

OVERVIEW OF BOOK OF JOEL – DEVASTATING DAY OF THE LORD

INTRODUCTION

Usually I begin with some background about the book we are studying; then outline the Big Idea and the structure of the book before diving into a more detailed overview. This morning I am going to take a different approach. I am going to jump right into the details of **Chapter 1** because I want you to get an immediate glimpse of the type of **devastation** that Joel is highlighting.

I. (1:1-20) IMMEDIATE DAY OF THE LORD – DEVASTATING LOCUST PLAGUE CAUSES WEeping AND WAILING

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.”

J. Sidlow Baxter: Both in style and subject this Book of Joel is arresting. For vividness of description and picturesqueness of diction Joel is scarcely equaled. His pen-pictures of the plague-stricken land, the invading locust-army, and the final gathering of all nations to the valley of judgment, are miniature masterpieces of graphic vigour.

Joel, whose name means “*Jehovah is God*,” calls himself “*the son of Pethuel*” (i.1). Beyond this we are told nothing about him. His book makes it tolerably certain, however, that he exercised his prophetic ministry in or near **Jerusalem**. . . It is the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem which is then to be ended (iii. 1); and it is Judah and Jerusalem which shall “ *dwell forever*” (iii. 20). The ten-tribed northern kingdom [Israel] is not once mentioned.

Thomas 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.

2. (:2a) Call for Attention

“Hear this, O elders, And listen, all inhabitants of the land.”

Lloyd Ogilvie: Joel begins his communication of the Lord's Word with an impassioned call to attention. The call to hear and give ear marks the message to follow as especially crucial, worthy of undivided attention. First Joel addresses the elders, the leaders of the community. He wants to make sure that they understand God's word for their position of responsibility and influence in the community. But Joel does not rely upon them alone to communicate the message. He also addresses all the inhabitants of the land.

This is a message for all the people of Judah and Jerusalem. A vital connection needed to be made between something that happened and what the Lord wanted to say to His people.

3. **(:2b) Uniqueness of the Devastation – extent, severity ...**

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

Duane Garrett: The point of the verse is that this locust plague is no ordinary misfortune; it is **unique**. The alert reader sees an echo of **Deut 4:32–34** here. In that text Moses asked if anyone could remember anything since creation so wonderful as the election of Israel. Joel used the same rhetorical device to point out that God had done a **new thing** that was as uniquely terrible as the election of Israel was uniquely wonderful. In the locust plague he had undone creation itself. This was the day of the Lord.

Point: you think this is bad . . . you haven't seen anything yet – eschatological devastation will be far worse

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

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

B. (:4) Devastation Described

*“What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten;
And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten;
And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten.”*

Four waves of locust attacks featuring different types of locusts.

Duane Garrett: The impact of the verse is that the wrath of Yahweh is **inescapable**; those who think they have avoided one stage of the calamity are caught by another. In this **Joel 1:4** is like **Amos 5:19**: *“It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.”*

The extent of the devastation consumes everything in the land that is edible.

C. (:5-13) Devastation Lamented – by Wine lovers, Worship leaders and Farmers

[“Awake, drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you wine drinkers, On account of the sweet wine That is cut off from your mouth. ⁶ For a nation has invaded my land, Mighty and without number; Its teeth are the teeth of a lion, And it has the fangs of a lioness. ⁷ It has made my vine a waste, And my fig tree splinters. It has stripped them bare and cast them away; Their branches have become white. ⁸ Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the bridegroom of her youth. ⁹ The grain offering and the libation are cut off From the house of the LORD. The priests mourn, The ministers of the LORD. ¹⁰ The field is ruined, The land

mourns, For the grain is ruined, The new wine dries up, Fresh oil fails. ¹¹ Be ashamed, O farmers, Wail, O vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field is destroyed. ¹² 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. Indeed, rejoicing dries up From the sons of men. ¹³ 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 libation Are withheld from the house of your God.”]

D. (:14-15) Devastation Interpreted

“Consecrate a fast, Proclaim a solemn assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land To the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD. ¹⁵ Alas for the day! For *the day of the LORD* is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.”

The immediate historical context is but a foreshadowing of the awful coming destruction of the eschatological **Day of the Lord**. This is going to be a key concept in the book and we will look at it in more detail shortly.

John 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.*”

Leslie Allen: The prophet moves from failure of the crops to a poignant description of farm animals in distress. His heart goes out in remarkable tenderness to the thirsty, starving creatures in response to their piteous lowing. He interprets their noise in human terms as groans. As he had imaginatively depicted the countryside as mourning in vv. 10, 12, so now he fancies that the very animals join in the lament. The whole creation seems to be groaning, as Paul was to affirm in another age (**Rom. 8:22**). And if brother

ox and brother sheep are responding in this way, implies the prophet, ought not we ourselves join in unison? There is an implicit contrast between the response of brute animals and the people's insensitivity. He observes with compassionate eye the weary wandering of cattle in search of pasture, driven by the hunger pangs of empty stomachs. His sympathetic eye has also seen the sheep suffering from lack of grass and whole flocks dying off.

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

a. (:19) Impact on Man

"To You, O Lord, I cry.

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

"Even the beasts of the field pant for You.

For the water brooks are dried up

And fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness."

Overview: The imagery of the plague of locusts and the theological theme of the **Day of the Lord** dominate this short prophetic book. The devastation occurs on a number of multiple levels – from an immediate and then imminent timeframe all the way to the ultimate eschatological fulfillment of God's day of judgment. For the elect people of God there is promised blessing associated with repentance as Judah is eventually restored.

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

Key Verses: 2:12-13

*"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."*

DEFINITION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

What is the bible talking about when it references **the Day of the Lord**?

In Scripture, **"the Day of the Lord"** is a recurring prophetic theme referring to a **period of divine intervention in human history**, when God directly **judges the wicked** and **delivers His people**, culminating in **the establishment of His rule**.

The **Day of the Lord** is **future, sudden, and catastrophic**, but **its onset is post-Rapture** and **marks the beginning of the outpouring of divine wrath** – not persecutions by Antichrist or

Satan. Believers are not destined to experience the outpouring of God's wrath. I personally do not believe that the entire 70th week of Daniel's prophecy in Chapter 9 should be defined as the **Day of the Lord**. I think that after the mid-point, the first 3 ½ years – which is marked by the abomination of desolation in the temple in Jerusalem, you then have in the last 3 ½ years the Great Tribulation period which is then followed by the Rapture of the saints [this position is labeled as the **Pre-Wrath view of the Rapture**] and then immediately by the Day of the Lord. Christ then establishes His 1000 year millennial kingdom on earth. The timeframe from the book of Revelation would be after the sixth seal in **Rev. 6** which is characterized by extreme cosmic disturbances. So the Day of the Lord would include the trumpet and bowl judgments as the wrath of God is poured out. But I can't get into all the nuances of my eschatology timeline at this point. My objective in this study is to focus on the **nature** of the Day of the Lord as revealed by the prophet Joel.

Key OT references:

- **Amos 5:20** *Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?*
- **Isaiah 13:6, 9** *Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. . . Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.*
- **Ezek. 30:3** *For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations.*
- **Joel 1:15; 2:1–31; 3:14**
- **Zephaniah 1:14–18**

Key NT references:

- **1 Thess. 5:2** *For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.*
- **2 Thess. 2:2** *that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*
- **2 Peter 3:10** *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*
- **Revelation 6–19** (contextually)

It is characterized by **darkness, wrath, cosmic disturbances, and judgment**, but also leads into the **restoration of Israel** and the **millennial reign of Christ** (**Isa. 2:12–21; Zech. 14; Rev. 20:1–6**).

John MacArthur: The phrase [**Day of the Lord**] 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.

Structure of the Book:

- I. (1:1-20) The Immediate Day of the Lord – Devastating Locust Plague Causes Weeping and Wailing
- II. (2:1-27) The Imminent Day of the Lord – Threat of Invading Forces Prefigures the Eschatological Day of the Lord
 - A. (:1) Call to Attention
 - B. (:2-11) Crisis of Military Invasion
 - C. (:12-17) Call for Eleventh Hour Repentance
 - D. (:18-27) Consequence of Deliverance with Emphasis on Material Restoration

(2:28-32) Transition: Promise of Eschatological Deliverance with Emphasis on Spiritual Restoration

- III. (3:1-21) The Ultimate Day of the Lord – Reality of Eschatological Judgment Leading to Blessing with National Restoration
 - A. (3:1-12) Awesome Judgment of the Enemy Gentile Nations
 - B. (3:13-16a) Announcement of the Coming Eschatological Day of the Lord
 - C. (3:16b-21) Assurance of Final Restoration of National Judah

Joel refers to three important events, each of which he calls a “*day of the Lord*.” He sees the plague of locusts as an immediate day of the Lord (1:1-20), the invasion of Judah by Assyria (and later by Babylon) as an imminent day of the Lord (2:1-11), and the final judgment of the world as the ultimate day of the Lord (3:1-21).

In the first, the locusts are an actual army of physical locusts; in the second, the locusts symbolize a real army of invading warriors; in the third, the locusts aren’t seen at all and the armies are very real and very dangerous.

The purpose of Joel is to call the people to **Repentance (2:12-32)** – reminding them of the consequences of repentance as God fulfills His deliverance promises – both immediately in the history of Judah as well as ultimately in eschatological restoration and blessing.

II. (2:1-27) THE IMMINENT DAY OF THE LORD – THREAT OF INVADING FORCES PREFIGURES THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DAY OF THE LORD -- (POSSIBLE NEAR TERM INVASION BUT DEFINITE ESCHATOLOGICAL FULFILLMENT)

David Baker: The description of the Day builds up throughout this passage,

- starting with the warning (v. 1),
- a description of the darkness of the Day (v. 2a),
- which is compared to the approaching army (v. 2b).
- The metaphor changes to overwhelming fire (v. 3)

- and then to an inexorable army (vv. 4–9).
- Its coming results in an apocalyptic cataclysm affecting the entire universe (v. 10).
- Possibly even more devastating than its physical presence is the identity of the army's commander, God himself (v. 11).

A.(2:1) Call to Attention

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

B. (2:2-11) Crisis of Military Invasion

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”*

Robert Chisholm: Darkness and clouds-often associated with the Lord in His role as the mighty victorious Warrior (cf. **Deut. 4:11; 5:22-23; Pss . 18:9, 11; 97:2**)- here symbolize both judgment and destruction (cf. **Jer. 13:16; Ezek. 30:3, 18; 32:7-8; 34:12; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:15**).

4. Characterized by innumerable troops

*“As the dawn is spread over the mountains,
So there is a great and mighty people”*

James Nogalski: Beginning with **2:2b** and continuing through the end of the unit in **2:11**, the poem focuses upon the army that is attacking on the day of Yahweh, its effects, and its progression toward Jerusalem. **Joel 2:2b** describes the location, the power, and the uniqueness of the army. In contrast to the darkness of **2:2a**, the army fills the horizon like the dawn over the mountains. Several interpreters assume that this army is an extension of the locust imagery from **1:4**. This reading is possible; it is more likely, however, that this army represents yet **another threat** rather than a reprise of the locusts. Following the logic of **Joel 1**, the locust plagues have already occurred, while **2:1** anticipates an impending attack.

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.”*

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.”*

James Nogalski: The location of the army changes from the distant mountaintops (2:2, 5) to the city. The unstoppable force rushes the city and scales the wall. The army moves forward en masse, collectively forming an invincible force that is greater than the sum of its parts. . . The verbs describing the movement of the army convey **speed** and **discipline**. The army runs and ascends the city wall. Each soldier travels in his own path as assigned and they do not veer from those paths. Hence, they advance speedily, as a disciplined unit, each part of the whole following the other. This imagery conveys the idea that **resistance is futile** because, even if a member of this army is felled by an arrow or a spear, the army moves forward undeterred.

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?”*

C. (2:12-17) Call for Eleventh Hour 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.
For He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, And relenting of evil.*

John Goldingay: Joel characterizes the one to whom people may turn as gracious, compassionate, long-tempered, and big in commitment. He thereby nails **key characteristics of God**. Graciousness means that the relationship between God and his people has its basis in God’s love and generosity and not in what they deserve. Compassion means that God has the feelings of a mother for the children of her womb, especially when they are threatened by disaster. Commitment means that God is not only faithful when his people are faithful to him but that he stays faithful even when they have forfeited any right to faithfulness. Long-temperedness means that God looks in the eye the shortcomings of the people of God but keeps resisting the temptation to act in anger against this people, even though it doesn’t mean that God is incapable of letting his temper have its way eventually. God’s being long-tempered is thus a key expression of his love.

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?”*

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?’”*

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: Using a bracketing device called an **inclusio**, the final statement of the passage returns to the theme of the day of the Lord (**2:11b**), with which the passage began (**2:1b**), thereby enclosing everything described in between within the embrace of this day. To summarize, Joel utilizes an expression also found in Malachi to describe this day as great and terrible (**Mal 4:5**), closing with a paraphrase of the ominous question from **Malachi 3:2**, *who can endure it?* (**Joel 2:11b**). This cry of **hopelessness** sums up the communicational goal of the entire passage. Joel takes readers into the abyss of terrors that potentially await, only to make them receptive to the hope to which the next verse points.

D. (2:18-27) Consequence of Deliverance with Emphasis on Material Restoration

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.”*

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.”*

The farther away we get from an agricultural economy the less we identify with such imagery

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.”*

Important verse as encouragement to those who have suffered brokenness in their life. God is able to restore and bring light, love and healing to places that formerly were dark and wasted; Cf. the story of the Prodigal Son; no sin so great that God cannot overcome with His amazing grace and blessing

- 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.”*

(2:28-32) TRANSITION: PROMISE OF ESCHATOLOGICAL DELIVERANCE WITH EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUAL RESTORATION

A. (: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.”*

Lloyd Ogilvie: “*All flesh*” in the Old Testament can indicate all of humanity (Gen. 6:12; Is. 40:5, 6) or even all of humanity and the animal kingdom (Gen. 6:17, 19; Ps. 136:25). However, in this context it is more likely that “*all flesh*” refers to all Israel. The term is clarified by the following subgroups. God is speaking reassurance to His frightened people in Jerusalem and refers to “*your sons and your daughters,*” “*your old men,*” “*your young men,*” “*My menservants, and . . . My maidservants.*” The possessive pronouns and the context of the promise indicate that Joel and his listeners would probably have understood this as a promise to Israel alone. Moreover, the lot of the other nations as described in chapter 3 would seem to exclude them from this promise. Even if we limit the promise to Israel, it still represents a radical expansion of the experience of God’s Spirit.

Time reference – **Acts 2** at Pentecost = partial fulfillment
“*this is that*” – not referring to entire paragraph from Joel
Complete fulfillment right before Second Coming
Promise of the Spirit associated with New Covenant

B. (: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**; Sixth seal at the end of **Rev. 6**

C. (: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.”*

**III.(3:1-21) THE ULTIMATE DAY OF THE LORD –
REALITY OF ESCHATOLOGICAL JUDGMENT AND BLESSING WITH NATIONAL
RESTORATION**

The final eschatological Day of the Lord will bring victory and pardon and millennial kingdom blessings for God's people, but only after bringing lasting judgment on their enemies. God will live in Zion among his people.

James Nogalski: Chiastic Structure

A Restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (3:1)

B Judgment of the Nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (3:2)

C Judgment for the Slavery of Yahweh's People (3:3)

C' Judgment for the Slavery of Yahweh's People (3:4–8)

B' Judgment of the Nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (3:9–17)

A' Restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (3:18–21)

A. (3:1-12) Awesome Judgment of the Enemy Gentile Nations

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

a. (:1) Timetable

*“For behold, in those days and at that time,
When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,”*

b. (:2a) Triggering Event

*“I will gather all the nations,
And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.”*

c. (:2b-3) Treachery Punished

*“Then I will enter into judgment with them there
On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
And they have divided up My land.
They have also cast lots for My people,
Traded a boy for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine that they may drink.”*

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

a. (:4) Over-Inflated Self-Assessment by the Nations

*“Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon,
and all the regions of Philistia?
Are you rendering Me a recompense?
But if you do recompense Me,
swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head.”*

b. (:5-6) Overreach and Oppression by the Nations

*“Since you have taken My silver and My gold,
brought My precious treasures to your temples,
6 and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks
in order to remove them far from their territory,”*

c. (:7-8) Overturning of Fortunes by Divine Judgment

1) (:7) Restoration of God's People

*“behold, I am going to arouse them
from the place where you have sold them,
and return your recompense on your head.”*

2) (:8) Retribution on the Nations

*“Also I will sell your sons and your daughters
into the hand of the sons of Judah,
and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a distant nation,
for the LORD has spoken.”*

3. (:9-12) Dispensing of Judgment

a. (:9-10) Call to the Nations to Prepare for Conflict

*“Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men!
Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up!
10 Beat your plowshares into swords, And your pruning hooks into spears;
Let the weak say, ‘I am a mighty man.’”*

b (:11-12) Call to the Nations to Stand before God’s Judgment

*“Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations,
And gather yourselves there. Bring down, O LORD, Thy mighty ones.
12 Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.”*

B. (3:13-16a) Announcement of the Coming Eschatological Day of the Lord

1. (:13) Calendar of God’s Judgment Indicates Time for Harvest

*“Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.
Come, tread, for the wine press is full;
The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.”*

Switches image from military battle where forces are mismatched to an agricultural image where the combatants have become the sickle and the grain, the grapes and the winepressers - **Dever**

Biblehub: The wine vats overflow because their wickedness is great --

The overflowing wine vats represent the excessive wickedness of the nations, which has reached a tipping point. This abundance of sin necessitates divine action. The imagery of overflowing suggests that the iniquity is not only full but excessive, aligning with the biblical principle that God’s patience with sin has limits (**Genesis 15:16**). The great wickedness of the people is a recurring theme in prophetic literature, emphasizing the need for repentance and the certainty of divine judgment if repentance is not forthcoming.

2. (:14) Crisis Time of the Day of the Lord Is Near

*“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.”*

3. (:15-16a) Cosmic Disturbances Signal the Terror of God’s Wrath

*“The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars lose their brightness.
16 And the LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem,
And the heavens and the earth tremble.”*

C. (3:16b-21) Assurance of Final Restoration of National Judah

Daniel Epp-Tiessen: The final verses of Joel feature

- four specific references to God's presence on Zion (3:16, 17, 18, 21),
- highlighting eight interrelated benefits that flow from this presence:
 - military security,
 - Israel's recognition of God,
 - sanctification of Jerusalem,
 - freedom from invasion,
 - amazing fertility,
 - abundant rainfall and water,
 - revenge on historic enemies, and
 - perpetual inhabitation.

*"But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ And it will come about in that day That 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. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ But Judah will be inhabited forever, And Jerusalem for all generations. ²¹ And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, **For the LORD dwells in Zion.**"*