

JOEL OVERVIEW –  
REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION CONTRASTED WITH  
THE DEVASTATION OF THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD

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**BIG IDEA:**

**THE DEVASTATION OF THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD (PREFIGURED IN THE LOCUST PLAGUE AND SEVERE DROUGHT) SHOULD PROMPT HEARTFELT REPENTANCE THAT WILL LEAD TO GOD’S GRACIOUS PROMISES OF RESTORATION AND BLESSING**

*“Yet even now, declares the Lord, Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments. Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil.” (2:12-13)*

**INTRODUCTION:**

Both the book of **Hosea** and the book of **Joel** provide solid support for the dispensational position of maintaining a distinction between God’s program for Israel and God’s program for the church. How does a passage like **Is 49:14-15** fit into an amillennial perspective? Edward Young comments: *“Even though the forces of infidelity and unbelief, of indifference and ignorance, may attempt to overthrow the Church, yet God is with her, for she is ever before His eyes.”* That view really waters down the impact of Hosea where God restores His adulterous people to the covenant relationship. In Joel we are going to see more of the details of God’s program for Israel as it relates to the coming **Day of the Lord**.

**MacArthur:** The phrase does not have reference to a chronological time period, but to a general period of wrath and judgment uniquely belonging to the Lord. It is exclusively the day which unveils His character – mighty, powerful, and holy, thus terrifying His enemies. The Day of the Lord does not always refer to an eschatological event; on occasion it has a near historical fulfillment, as seen in Eze 13:5, where it speaks of the Babylonian conquest and destruction of Jerusalem. As is common in prophecy, the near fulfillment is a historic event upon which to comprehend the more distant, eschatological fulfillment.

Promises certain for the nation as a whole; enjoyment dependent on repentance and faithfulness of immediate generation

**What events** are spoken of in Joel?

- locust plague that devastated the land – actual, not just a threat
- language in chap 2 that goes beyond that historical plague
  - possibly has a near fulfillment in some more immediate historical context
  - definitely looks forward to ultimate fulfillment in the eschatological Day of the Lord

## **I. (1:1-20) DEVASTATION-- THE DEVASTATION OF THE IMMEDIATE LOCUST PLAGUE AWAKENS WEeping AND WAILING AND CRYING OUT TO GOD**

### A. (:1-3) Devastation Unparalleled

#### 1. (:1) Introduction of the Prophet = Joel

*“The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel”*

### **Historical Context / Dating Issues:**

**Constable:** some scholars advocate an **early pre-exilic date** during the reign of King Jehoshaphat (872-848 B.C.) or possibly his grandson, King Joash (835-796 B.C.). Arguments in favor of this period include the position of Joel in the Hebrew canon; it appears among other prophetic writings of this period. Also the enemies of Israel that Joel named (Tyre, Sidon, Philistia [cf. 2 Chron. 21:16-17], Egypt [cf. 1 Kings 14:15-16], and Edom [cf. 2 Kings 8:20-22]; 3:2-7, 19) were enemies of Israel during this time. The prominence Joel gave to Judah's priests and elders rather than to her king—Joash was a boy king under the influence of Jehoiada, the high priest, early in his reign—is a further argument for this view.

<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/joel.pdf>

**Amos 4:9** with dating reference to Uzziah, king of Judah in 1:1 = more of a **mid pre-exilic date** (early eighth century)

#### 2. (:2A) Call for Attention

##### a. Directed to the Leaders

*“Hear this, O elders”*

##### b. Directed to the People

*“And listen, all inhabitants of the land”*

Devastation targeted against *the land* which is the source of all material prosperity in their agrarian culture

#### 3. (:2B) Uniqueness of the Devastation – extent, severity ...

*“Has anything like this happened in your days  
Or in your fathers' days?”*

#### 4. (:3) Testimony to Succeeding Generations

*“Tell you sons about it,  
And let your sons tell their sons,  
And their sons the next generation.”*

### B. (:4) Devastation Described = from Surprising Enemy -- Four Waves of Locust Attacks

(Different types of locusts or describing waves of attacks)

#### 1. Army of Gnawing Locusts

*“What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten”*

2. Army of Swarming Locusts

*“What the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten”*

3. Army of Creeping Locusts

*“What the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten”*

4. Army of Stripping Locusts

C. (:5-13) Devastation Lamented

1. (:5-7) Lamented by Wine Lovers

a. 2 Different Categories

1) Alcoholics – Using wine as an Escape

*“Awake, drunkards, and weep”*

2) Sophisticated Pleasure Seekers

*“And wail, all you wine drinkers”*

b. Same Deprivation

*“On account of the sweet wine that is cut off from your mouth.”*

Nothing wrong with drinking the fruit of the vine

**Wood:** called attention not only to the debased nature of society but to the people’s insensitivity to their own condition, a moral decadence that if unchecked would bring on national disaster. Times of ease too often result in dissipation.

2. (:8-9) Lamented by Worship Leaders

a. Untimely Deprivation

*“Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth  
for the bridegroom of her youth.”*

**Constable:** The next entity called to mourn appears to be Jerusalem. The gender of "Wail" is feminine (singular), and Jerusalem is often compared to a virgin daughter in the Old Testament (e.g., 2 Kings 19:21; Lam. 1:15; cf. Joel 2:1, 15, 23, 32).

b. Cessation of Sacrifices

*“The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off  
From the house of the Lord.  
The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord.”*

3. (:10-12) Lamented by Working Laborers – in the farms and vineyards and orchards

*“The field is ruined, the land mourns;  
For the grain is ruined, the new wine dries up, fresh oil fails.*

*Be ashamed, O farmers, Wail, O vinedressers,  
For the wheat and the barley,  
Because the harvest of the field is destroyed.  
The vine dries up and the fig tree fails;  
The pomegranate, the palm also, and the apple tree,  
All the trees of the field dry up.”*

**Key = Connection Between Physical Deprivation and Happiness**

*“Indeed, rejoicing dries up from the sons of men.”*

4. (:13) Lamented by Worship Leaders (priests / ministers of the altar)

*“Gird yourselves with sackcloth and lament, O priests;  
Wail, O ministers of the altar!  
Come, spend the night in sackcloth O ministers of my God,  
For the grain offering and the drink offering  
are withheld from the house of your God.”*

**Constable:** Tragedy of curtailed worship

D. (:14-15) Devastation Interpreted – the immediate historical context is but a foreshadowing of the awful coming destruction of the eschatological Day of the Lord; These are the key verses in Chap. 1

1. (:14) Response of the People: Consecration to the Lord

a. Fasting

*“Consecrate a fast,”*

b. Assembling (for national day of repentance and pleading)

*“Proclaim a solemn assembly;  
Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land  
To the house of the Lord your God,”*

c. Petitioning

*“And cry out to the Lord.”*

2. (:15) Threat from the Almighty: Impending Day of the Lord

*“Alas for the day!  
For the day of the Lord is near,  
And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.”*

**MacArthur:** The Heb term “*destruction*” forms a powerful play on words with the “*Almighty*.” The notion of invincible strength is foremost; destruction at the hand of omnipotent God is coming.

E. (:16-20) Devastation Detailed

1. (:16) Summary Impact

a. In the Physical Realm – Very Abrupt

*“Has not food been cut off before our eyes”*

- b. In the Emotional and Spiritual Realms  
*“Gladness and joy from the house of our God?”*

2. (:17-18) Lack of Food Impacts Both Man and Beast

- a. (:17) Impact on Man – No Harvest to Collect and Store  
*“The seeds shrivel under their clods;  
The storehouses are desolate,  
The barns are torn down,  
For the grain is dried up.”*

- b. (:18) Impact on Beast – No Pastureland for Grazing  
*“How the beasts groan!  
The herds of cattle wander aimlessly  
Because there is no pasture for them,  
Even the flocks of sheep suffer.”*

3. (:19-20) Desperate Turning to God -- Combination of Fire, Drought, Famine

- a. (:19) Impact on Man
  - 1) Only One Source for Deliverance Known to Man  
*“To You, O Lord, I cry”*
  - 2) Impact of Fire, Drought and Famine  
*“For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness  
And the flame has burned up all the trees of the field.”*
- b. (:20) Impact on Beast
  - 1) Only One Source of Deliverance Available for Beasts  
*“Even the beasts of the field pant for You”*
  - 2) Impact of Fire, Drought and Famine  
*“For the water brooks are dried up  
And fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.”*

**Constable:** The brooks were dry, and even the wild animals panted for water. Joel could say they panted for Yahweh because the Lord was the provider of the water these animals sought (cf. Ps. 42:1). By panting for Yahweh these animals set a good example for the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

**II. (2:1-17) REPENTANCE -- THE ANTICIPATION OF A FUTURE COMING DAY OF THE LORD (EMPHASIS ON POSSIBLE IMMEDIATE INVASION BUT DEFINITE ESCHATOLOGICAL FULFILLMENT) PROMPTS PLEA FOR HEARTFELT REPENTANCE**

- A. (:1-11) Picture of the Day of the Lord -- Like an Invading, Conquering Army

Attention-getter --     *“Blow a trumpet in Zion  
And sound an alarm on My holy mountain!”*

Wood: Joel portrayed a coming army, in particular, that of the Assyrian armies of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. The appearance and martial activities of the locusts were analogous to those of a real army. . . The locust plague of chapter 1 was a precursor of the locustlike plague of the Assyrian armies of chapter 2. The judgment effected by the Assyrian armies was in turn to be a harbinger of a still greater eschatological judgment (228-3:21).

Analogies derived from the assault of locusts described in chap. 1

**Twelve notable characteristics of this Day of the Lord:**

1. Fearsome event – directed against Jerusalem and Judah  
*“Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble”*
2. Imminent event – certain and coming soon  
*“for the day of the Lord is coming; Surely it is near”*
3. Characterized by darkness and gloom  
*“A day of darkness and gloom,  
A day of clouds and thick darkness”*
4. Characterized by innumerable troops  
*“As the dawn is spread over the mountains,  
So there is a great and mighty people”*
5. Unique in its manifestation and devastation  
*“There has never been anything like it,  
Nor will there be again after it.”*
6. (:3) Accomplishes complete devastation  
*“A fire consumes before them  
And behind them a flame burns.  
The land is like the garden of Eden before them  
But a desolate wilderness behind them,  
And nothing at all escapes them.”*
7. (:4-5) Deploys the strongest imaginable war machinery  
*“Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;  
And like war horses, so they run.  
With a noise as of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains,  
Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble,  
Like a mighty people arranged for battle.”*

**Constable:** It is interesting that locusts look like tiny armored horses, and they behave

like them as well (cf. Job 39:19-20; Rev. 9:7). The Italian word for locust means "little horse," and the German word means "hay horse." Thus the correspondence between the army of locusts that had recently swept through the land swiftly and this future invading army is unmistakable. Even their sounds were similar. However, the point of the comparison is probably the horse as a symbol of power and might (cf. Isa. 31:1-3; Hos. 14:3; Mic. 5:10; Hag. 2:22; Zech. 9:10; 12:4; Rev. 9:7).

8. (:6) Spreads fear and panic and hopelessness and despair

*“Before them the people are in anguish;  
All faces turn pale.”*

9. (:7-9) Organized, relentless, thorough assault

*“They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like soldiers;  
And they each march in line, nor do they deviate from their paths.  
They do not crowd each other, they march everyone in his path;  
When they burst through the defenses, they do not break ranks.  
They rush on the city, they run on the wall;  
They climb into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief.”*

10. (:10) Accompanied by cosmic upheaval

*“Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble,  
The sun and the moon grow dark  
And the stars lose their brightness.”*

11. (:11A) Authorized by the Omnipotent Lord Himself

*“The Lord utters **His** voice before **His** army;  
Surely **His** camp is very great,  
For strong is he who carries out **His** word.”*

12. (:11B) Unparalleled and Unstoppable

*“The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome,  
And who can endure it?”*

B. (:12-17) Plea for Repentance

1. (:12A) Gracious Offer -- Patience of Longsuffering Lord

*“‘Yet even now,’ declares the Lord”*

2. (:12B-13) Genuine Repentance -- Inward Orientation –

Whole-hearted, Sincere, Penitent Repentance

*“Return to Me with all your heart,  
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;  
And rend your heart and not your garments.  
Now return to the Lord your God”*

3. (:14) Goodness Restored

*“Who knows whether He will not turn and relent*

*And leave a blessing behind Him,  
Even a grain offering and a drink offering, for the Lord your God?"*

Attention-getter -- "*Blow a trumpet in Zion*"

4. (:15-16) Gathering the People

*"Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,  
Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders,  
Gather the children and the nursing infants.  
Let the bridegroom come out of his room  
And the bride out of her bridal chamber."*

5. (:17) Glory of God = Best Grounds for Appeal for Mercy

*"Let the priests, the Lord's ministers,  
Weep between the porch and the altar,  
And let them say, 'Spare Your people, O Lord,  
And do not make Your inheritance a reproach,  
A byword among the nations.  
Why should they among the peoples say, Where is their God?'"*

**III. (2:18-32) BLESSINGS -- THE PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT OF BLESSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH REPENTANCE**

A. (:18-27) Fulfillment of Deliverance Promises Based on Historical Repentance

1. (:18) Restoration of Divine Favor

*"Then the Lord will be zealous for His land  
And will have pity on His people."*

2. (:19) Restoration of Material Prosperity

a. Response to Repentance and Appeals to God's Mercy

*"The Lord will answer and say to His people"*

b. Resources for Contented Living

*"Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil,  
And you will be satisfied in full with them"*

c. Reputation as the People of God

*"And I will never again make you a reproach among the  
nations."*

3. (:20) Removal of Threatening Enemies

*"But I will remove the northern [army / one] far from you,  
And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land,  
And its vanguard into the eastern sea,  
And its rear guard into the western sea.  
And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up,*



*For it has done great things.”*

**Constable:** Instead of leading this army against Jerusalem (v. 11), the Lord would drive it from Judah. He would drive its soldiers into a parched and desolate land (Arabia?) and into the eastern (Dead) sea and the western (Mediterranean) sea (cf. Dan. 11:45). In other words, He would turn against them rather than leading them and scatter them rather than uniting them against Jerusalem. The smell of the dead carcasses of the many soldiers would fill the air because they had done many great things. In short, they had tried to overthrow God's people (cf. the Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea). Masses of dead locusts also smell terrible, especially after dying in the sea and then being washed ashore.

4. (:21-24) Rejoice in the Lord's Blessings / Do Not Fear

a. (:21) Encouragement directed to the Land

*“Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad,  
For the Lord has done great things.”*

b. (:22) Encouragement directed to the Beasts

*“Do not fear, beasts of the field,  
For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green,  
For the tree has borne its fruit,  
The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.”*

c. (:23) Encouragement directed to the Israelites

*“So rejoice, O sons of Zion,  
And be glad in the Lord your God;  
For He has given you the early rain for your vindication.  
And He has poured down for you the rain,  
The early and latter rain as before.”*

d. (:24) Encouragement Realized in Abundant Harvests

*“The threshing floors will be full of grain,  
And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.”*

5. (:25-27) Reversal of Former Judgments

a. (:25) Reversal of Devastation

*“Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming  
locust has eaten,  
The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust,  
My great army which I sent among you.”*

b. (:26) Reversal of Deprivation

*“You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied  
And praise the name of the Lord your God,  
Who has dealt wondrously with you;  
Then My people will never be put to shame.”*

c. (:27) Reversal of Disgrace

*“Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel,  
And that I am the Lord your God, And there is no other;  
And my people will never be put to shame.”*

B. (:28-32) Eschatological Promises in Anticipation of National Repentance and Restoration

1. (:28-29) Promise of the Outpouring of the Spirit

*“It will come about after this  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;  
And your sons and daughters will prophesy;  
Your old men will dream dreams,  
Your young men will see visions.  
Even on the male and female servants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”*

Time reference – **Acts 2** at Pentecost = partial fulfillment  
“this is that” – not referring to entire paragraph from Joel  
Complete fulfillment right before Second Coming  
Look at **Is. 61** as quoted by Christ in **Lk. 4:21**  
Promise of the Spirit associated with New Covenant

2. (:30-31) Promise of Cosmic Signs before the Second Coming

*“I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,  
Blood, fire and columns of smoke.  
The sun will be turned into darkness  
And the moon into blood  
Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.”*

Has not happened yet; cf. 2:10

3. (:32) Promise of Deliverance to Those Who Repent and Call on the Lord

*“And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord  
Will be delivered;  
For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape,  
As the Lord has said,  
Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.”*

**IV. (3:1-21) JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS AND RESTORATION OF JUDAH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DAY OF THE LORD**

A. (:1-16A) Awesome Judgment of the Nations

1. (:1-3) Day of Reckoning for the Nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat

**Constable:** The valley of Jehoshaphat would mean the place where Yahweh judges, without reference to a specific geographical site. Valleys were often preferred locations for battles in biblical times, so "valley" is an appropriate word to use to describe the place where God will defeat Israel's enemies. Later Joel referred to this place as the valley of decision (v. 14). There God would judge the nations for scattering His covenant people, His inheritance, and for dividing up His land (cf. Lam. 5:2). They had thought so little of the Hebrews that they gambled for them. They had valued them no higher than the hire of a prostitute or the cost of a drink.

2. (:4-8) Disdain for the Pride and Prosperity of the Nations

3. (:9-16A) Dispensing of Judgment

**S. Lewis Johnson:**

Unusual battle cry issued to the nations of the earth; very ironic;  
But the wicked nations of the earth discover that they are going to fight  
Jehovah and be defeated and judged (cf. beast warring against lamb in Rev.)

**Constable:** [Re :12-13] The Lord urged the nations to rouse themselves and to assemble in the valley of Jehoshaphat (cf. v. 2) because it was there that He would sit in judgment on them. He compared this judgment to harvesting grain with a sickle and to treading grapes in a vat (cf. Isa. 17:5; 63:1-6; Rev. 14:14-20). As grapes squirt juice when trodden, so the nations will give up the wickedness with which they have been full (cf. 2:24). This scene of divine warfare must correspond to the battle of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation (cf. Rev. 14:14-20; 16:16; 19:11-21). The judgment of the nations following Christ's second coming (Matt. 25:31- 46) will not involve warfare.

**Piper:** For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. This does not mean people come there to make a decision; they come to experience God's decision. God is the Decider in the valley of decision. The valley of decision is the same as the valley of Jehoshaphat, and "decision" (or verdict) is virtually the same as "judgment."

B. (:16B-21) Final Restoration of Judah

1. (:16B) Protection for the Jewish Nation

*"But the Lord is a refuge for His people  
And a stronghold to the sons of Israel."*

2. (:17) Holy and Majestic Enthronement

*"Then you will know that I am the Lord your God,  
Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain.  
So Jerusalem will be holy,  
And strangers will pass through it no more."*

**S Lewis Johnson** – Millennial kingdom is not a carnal type of kingdom but a spiritual one

3. (:18) Overflowing Blessing for Judah -- Fertility  
*“And in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine,  
 And the hills will flow with milk,  
 And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water;  
 And a spring will go out from the house of the Lord  
 To water the valley of Shittim.”*
  
4. (:19) Utter Desolation for Egypt  
*“Egypt will become a waste,  
 And Edom will become a desolate wilderness,  
 Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah,  
 In whose land they have shed innocent blood.”*
  
5. (:20) Judah Secure in Possessing Her Land  
*“But Judah will be inhabited forever  
 And Jerusalem for all generations.”*
  
6. (:21) Final Avenging  
*“And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged,  
 For the Lord dwells in Zion.”*

\* \* \* \* \*

**Favorite Verses / Use in NT**

**1:15**

**2:12-13**

**2:28 ff**

**Key Applications**

- God’s Judgment against sin.
- Need for Repentance and what that involves.
- God’s program for Israel and the nations in the Day of the Lord.
- Compassion and mercy of God.
- Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and what that involves.
- How to respond to disastrous times.

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**QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**Malick:**

**Message:** Ultimate deliverance from Yahweh at the time of his future judgment upon

the nation will occur as they cry to him in repentance just as they did during the local devastation through the swarms of locust

**Outline:**

I. Introduction: Joel, the prophet and son of Pethuel, urged the people to hear his message, in view of the locust plague, and to pass it on down through their generations 1:1-3

A. Superscription: The word of the Lord came to Joel, the son of Pethuel 1:1

B. Exhortation to Pass Down the Message: Joel urges the people in the land to hear what he has to say, in view of the locust plague, and to pass this information on from generation to generation 1:2-3

II. An Historical Judgment of God and Deliverance: After Joel described the “local” Day of the Lord through terrible devastation caused by the locusts on the land and the people, he urged them to repent and the Lord had pity for the people and promised to remove the “northern army” away from them and to restore the land and the people 1:4-2:32

A. The Judgment in the Locust Plague/Invasion: Joel described the total devastation which was brought about by the locusts, who were like a nation in their organization, and urged the people to mourn their loss and cry to the Lord for deliverance from this terrible judgment from the Almighty 1:4-20

1. A Description of the Invasion: Joel describes the total devastation which was brought about by four kinds of locusts which, like an organized nation, stripped the land of all of its crops 1:4

2. A Call to Mourn: Joel urges the people to mourn over the devastating locust invasion 1:5-13

3. A Call to Cry to the Lord for Deliverance: Joel urges all of the people to fast, come to the house of the Lord in a solemn assembly and cry unto the Lord for deliverance 1:14

4. The Significance of the Plague--A Local Day of the Lord: Joel proclaims that a day of judgment (the Day of the Lord) has come from the Almighty bringing total devastation so that he and the animals call to Him for deliverance 1:15-20

B. The Day of the Lord and God’s Deliverance: After Joel called the people together to describe the coming Day of the Lord and to urge the people to repent, the Lord had pity for the people and promised to remove the “northern army” away from them and to restore the land and the people 2:1-27

1. The Day of the Lord & A Call For Repentance: After Joel announces the coming day of the Lord and describes its terror, he and Yahweh urge the people to turn to Him so that the nations will not mock their God in their trouble 2:1-17

2. God’s Response and Promise: The Lord responded by being zealous for His land and having pity on His people so that He promised to remove the “northern army” away from them and to restore the land and the people 2:18-27

III. An Eschatological Promise to Judge the Nations and Restore Judah: Joel proclaims that in the future Day of the Lord Yahweh will pour out His Spirit upon those who call upon Him, judge the nations with a swift talionic judgment because of their treatment of Judah, and restore Judah to a covenant relationship of blessing with His presence among them forever 2:28--3:21

A. Future Blessing of Spiritual Movement: Joel proclaims that as part of the coming restoration connected with the Day of Yahweh, the Lord will pour His spirit out on His people, miracles will occur in the sky, and those who call upon Him will be saved 2:28-32

1. The Outpouring of the Spirit: In the future when the Lord heals the land He will pour out His Spirit on His people, even common people, and miracles will occur in the sky as part of the coming Day of the Lord 2:28-31

2. The Outworking of Salvation: In the coming Day of the Lord He will deliver some of His people--those who call upon the name of the Lord 2:32

B. The Judgment is Announced and Described: Joel proclaims that Yahweh, as Judah's stronghold, will judge the nations at Jehoshaphat with a swift, talionic judgment because of what they did to Judah 3:1-16

1. Announced: At the future time when the Lord restores Judah and Jerusalem, He will judge the nations because of what they did to Judah 3:1-8

2. Judgment is Described: 3:9-16

C. Israel's Ultimate Restoration: Joel proclaims that in the future restoration Yahweh and Judah will once again be in covenant relationship, Judah will become fruitful, and Yahweh will dwell in her midst forever as her vindication 3:17-21

1. Renewed Covenant: Yahweh and the nation will once again be in covenant relationship 3:17

2. Fruitful: Judah will become fruitful while her enemies (Edom and Egypt) will become unfruitful 3:18-19

3. With Yahweh: Yahweh will inhabit Judah forever as their avenger (with the nations) 3:20-21

**Tom Hawkins:**

### **Theme and Purpose**

Joel was written because of a locust plague (described in chap. 1) in order to call Israel to repentance (1:13-20; 2:12-17). The locust plague was only a forerunner of much greater judgment in the coming day of Yahweh. This judgment would take the form of an invading army (2:1-11) and devastating signs in the heavens (2:10, 30-31) followed by divine judgment in the nations (3:2, 12-16) and blessing for Israel (3:16-21).

## Contribution to the Bible

Joel provides a framework for later prophetic development of the theme "day of Yahweh" (the LORD). All of the prophets build upon common themes of the call to repentance, judgment of the nations and eventual blessing for Israel.

## Christ in Joel

Christ can be seen in His relation to the coming messianic blessing. It is possible, indeed probable, that 2:23 should be translated, "for he has given you a teacher for righteousness." If so, this is a reference to Messiah. The context clearly calls for Messiah's presence (2:26-27 and 2:32-3:2).

## Summary Outline of Joel

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| I. The locust plague--calling for repentance           | 1:1-20    |
| II. The invader from the North--calling for repentance | 2:1-27    |
| III. The day of Yahweh revealed                        | 2:28-3:21 |

[http://bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=5022](http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=5022)

### S. Lewis Johnson (2:1-17) **Judah's Repentance and God's Repentance**

Joel's message of repentance is the same as that of John the Baptist – with exception of different time reference; "repent" in NT = "return to me" in OT; Joel is prophet of repentance; Day of the Lord seems to include both Trib Period, Second Coming and Millennial kingdom aspects

#### **I. (:1-11) Description of the Coming Day of the Lord** under image of locust plague

Will be a time of judgment on Judah (surprising message)

A. (:1-2) Introductory Warning – theme emerging; vs. 11 mentions it as well

"Blow a trumpet" = an alert for enemy attack

B. (:3,6,10) – delineate 3 sections

1. (:3-5) The locusts and the land – military metaphors abound

2. (:6-9) The locusts and effect on the people

Apprehension and alarm; terminology cannot be limited to locust plague

3. (:10-11) The locusts and relationship to universe as a whole – Impressive Climax

Picture enlarges in the prophet's focus; locusts on the ground can make it look like the earth is moving; so many in the sky that they blot out the light of the sky

#### **II. (:12-14) Prophet Calls on Judah to Repent (National Repentance)**

Only the person who has repented can endure the Day of the Lord; Urgent necessity of repentance right now

#### **III. (:15-17) Repentance of the Lord**

### S. Lewis Johnson (2:18-32) **Joel and the Day of Pentecost**

Joel is the prophet of the Day of the Lord and of the Day of Pentecost. Three truths committed to prophet Joel to expound in some detail:

- doctrine of **the Day of the Lord** – day of judgment; will not be a happy day for Israel; but for another part of the nation it will be a day of deliverance
- doctrine of **repentance** – 2 Chron. 7:14 – common text often misapplied – conditions for repentance and restoration
- doctrine of the **outpoured Spirit** --

Has the locust plague already come or is it still on the horizon? Day of the Lord described in language that goes beyond the day of Joel to the eschatological Day of the Lord; a typical passage; language could not be completely fulfilled until the future; (there are some Joel wrote only of things that happened in his day); the plague is a judgment for disobedience; a means of discipline for turning away from the Lord; Joel had called for a national service of repentance for Judah to come and weep publicly before the Lord in the temple area;

**I. (:18-27) The Promise of Immediate Blessings** – we are intended to assume that Joel’s appeals were successful; the people did repent ; past tense in v. 18 preferred;

A. (:18-20) Opening Promises

The land and the people were in covenant relationship with their Lord; given unconditional promises for Israel; the enjoyment of the promises limited by the obedience of the nation – they still have their blessings which will eventually be fulfilled; in the future God will bring His people to obedience

“*the northern one*” – leave this ambiguous – can apply to both the locust and the army that will come (Ezek 38-39) – the Antichrist and his hordes; problem: locusts usually came from the SE into Judah so this seems very strange

B. (:21-23) Song of Encouragement and Exhortation

Breaks into account of these promised blessings; locusts did great things of destruction and havoc; “*the early rain for your vindication*” – “*the teacher for righteousness*” in the Hebrew – interpreted this way by some of the early rabbis (some textual evidence as well) – reference to a personal Messiah in His second advent (Johnson inclined to reject that view)

C. (:24-27) Closing Promises

Locusts ultimately sent by the Lord; things happen to us for a purpose

**II. (:28-32) The Promise of Some Last Day Blessings**

A. (:28-29) Outpouring of the Spirit

“*after this*” = immediately preceding context; but gap of intervening time; Acts 2:17ff – after this in the ultimate sense – looking at the Messianic days just preceding the second coming; part of the Abrahamic blessing fulfillment – Gal. 3:14 – the promise of Abraham – reference to the Holy Spirit;

B. (:30-31) Cosmic Signs

Upheavals in nature anticipate Lord’s intrusion into this earthly scene at second advent; shows that some great thing is about to happen; time of judgment (we should speak with tears in our eyes)

C. (:32) Security of the People



**III. What use did Peter make of this prophecy of Joel?** A miracle had taken place at Pentecost; speaking in tongues as the Holy Spirit had fallen upon them; people gathered from all over the face of the inhabited earth;

Sermon of Peter was a good model: Plain, pertinent, personal, purposeful, persuasive  
Various views:

- everything that Joel spoken was fulfilled on day of Pentecost?? But cosmic signs did not happen – so we would have to spiritualize these things
- no real fulfillment here at all – opposite extreme; but Peter said: This is That!
- preferred view: there is something in the way of fulfillment: the Spirit was poured out here; given on the day of Pentecost; the rest of the references are yet to be fulfilled and still will be fulfilled; Israel was in disobedience so the effects of the outpouring of the Spirit do not take place at this point in time; dependent on the belief of nation of Israel

**S. Lewis Johnson** (3:13-21) **The Day of the Lord in Verdict Valley**

(valley of decision; valley of Jehoshaphat)

**2 great themes:**

- Divine judgment – “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay; Our God is a consuming fire*”
  - eternal, lasting judgment; in moments of indignation no one is a universalist
- Divine covenantal grace – never fails; **Is. 49:14-15** – God will not forget those who are His (:16-20)

**I. (:13-14) A New Summons to Battle** -- Conditions before the Day of the Lord

Nations of earth pictured as field of wheat ready to be harvested and cut down; grapes trodden upon in the winepress; world ripe for judgment; vast multitude of people; you cannot flaunt your own will against the will of God; he that sows thorns let him not walk barefoot; Why are these nations here? “*for their wickedness is great*” – their own moral depravity; they are responsible before God; men are not lost because they are non-elect but because of their own moral depravity; very decisive battle; Rev. 14 – many of the same expressions used

**II. (:15-17) Cosmic Disturbances and Judah’s Preservation** – Conditions during the Day of the Lord

The moment of truth for all of the nations of the world at that time; reference to Zion as the source of the disaster that will fall on the earth; Amos used same expression: “*the Lord roared from Zion;*” (2:11) -- ultimate fulfillment of what was prefigured by locust invasion in former chapter; the stable elements of this universe are convulsed at the day of the Lord – shows it is a tremendous day of judgment; but preservation for the people of God (the one who keeps the covenant); Refuge rests in this God who made promises to the nation of Israel – important application to Christians today; it is the person of the Lord who is the refuge (not simply the promises); He is the Hope of His people, the Happiness and the Holiness of His people; time is coming when the tares shall be rooted up and no longer mingled with the wheat; bible teaches the perseverance of the saints, not the full holiness of the saints

**III. (:18-21) Picture of Fertility (children of Israel) and Desolation (Egypt and Edom)**

Conditions after the Day of the Lord

Won't be any dry places left in Israel;  
Everlasting blessing (vindication of Judah) and vengeance;  
The doctrine of the distinguishing grace of God should be pleasant to us – the doors are open; the invitation is offered; God has chosen to dwell in Zion

**Constable: OUTLINE**

- I. Introduction 1:1
- II. A past day of the Lord: a locust invasion 1:2-20
  - A. An initial appeal 1:2-4
  - B. A call to mourn 1:5-13
  - C. A call to repent 1:14
  - D. The significance of the plague 1:15-20
- III. A near future day of the Lord: a human invasion 2:1-27
  - A. The invading army 2:1-11
    - 1. The nearness of the army 2:1-2
    - 2. The destructive power of the army 2:3-5
    - 3. The relentlessness of the army 2:6-9
    - 4. The invincibility of the army 2:10-11
  - B. A call to repentance 2:12-17
    - 1. An appeal for private repentance 2:12-14
    - 2. An appeal for public repentance 2:15-17
  - C. The possibility of forgiveness and restoration 2:18-27
    - 1. The Lord's gracious response 2:18
    - 2. The Lord's promise of blessing 2:19-27
- IV. A far future day of the Lord: another human invasion and deliverance 2:28—3:21
  - A. Israel's spiritual renewal and deliverance 2:28-32
  - B. God's judgment on Israel's enemy nations 3:1-17
    - 1. The announcement of judgment 3:1-8
    - 2. The description of judgment 3:9-17
  - C. Israel's ultimate restoration 3:18-21

The prophecy of Joel unfolds in chronological sequence. It begins with reference to a severe locust invasion that had come as a judgment on the Judahites for their covenant unfaithfulness to Yahweh (1:2-20). Even though it is impossible to date this plague, it happened in the recent past from Joel's perspective. The Lord used this severe judgment to call His people, through His prophet, to anticipate an even worse devastation coming in the near future, not from insects but from foreign invaders. He called on the Jews to repent and promised that if they did He would forgive them and save them from this invasion. This would be a day of deliverance in which they would learn that He was at work for them. This is what happened when the Assyrians under Sennacherib's leadership attacked Jerusalem unsuccessfully in 701 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 18—19; Isa. 36—37). Yet another similar day was coming farther in the future in which they would again experience an invasion by foreigners who hated them. Nevertheless Yahweh promised to deliver them in that day and to restore them to unprecedented blessing because He was their covenant-keeping God.

**Piper:** There are four things I think we should take to heart.

1) First, let us never lose sight of God's purpose in history—from grasshopper swarms, to world-wide judgment, to the dissolving of sun and moon—his purpose is to be God in the eyes of all the world. . .

2) Second, if our hearts wander from this God, he will fight against us to bring us to repentance. . .

3) Third, therefore, as Joel pleads, rend your hearts and not your garments, awake (1:5), lament (1:8), be ashamed and wail (1:11), declare a fast, and cry to the Lord (1:14) for mercy. Turn from the sin you cherish and for which you feel guilty every day. Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (2:13). Don't be bitter at God because he clogs your way and frustrates your day. Every divine stroke is the discipline of a loving Father and a blow against our pride, our self-reliance, and our love for the world. Turn and kiss the rod of God, and the Lord will become to you a gentle shepherd. . . .

4) Fourth, and finally, let us pray and seek God earnestly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised in 2:28, 29.

**Guzik:** *He has given you the former rain faithfully . . . and the latter rain in the first month:* At the end of Joel 1, the prophet saw the destruction drought brought. Now with the eye of faith he sees God restoring both the former and latter rain to Israel.

i. Ancient Israel had no irrigation system, and relied on rain to water their crops. In a time of drought, nothing grew. God promises to restore both the former rain (falling in autumn) and the latter rain (falling in spring). When God restores these rains, Judah will have full threshing floors and wine vats.

ii. This passage along with others (Deuteronomy 11:14, Hosea 6:3) were taken to give the name of the "*Latter Rain Movement*" starting in 1948 by **William Branham**. Branham influenced a generation of Pentecostal preachers, including a young protégé named Oral Roberts. Marked by strange and aberrant doctrine and practices, the movement eventually faded from prominence and Branham himself died in a traffic collision with a drunk driver in 1965. He died on Christmas Eve, and his faithful followers believed that he would rise from the dead, so they delayed his burial for several days. But the influence of the Latter Rain movement lived on.

The Latter Rain popularized many attitudes and doctrines popular in revival movements today:

- ◆ The "five-fold ministry" and "restoration of apostle and prophets"
- ◆ The "foundational truths" of Hebrews 6:1-2
- ◆ An emphasis on signs and wonders as marks of true revival
- ◆ A strong emphasis on unity
- ◆ Replacement theology, replacing Israel with the church
- ◆ Dominion theology, saying the church will conquer and rule the world
- ◆ An elitist attitude, promoting the idea of a group of "superchristians"