they had committed. Our trembling should be for the same reason. Just as John the Baptist shouted, Repent, for the Lord is coming, it should be the cry of every Christian today. The Lord is coming. The "day of the LORD" speaks of a time of judgment.

Verses 2-11: In dramatic and vivid language, Joel compared the drought and locusts to fire, horses, and an invading army.

Joel 2:2 "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, [even] to the years of many generations."

“Darkness and gloominess ... clouds and thick darkness”: These features describe the blackness of a locust invasion, so thick that it blots out the sun with its deadly living cloud of insects.

Such terms are often common figures for misery and calamity in the Old Testament (Isa. 8:22; 60:2; Jer. 13:16; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:15), and past visitations of the Lord (Exodus 10:12; 19:16-19; 24:16; Deut. 4:12; 5:22-23).

This darkness can be of a spiritual nature, or it could be dark because of the number of locusts. There is a third possibility as well.

Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"

Perhaps, all three of these things are spoken of here. In the physical sense, the locusts are so thick that it is dark as night. The fact that they had eaten all vegetation would bring great gloominess. Perhaps, the fact that there were 4 different types of locusts at once was unique to this area.

Darkness, both physical and spiritual, comes with judgment from God. We must remember this is a judgment from God.

Verses 3-6: The locusts have the appearance of warhorses and sound “like the noise of chariots” as they go about their destruction. No natural barrier can contain them because “they leap”.

Joel 2:3 "A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land [is] as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them."

"A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth": This is not to be understood of the heat of the sun, or of the great drought that went before and continued after the locusts; but of them themselves, which were like a consuming fire. Wherever they came, they devoured all green grass, herbs, and leaves of trees, the same as fire does stubble.

They sucked out the juice and moisture of everything they came to, and what they left behind shriveled up and withered away, as if it had been scorched with a flame of fire.

"The land is as the garden of Eden before them": Abounding with fields and vineyards, set with fruitful trees, planted with all manner of pleasant plants, and all kind of corn growing upon it, and even resembling a paradise.

"And behind them a desolate wilderness": All green grass eaten up, the corn of the field devoured, the vines and olives destroyed, the leaves and fruit of them quite gone, and the trees themselves stripped of their bark.

So that there was just the same difference between this country before the calamities described came upon it, and what it was after, as between the Garden of Eden, or a paradise, and the most desolate wilderness; such ravages were made by the locusts, and by those they resembled.

Yea and nothing shall escape them; no herb: plant, or tree, could escape the locusts; nor any city, town, or village, nor scarce any particular person, could escape them.

The magnitude of locusts, spoken of here, would easily turn a Garden of Eden into a very desolate place, as if it had burned. Perhaps, the farmers tried to burn the locusts out, and the fire came from there. It is possible; also, that God sent fire on the crops and burned them up.

Joel 2:4 "The appearance of them [is] as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run."

"The appearance ... as the appearance of horses": The resemblance of the locust's head to that of a horse is striking, so much so that the prophet reiterates the word "appearance." Horses were not used for agricultural purposes in ancient times, but were the most feared military equipment (Exodus 15:1, 19; Deut. 20:1; Josh. 11:4).

The simile continues with "as of chariots" (verse 5), "Like a mighty people" (verse 5), "like mighty men" (verse 7); and "like soldiers" (verse 7).

The noise these locusts would make would sound like many horse hooves. They can destroy an entire farm in just a few minutes.

Revelation 9:7 "And the shapes of the locusts [were] like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads [were] as it were crowns like gold, and their faces [were] as the faces of men."

Joel 2:5 "Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array."

"Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap": The motion of the locusts is leaping from place to place; for which the locusts have legs peculiarly made, their hindermost being the longest; wherefore Pliny observes, that insects which have their hindermost legs, are the long leap locusts.

To which agrees the Scripture description of them: "which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; even those of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind" (Lev. 11:21).

There sound resembles the jumping of chariots on mountains and hills, which are uneven, and usually have stones lie scattered about, which, with the chains and irons about chariots, cause a great rattling; and the noise of locusts is compared to the noise of these, which is represented as very great.

Some say they can be heard six miles off as they make such a noise with their wings when they fly, that they are thought to be other winged fowls (see Rev. 9:9).

"Like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble": As they are before compared to fire, and a flame of fire that devoured all things as easily as the fire devours stubble, so here to the crackling noise of it see (Eccl. 7:6).

"As a strong people set in battle array": That is, as the noise of a mighty army prepared for battle, just going to make the onset, when they lift up their voices aloud, and give a terrible shout; for this clause, as the other two, refer to the noise made by the locusts in their march.

There will not even be stubble left, because the 4 types of locusts even destroy the stubble. This is speaking of literally millions of locusts. There would be a deafening roar from their wings. This would leave the land in terrible shape, as if it had been devastated by a fire.

Joel 2:6 "Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness."

"Before their face the people shall be much pained": Or, "at their presence"; at the sight of them they shall be in pain, as a woman in travail. Into such distress an army of locusts would throw them, since they might justly fear all the fruits of the earth would be devoured by them, and they should have nothing left to live upon.

"All faces shall gather blackness": Like that of a pot, as the word signifies; or such as appears in persons dying, or in fits and swoons; and this here, through fear and hunger (see Nahum 2:10).

Some of the translators say this is speaking of a paleness that comes over the face, when the blood runs out. Their hearts would fail them for fear of things coming upon the earth. It could very well be speaking of mourning, to the extent that the face became black with death.

Joel 2:7 "They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:"

"They shall run like mighty men": Like men of war, in a hostile way, as soldiers run upon their enemy with undaunted courage and bravery. Bochart from Pisidas describes the locusts' manner of fighting, who says, they strike not standing, but running.

"They shall climb the wall like men of war": Scale the walls of cities as besiegers do; walls and bulwarks cannot keep them out; all places are accessible to them, walled cities, towns, yea, even houses (Exodus 10:6).

"And they shall march everyone on his ways": In his proper path, following one another, and keeping just distance.

"And they shall not break their ranks": Or "pervert their ways", as the word signifies in the Arabic language, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, observe; that is, decline not from their paths, as the Septuagint version; proceed in an orderly way, keep rank and file.

So they are said to go forth in bands (Proverbs 30:27); and to encamp (Nahum 3:17).

Jerom on the text relates what he saw with his own eyes: "this we lately saw (says he), in this province (Palestine); for when swarms of locusts came, and filled the air between heaven and earth.

They flew in such order, by the disposition and command of God, that they kept their place like checkered squares in a pavement fixed by the hands of skilled craftsmen; so as not to decline a point, nor even I may say a very small measure.

This is speaking of them being in swarms that do not separate out, but move as a unit. A wall would be nothing to them. They would just go over it and destroy behind it. The wall might slow down a natural army, but not these locusts. The movement across the land is swift, and their destruction is total.

Joel 2:8 "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and [when] they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded."

"Neither shall one thrust another": Press upon another, thrust him out of his place, or push him forward, or any ways straiten and distress him, or in the least hinder him in his progress.

"They shall walk everyone in his path": or "highway"; Everyone should have his path, and keep in it, and it should be as roomy to him as if he had a highway to walk in by himself, and in which he could not err.

"And when they shall fall upon the sword": On which they would fling themselves without any fear or dread of it:

"They shall not be wounded": Or "cut to pieces" by it; it not being easy for the sword to pierce and cut them, through the smoothness and smallness of their bodies (see Rev. 9:9). They have hard scales like a coat of mail; but the expression refers to the utter uselessness of all means to prevent their plundering.

Normal weapons of war will be no help against these locusts. They are so well organized; they do not destroy each other in their conquest.

Joel 2:9 "They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief."

"They shall run to and fro in the city": Leap about from place to place, as locusts do (see Isa. 33:4).

"They shall run upon the wall": Which before they climbed; now they shall run upon, and go from tower to tower.

Joel had described their approach; they had come over "the tops of the mountains," those which protected Jerusalem; and now he describes them scaling "the wall," "mounting the houses," "entering the windows," "running to and fro in the city."

Here the description has reached its height. The city is given over to those who assault it. There remains nothing more, save the shaking of the heaven and the earth.

They shall climb up upon the houses, and enter in at the windows, like a thief; so the locusts entered into the houses of the Egyptians (Exodus 10:6); and Pliny says, they will eat through everything, and even the doors of houses.

Their houses were not airtight, and these locusts got into the houses, as well. There will be nothing safe before them.

Joel 2:10 "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:"

“Earth shall quake ... sun and the moon shall be dark”: The ground trembles as dust flies along with the growing devastation. Earthquakes and cosmic disruptions are well attested elsewhere as signs accompanying divine appearances (Judges 5:4; Psalm 18:7; Jer. 4:23-26; Nahum 1:5-6; Matt. 24:7). Joel later refers to these signs (2:31; 3:15).

This is still speaking of the terror the locusts put into the hearts of men. It is also, speaking of the time of the end, when the sun and the moon do not shine. At that time, there will be an earthquake felt around the entire world. This near devastation that Joel is speaking of here, is a type and a shadow of that great and terrible day at the end of the age.

Mark 13:24-25 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," "And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken."

Luke 21:25-26 "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;" "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Joel 2:11 "And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp [is] very great: for [he is] strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD [is] great and very terrible; and who can abide it?"

Nature has not gone awry; the locusts are not beyond God's control. They move at His specific command.

These creatures are certainly at his beck and command: He can "command the locust to devour the land" (Chron. 7:13); which may be meant by his uttering his voice here; though Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the Lord's giving notice of this judgment by his prophets before it was known.

"For strong are the executors of his word": For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it? The day appointed by the Lord to take vengeance on the Jews for sin. And this, being the day of his wrath, is very dreadful and intolerable.

So any season may be called, in which God remarkably pours down his wrath on men because of their sins (see Rev. 6:17). Such was the time of Jerusalem's destruction, both by the Chaldeans and Romans.

This could be the army of the locusts, or the army of the LORD that is made up of all the believers in Christ. The weapon that each of them use, is the Word of God (two-edged sword). This army is obedient to the wishes of the LORD. The answer is no one can abide against God.

Revelation 17:14 "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him [are] called, and chosen, and faithful."

Revelation 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

Verses 12-14: Even in the midst of judgment, opportunity to repent was given. If they would demonstrate genuine repentance, the Lord stood ready to forgive and bless.

Verses 12-13: The customary way a Jew showed his grief was to tear his outer "garment." This external sign could be meaningless. The tearing of the outer garment is useless, unless the "heart" is broken in repentance and contrition.

Joel 2:12 "Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye [even] to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:"

"Therefore also now, saith the Lord": Before this terrible and intolerable day, which is near at hand, comes. Before these judgments and calamities threatened take place, though just at hand; serious repentance is never too late, now is the accepted time (see Luke 19:42).

"Turn ye even to me with all your heart": Against whom they had sinned, and who had prepared his army against them, and was at the head of it, just ready to give the orders, and play his artillery upon them.

And yet suggests, that even now, that if they turned to the Lord by true repentance, not, feignedly and hypocritically, but cordially and sincerely, with true hearts, and with their whole hearts, he was ready to receive and forgive them.

The Targum is, "turn ye to my worship with all your heart".

"And with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning": External signs of inward grief and sorrow, testifying their hearty return to the Lord; which, though, without the heart, signify nothing, yet should be shown where hearty repentance is, for the honor and glory of God.

This is for the near time of Joel, and for now, as well. God's people must fast and pray in sincerity. The prayers must come from our hearts, and God will hear and answer our prayers.

There is such a spread of A.I.D.S that it threatens to wipe out many of our children and grandchildren. This, in my opinion, is a judgment of God upon a society that has gone mad. Only God can stop it. We must call our nation to true repentance now.

Joel 2:13 "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

"And rend your hearts and not your garments": That is, "not your garments only" (see note at Hosea 6:6). The rending of the clothes was an expression of extraordinary uncontrollable emotion, chiefly of grief, of terror, or of horror. At least, in Holy Scripture it is not mentioned as a part of ordinary mourning, but only upon some sudden overpowering public or private grief.

"And turn unto the Lord your God": Consider him not as an absolute God, and as an angry one, wrathful and inexorable; but as your covenant God and Father. As your God in Christ, ready to receive backsliding sinners and prodigal sons; yea all sinners sensible of sin that flee to him for mercy through Christ.

"For he is gracious and merciful": He is the God of all grace, and has laid up a fullness of it in Christ. And he gives it freely to them that ask it of him without upbraiding them with their sins. He is rich and plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive; he delights in showing mercy and in them that hope in it. And this is no small encouragement to turn to the Lord, and seek mercy.

"Slow to anger": He is not hasty to stir it up, and show it. He bears with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath; and his longsuffering to his own people issues in their salvation. He waits to be gracious to them; and, though he may seem to be angry, he does not stir up all his wrath their sins deserve nor does he retain anger for ever.

"And of great kindness": Both in a providential way, and in a way of special grace through Christ. Whom he has provided as a Savior, and sent him into the world as such, and saves sinners by obedience sufferings, and death.

These characters of God are taken (out of Exodus 34:6); and are admirably adapted to engage and encourage sensible souls to turn to the Lord by acts of faith in him, and repentance towards him (see Isa. 55:7).

"And repenteth him of the evil": Which the sins of men deserve; and he has threatened on account of them. Not that he ever changes the counsels of his will, but alters the course of his

providence, and the manner of his conduct towards men, according to his unalterable repentance otherwise does not properly belong to God (Numbers 23:19).

But is ascribed to him after the manner of men; and is used to express his compassion. How ready he is to receive and forgive returning sinners and not execute the threatened and deserved evil and to bestow all needful good (see Jonah 3:10).

There are several instances in the Bible, where God changed His mind and reversed a curse. True repentance would bring this for Joel's day and for ours.

Exodus 32:14 "And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

Micah 7:18 "Who [is] a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth [in] mercy."

Joel 2:14 "Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; [even] a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?"

God is immutable and does not change. This verse sets forth the possible results of revival and repentance from man's point of view. When man changes, he is unaware of the change in himself, and views it as though it were a change in God.

God, perhaps, will stay His judgment, and instead of placing a curse on them for their sins, will bless them mightily. He will restore their food supply greatly. They will be able to again offer the meat offering and drink offering daily.

Verses 15-17: This is the second invitation to "blow the trumpet in Zion." It summons the whole nation to an assembly of repentance in order to implore God's mercy.

Joel 2:15 "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:"

"Blow the trumpet in Zion": For the calling of the people together to religious duties, which was one use of the silver trumpets made for and blown by the priests (Num. 10:2).

"Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly" (see Joel 1:14).

If there is a possibility of the plague of locusts being stopped, blow the trumpet and gather the people to repent. This is just as true today. We must blow the trumpet, and cause revival to sweep across our land, if we expect God to stay the plague of A.I.D.S.

Joel 2:16 "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet."

From oldest to youngest they were to come. The situation is so grave that even the groom and bride were exhorted to assemble (Deut. 24:5); consummation of the marriage could wait.

At this gathering, there would be no excuses accepted. Everyone must repent. Even the babies and little children must come, and be set aside for God's purpose.

Joel 2:17 "Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where [is] their God?"

"Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar": Not the altar of incense which stood in the Holy Place; but the altar of burnt offering, where the priests used to stand and do service.

But now having nothing to do of that kind, they are called upon to weep and pray between that and the porch of the temple; where they might be seen and heard by the people in the outward court which the porch led into. This is thought by some to be the same situation with that between the temple and the altar (Matt. 23:35).

"And let them say, spare thy people, O Lord": They are directed to plead, not in a way of justice, but mercy; that though it might be just with God to destroy these people, who were called by his name. Yet it is entreated that he would not, but in mercy spare them, and not cut them off in his sore displeasure, which the present judgment threatened them with.

There seems to be an argument for mercy suggested, in the relation these people stood in to God, they are "thy people", whom thou hast chosen, and who are called by thy name; though this was also an aggravation of their sin; and the same may be observed in what follows.

"And give not thine heritage to reproach": The people whom he had chosen for his inheritance, and the land of Canaan he had given to them for an inheritance; both which would be given to reproach if such a famine should ensue, that they must be obliged to go into other countries for food.

"That the Heathen should rule over them": As they would, should they be forced to leave their own country, and settle in theirs for the sake of food. Or "to be a proverb", or "byword, among the Heathen", as Jarchi. This clause Jerom thinks opens the mystery, and explains who are meant by the mighty nation under the name of locusts, the enemies of the Jews.

Though this does not necessarily follow, take the words in either sense, as explained: it seems indeed very likely, that though the locusts may be understood literally.

"Wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God?" They boast of as their Creator and Benefactor, their Protector and Defender, that gave them a land flowing with milk and honey, and abounding with all blessings? What is become of that? And where is he now? Which the Gentiles would say in a reproaching blaspheming way.

Should they be reduced to famine by the locusts, or fall into the hands of their enemies; than which kind of reproach and blasphemy there is nothing more cutting to religious minds (see Psalm 42:10).

And this, as well as the former is used as an argument with God for mercy. The Targum is, "where are they that are redeemed by the Word of your God?"

In this giant prayer service, the ministers should lead the prayers. They must plead with God to show mercy on the people. This is the same message Moses gave God at the mount, when the people had made the golden calf.

Exodus 32:12-13 "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people." "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit [it] for ever."

Exodus 33:13 "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation [is] thy people."

Verses 2:18 – 3:21: With the advent of verse 18, the text makes a decisive transition, devoting the remainder of the book to restoration.

It assumes an interval of time between verse 17 and verse 18 during which Israel repented. As a result of her repentance, the 3 major concerns of 1:1 - 2:17 are answered by the Lord: physical restoration (2:21-27), spiritual restoration (2:28-32), and national restoration 3:1-21).

Joel 2:18 "Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people."

"Then will the Lord be jealous for his land": Or "zealous" for it; for the honor of it, and the good of its inhabitants, and for the glory of his own name, it being the chief place in the world for his worship and service. And his indignation will be moved against those who have brought desolation on it.

"And pity his people": As a father his children, who had suffered much, and had been reduced to great distress by the locusts, or by their enemies. This the prophet foretells would be done upon their repentance, fasting, prayers, and tears. Or, as some think, this is a narrative of what had been done, and the prophet was a witness of.

That the people meeting together with their princess and priests, and humbling themselves before the Lord, and crying to him, he expressed a zeal and compassion for them, and delivered them

out of their troubles. For though their humiliation is not expressed, it may be understood and supposed, as doubtless, it was fact.

This is forgiveness on the way. This reminds me of the following Scripture.

Luke 15:20 "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Joel 2:19 "Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:"

"Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people": By his prophets, as Kimchi: or, "the Lord answered and said"; while they were praying and weeping, or as soon as they cried unto him. Or, however, praying to him, they might assure themselves that he heard them, and would answer them both by words and deeds.

"Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil": That is, cause the earth to bring forth corn, as wheat and barley, and the vines and olive trees to bring forth grapes and olives, from which wine and oil might be made. This is, according to some interpreters, to be understood of an abundance of spiritual blessings.

"And ye shall be satisfied therewith; or, "with it": With each and every of the above things, corn, wine, and oil; they should not only have them, but have enough of them. Even to beyond the point of satisfaction.

"And I will no more make you a reproach among the Heathen": For want of food, and as if forsaken of God (see Joel 2:17).

They did not deserve it, but God forgave them, and restored their land.

Joel 2:20 "But I will remove far off from you the northern [army], and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he hath done great things."

"Northern army": Although some have viewed this as a reference to the locusts, it is more likely referring to a military invasion by a country coming down from the north of Israel (Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2). That future army will be driven into the eastern sea (Dead Sea), and the western sea (Mediterranean Sea).

God drives the enemy out, and the curse is over.

Verses 21-24: Reminiscent (of 1:18-20), the former situation had been reversed. The animals were admonished to be afraid no longer.

Joel 2:21 "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things."

"Fear not, O land": O land of Israel, as the Targum, and the inhabitants of it; neither of the locusts, who had so terrified them, and had done so much mischief, and threatened more. Or of their enemies; the Assyrians or Chaldeans and their powerful armies, or any other.

"Be glad, and rejoice": At the removal of the locusts, and at the destruction of their enemies.

"For the Lord will do great things": Good things, in opposition to the evil things done by the locusts, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe.

And in the times of the Maccabees, and especially in the times of Christ, which are quickly prophesied of in this chapter; and which prophecies some interpreters begin here, it not being unusual for the prophets to pass directly from things temporal to things spiritual.

And especially to the great deliverance and salvation by Christ, and also by temporal blessings to design spiritual ones.

With the blessings of God upon the land, it will bloom again. The crops will be abundant. It will rain at the needed time, and they will prosper.

Joel 2:22 "Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength."

"Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field": Which before groaned, and were perplexed for want of pasture, and cried because of the drought (Joel 1:18). Perhaps the Gentiles may be here designed, in the mystic and spiritual sense, in distinction from the Jews, the children of Zion (in Joel 2:23).

"For the pastures of the wilderness do spring": Grass in abundance springs up in them, and covers them, so that there was plenty of food for the beasts of the field.

"For the tree beareth her fruit": Brings forth and bears fruit suitable to it, agreeable to its nature.

"The fig tree and the vine do yield their strength": Send forth their branches, put forth their buds, their leaves and fruit. This and the preceding clause cannot be understood as a reason why the beasts of the field should not be afraid, for they relate not to them, but to men.

And may serve to confirm the mystic sense of the words, as they may refer to the great fruitfulness produced in the wilderness of the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel in the times of the Messiah.

Which are more clearly pointed at (in Joel 2:23); and which were introduced with great outward peace and plenty. And the Jews by the tree bearing her fruit, in the preceding clause, understand barren trees bearing fruit.

All natural vegetation springs forth to feed the beasts of the field. The fruit trees will abundantly produce fruit, and the vines will bring forth in strength.

Verses 23-24: "Former ... latter rain": The early rains came (in Oct. – Dec.), to prepare the seed-bed and assist germination, while the latter rains came (in Mar. – May), to provide ample moisture for the grain and fruit crops to be rich and full.

Joel 2:23 "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month]."

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion": The people of the Jews, and especially the spiritual and believing part of them. Such as were born again, that were born of Zion, and born in Zion, and brought up by her, and in her. The children of that Zion or Jerusalem that is the mother of us all. And who were looking for the Messiah, and to whom it would be good news and glad tidings to hear of his coming (Zech. 9:9).

"And rejoice in the Lord your God": Not in any creature or creature enjoyment, but in the Lord.

"In the Word of the Lord your God": In Christ the essential Word (see Phil. 3:3). Though rather Jehovah the Father, the giver and sender of Christ, is here meant, because of what follows. And who is to be rejoiced in by his people, not as an absolute God, but as in Christ, and as their covenant God and Father in him.

Who has chosen them for himself, and is their portion and inheritance; which are reasons sufficient why they should rejoice in him, and others follow:

"For he hath given you the former rain moderately": Or rather, "for he hath given you the teacher of righteousness"; to which agrees the Targum. "For he hath returned to you your teacher in righteousness". And so Jarchi paraphrases the words, and interprets them of the prophets in general. "Your prophets that teach you to return unto me, that I may justify you.

"And he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month": Alluding to the two seasons of the year in which rain was given to the Jews. The former rain fell in Marchesvan, which answers to our September and October, part of each, at their seedtime.

And the latter in Nisan, the first month of their ecclesiastical year, and answers to part of March and April, and fell some time before their harvest. And these former and latter rains now fall about the same time.

There is a double meaning here. In the natural, there will be two rains to make the crops grow. This however, is also speaking to the church (Zion). The former rain was the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. The latter rain happens at the end of the age. This is a mightier outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh.

Joel 2:24 "And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil."

"And the floors shall be full of wheat": The churches of Christ, which will now be in Judea, and in the Gentile world, which are his "floors" (Matt. 3:12). And which will be set up everywhere through the preaching of the Gospel.

The descent of the former and latter rain; these will be full of precious souls gathered in. Compared to wheat, and of the choice and excellent, doctrines of the Gospel, and of all spiritual provisions (Matt. 13:30).

"And the fats shall overflow with wine and oil": With the wine of Gospel doctrine, and the oil of true grace; there shall be a flow, an overflow, a redundancy of these. Both in the ministers of the word and private Christians, in whom the grace of God shall abound (see Rom. 5:20).

In this, we see the results of the abundant rain on the crops. This is also speaking of the abundance of the Spirit bringing many into the kingdom of God. Wheat symbolizes the Christians. Wine and oil symbolize the Holy Spirit of God.

Joel 2:25 "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you."

"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten": Or "I will recompense to you the years"; give you fruitful ones, as a full compensation for those in which the locust ate up the fruits of the earth for some years running.

"The canker worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm" (see Joel 1:4).

"My great army which I sent among you" (see Joel 2:11).

And I will recompense unto you good years, instead of the years in which the people, nations, and tongues, the governors and kingdoms of vengeance, spoiled you, my great army which I sent among you.

And Kimchi observes, that the sense of the Targumist is, that this verse is a prophecy of the days of the Messiah. As no doubt it is, in which the Lord has done for his people, as Moses prayed he would, "make them glad according to the days wherein he afflicted them, and the years wherein they had seen evil" (Psalm 90:15).

The times of the Messiah, in which so many good things come to the people of God, are a sufficient recompense for what they endured in times past. Of the Mahometan ("Mohammad"), notion of locusts being the army of God (see Joel 2:11).

This is speaking of all that the locusts destroyed, being restored. God miraculously does it.

Joel 2:26 "And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed."

"And ye shall eat in plenty": Or, "in eating eat"; most surely eat, and in great abundance. Which Hebraism not only denotes the certainty of a thing, but the increase and abundance of it (see Gen. 22:17).

There are plenty of spiritual provisions held forth under the Gospel dispensation. Much in God: in his goodness, grace, and love, truth and faithfulness. In his covenant: the blessings and promises of it; much in Christ: who is compared to many things eatable. And is called the Lamb of God, the fatted calf, the hidden manna, the tree of life, and the bread of God.

Everything in him, and that belongs to him, is food for faith.

His flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed; the fullness of grace in him; the righteousness wrought out by him. The salvation he is the author of; upon all which the believer lives by faith. Much in the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, compared to honey for sweetness of taste; to milk for its nourishing nature, easiness of digestion, and the suitableness of it for babes.

And to strong meat fit for men: and there are blessings plenty also in the ordinances of the Gospel, particularly in the Lord's supper. The feast of fat things, where saints are invited to eat and drink abundantly. Which eating is not a bare attendance on outward ordinances, or a superficial taste of the things in them, but a feeding upon them by faith, receiving and digesting them.

"And be satisfied": Eat to satiety; eat and be full, so as to be entirely contented, and desire no other sort of food. Thus saints, as Naphtali, are satisfied with the favor and love of God, having a delightful sensation of it, and a full persuasion of interest in it. With Christ as the bread of life, so as not to hunger after other.

With his righteousness, as not to seek any other. And with his salvation, being so suitable to them. And with the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, his word and ordinances.

"And praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you": Acknowledge him to be the giver of all this spiritual food, and that they are unworthy of it. Ascribe it entirely to the grace of God, who has done wonders for them; in wonderfully setting them apart for himself in eternal election.

In making such a well ordered covenant with them in Christ; in sending him to be their Savior and Redeemer. In calling them out of darkness into marvelous light; in bestowing such love upon

them, as to call them and make them his children, and also heirs of him and eternal glory (see Psalm 22:26).

"And my people shall never be ashamed": Because they shall always have food to eat; shall never be disappointed, when they rightly apply for it in proper places and times. And not be like the troops of Tema, and companies of Sheba (Job 6:19).

They shall not be ashamed of their faith and hope, and expectation of good things promised them. Nor of the word and ordinances, and the profession they have made of Christ in this world.

Nor shall they be ashamed at his coming; but shall be placed at his right hand, and received into his kingdom, and shall be led by him to fountains of living water. And be satisfied with pleasures for evermore.

Romans 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Joel 2:27 "And ye shall know that I [am] in the midst of Israel, and [that] I [am] the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed."

"And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel": The presence of God among his people shall be so manifest, the tokens of it so clear, that it shall be easily known. By the impressions of his love upon them; the teachings of his Spirit in them; the usefulness of the word and ordinances to them.

This return promised a reversal of the Lord's departure (Ezekiel, chapter 8 to 11).

The spiritual and heavenly frame of soul they shall be favored with, and the pleasant taste of their conversation. This is the blessing Christ has promised to Gospel ministers and churches (Matthew 28:20).

"And that I am the Lord your God, and none else": That he is their covenant God and Father, and acknowledge none else.

"And my people shall never be ashamed": Which is repeated for the certainty of it (see Joel 2:26).

Revelation 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."

Verses 28-32: “And it shall come to pass afterward” is a formula employed to speak of future events. This differentiates the message on the locust plague from the Day of the Lord.

The promised outpouring of God’s Spirit will be on all ages and classes of people: “sons” and “daughters”. Accompanying the outpouring of the Spirit will be full salvation, or deliverance, for all who put their trust in the Lord as their Redeemer.

Joel has compressed together, in true prophetic fashion, events separated by millennia.

1. The crucial points of history are the events of the locust plague in Joel’s day;
2. The Day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Spirit was indeed poured out universally and made available to all mankind (about 33 A.D.);
3. The events of the Great Tribulation separated from the Day of Pentecost by over 2,000 years (3:1-17);
4. And the establishment of the earthly Davidic millennial kingdom that follows the events of the Great Tribulation (verses 18-21).

(See notes on Acts 2:16-21).

Joel 2:28 "And it shall come to pass afterward, [that] I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:"

“Afterward”: The abundance of material blessings would be followed by the outpouring of spiritual blessings. When coupled with the other temporal phrases within the passage (“in those days” (verse 29), and “before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes” (verse 31), the term points to a Second Advent fulfillment time frame.

“All flesh”: Since the context is “your sons and daughters,” “all mankind” best refers to the house of Israel only. The nations are the recipients of God’s wrath, not the effusion of His Spirit (3:2, 9).

The following is a confirmation of this very Scripture.

Acts 2:16-17 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;" " And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"

It was very important for this to be in two different Scriptures, because by two a thing is established. The word that prophecy was translated from means to speak by inspiration. This is made available to all flesh, male and female. We can see from this that spiritual dreams and visions, are also from God.

Joel 2:29 "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

And this God has done, and is still doing. He left the line of Aaron, and took his apostles indiscriminately from any tribe. He passed by the regular order of the priesthood, and the public schools of the most celebrated doctors, and took his evangelists from among fishermen, tent-makers, and even the Roman tax-gatherers.

And he lastly, passed by the Jewish tribes, and took the Gentile converts and made them preachers of righteousness to the inhabitants of the whole earth. The same practice he continues to the present day; yet he did not then pass by a man brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, no more than he would now a man brought up in a celebrated seminary of learning.

He is ever free to use his own gifts, in his own way; and when learning is sanctified, by being devoted to the service of God. And the possessor is humble and pious, and has those natural gifts necessary for a public teacher, perhaps we might safely say.

God would in many cases prefer such: but he will have others, as intimated in the prophecy, that we may see the conversion of men is not by human might, nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. The learned man can do nothing without his Spirit.

The unlearned must have his gifts and graces, without which both their labors would be unprofitable; and thus, the excellency of the power is of God, and no flesh can glory in his presence.

Notice the word "pour". This is speaking of an abundance, not just a few drops. It is a gift from God to His followers.

Verses 30-31: "Before ... Day of the Lord": Unmistakable heavenly phenomena will signal the imminent arrival of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord (verse 10; see note on 1:15).

Joel 2:30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke."

"And I will show wonders": Each revelation of God prepares the way for another, until that last revelation of His love and of His wrath in the Great Day.

In delivering His people from Egypt, "the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt (Deut. 6:22). Here, in allusion to it, He says, in the same words, of the new revelation, "I will show," or "give, wonders, or wondrous signs," (as the word includes both). Wonders beyond the course and order of nature, and portending other dispensations of God, of joy to His faithful, and terror to His enemies.

As when Israel came out of Egypt, "the pillar of the cloud was a cloud and darkness to the camp of the Egyptians," but "gave light by night" to the "camp of Israel" (Exodus 14:19-20). So all God's workings are light and darkness at once, according as people are, who see them or to whom they come.

These wonders in heaven and earth "began in" the First Coming and "Passion of Christ, grew in the destruction of Jerusalem, but shall be perfectly fulfilled toward the end of the world, before the final Judgment, and the destruction of the Universe."

At the birth of Christ, there was "the star" which appeared unto the wise men, "and the multitude of the heavenly host," whom the shepherds saw. At His Atoning Death, "the sun was darkened," there was the three hours' darkness over the whole land.

On earth "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened" (Luke 23:44-45; Matt. 27:45; 27:51-52).

And the Blood and water issued from the Savior's side. After His Resurrection, there was the vision of Angels, terrible to the soldiers who watched the sepulcher, comforting to the women who sought to honor Jesus.

His Resurrection was a sign on earth, His Ascension in earth and heaven. But our Lord speaks of signs both in earth and heaven, as well before the destruction of Jerusalem, as before His Second Coming.

Matthew 24:7 "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"

Joel 2:31 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood": Not by eclipses, as Aben Ezra; but by the clouds of smoke arising from the burning of towns and cities. Which would be so great as to obscure the sun, and through which the moon would look like blood.

Or all, this may be understood in a figurative sense of the change that should be made in the ecclesiastic and civil state of the Jewish nation, signified by the "heavens" and "earth". And particularly that their king or kingdom should be in a low, mean, and distressed condition, designed by the sun; and the change of their priesthood is signified by the "moon".

"Before the great and terrible Day of the Lord come": The days of our life are our days wherein we do what we please; that will be the "Day of the Lord," when He, our Judge, shall require the account of all our doings. It will be "great," because it is the horizon of time and eternity; the last day of time, the beginning of eternity. It will put an end to the world, guilt, deserts, good or evil.

It will be "great," because in it great things will be done. Christ with all His Angels will come down and sit on His Throne; all who have ever lived or shall live, shall be placed before Him to

be judged; all thoughts, words, and deeds shall be weighed most exactly; on all a sentence will be passed, absolute, irrevocable throughout eternity.

The saints shall be assigned to heaven, the ungodly to hell. A great gulf shall be placed between, which shall sever them forever. So that the ungodly shall never see the godly nor heaven nor God; but shall be shut up in a prison forever, and shall burn as long as heaven shall be heaven, or God shall be God.

"That day shall be great to the faithful, terrible to the unbelieving; great to those who said, 'Truly this is the Son of God;' terrible to those who said, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children.'"

"When then thou art hurried to any sin, think on that terrible and unendurable judgment-seat of Christ, where the Judge sits on His lofty Throne. And all creation shall stand in awe at His glorious Appearing and we shall be brought, one by one, to give account of what we have done in life.

Then by him who hath done much evil in life, there will stand terrible angels. "There" will be the deep gulf, the impassable darkness, the lightless fire, retaining in darkness the power to burn, but deprived of its rays. There is the empoisoned and ravenous worm insatiably devouring and never satisfied, inflicting by its gnawing pangs unbearable. There that sharpest punishment of all, that shame and everlasting reproach. Fear these things; and, instructed by this fear, hold in thy soul as with a bridle from the lust of evil."

Mark 13:24-25 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," "And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken."

The very best thing a Christian can do, is be ready to meet their Lord. We are not to fear these things, but rejoice when they happen, because our redemption is near.

Luke 21:28 "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Joel 2:32 "And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

“Whosoever shall call”: (quoted by Paul in Romans 10:13).

“Remnant”: In spite of the nation’s sin, God promised to fulfill His unconditional covenants (Noahic, Abrahamic, Davidic, and New). A future remnant of Jews will inherit God’s promised blessings (Isa. 10:20-22; 11:11, 16; Jer. 31:7; Mica 2:12; Zeph. 3:13; Rom. 9:27).

What a wonderful promise, that God will save everyone who calls upon His name. Notice Zion, which is the church. It is spoken of separately from Jerusalem, which represents the physical

house of Israel. The remnant here are the natural Jews that turn to the LORD. The Christians are the large number beyond counting.

Revelation 14:1 "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty [and] four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

Notice, the Father's name is written in the foreheads of natural Israel, who have turned to the Lamb.

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

These are the Christians (spiritual Israel). They are dressed in white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 7:14 "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Praise God! There is hope.

Joel Chapter 2 Questions

1. What is this a call to do?
2. Zion, many times, symbolizes the _____.
3. God classifies homosexuality as an _____.
4. Why were they trembling?
5. What should be the cry of every Christian today?
6. What does the " Day of the Lord " speak of?
7. What is this day like?
8. Darkness, both physical and spiritual, comes with _____ from God.
9. What is verse 4 speaking of?
10. What was like the noise of chariots?
11. Describe the faces of the people.

12. Who makes up the army of the LORD?
13. What are their weapons?
14. What must God's people do?
15. How bad is the disease A.I.D.S.?
16. Rend your _____, and not your garments.
17. Where do we find that God repented and forgave His people?
18. If God repents and turns again to the people, what will He leave them?
19. Who must repent?
20. Why are the beasts of the field told not to be afraid?
21. What does verse 23 promise God will do?
22. What are the two meanings of this Scripture?
23. When was the former rain fulfilled?
24. Wheat symbolizes the _____.
25. Wine and oil symbolize the _____.
26. God will pour out of His Spirit upon _____ flesh.
27. Why was it important for there to be a confirmation of this Scripture?
28. What does the word that prophecy was translated from, mean?
29. When will the sun turn into darkness and the moon into blood?
30. What attitude should the Christian have at this time?
31. What promise did God make about who would be saved in verse 32?
32. Who are the multitude in verse 9 of Revelation chapter 7?