

Joel 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

Analysis

Joel commands drunkards to "Awake" and "weep," addressing those spiritually asleep in self-indulgence. The Hebrew *qawts* ("awake") indicates urgent arousal from stupor. The phrase "all ye drinkers of wine" doesn't merely describe social drinking but those whose lives center on pleasure and comfort. Joel targets complacency—the spiritual danger of being absorbed in earthly enjoyments while ignoring covenant obligations. The reason for weeping: "it is cut off from your mouth." The locust invasion destroyed vineyards, ending wine production. When God removes temporal comforts, He exposes what we truly worship. The Reformed doctrine of common grace teaches that God gives unbelievers temporal blessings not as reward but as kindness intended to lead to repentance (Romans 2:4). When withdrawn, these reveal both God's sovereignty and humanity's dependence.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's agricultural economy made wine a staple beverage, safer than potentially contaminated water and central to daily meals, festivals, and worship (Psalm 104:15). Wine symbolized joy and prosperity. The locust plague's devastation of grapevines meant economic loss and removal of celebration. Joel's address to drunkards may target the wealthy who had leisure for excessive drinking—a class repeatedly confronted for complacency.

