

Joel

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Author: Joel son of Pethuel · Written: Uncertain (possibly c. 835-800 BC or later) · Category: Minor Prophets

Introduction

Joel transforms a devastating locust plague into a prophetic lens for understanding the Day of the LORD—a day that holds both terrors for the rebellious and blessings for the repentant. The book opens with an unprecedented agricultural catastrophe that strips vineyards bare and halts temple worship, yet this immediate crisis becomes the vehicle for revealing God's ultimate purposes in history. **Joel's genius lies in making a natural disaster transparently theological**, showing how present judgments foreshadow cosmic realities and how local repentance models the global response God desires.

The prophet calls the entire community—from elders to infants, from priests to bridegrooms—to gather in solemn assembly, rending their hearts rather than their garments. This authentic repentance triggers God's compassionate response: restoration of wasted years, abundant material blessing, and most significantly, the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh regardless of age, gender, or social status. **Peter's Pentecost sermon identifies Joel's prophecy as fulfilled in the birth of the church**, making this brief book foundational for understanding the Spirit's work in the new covenant age.

Joel's vivid imagery—locusts like an invading army, the sun darkened and moon turned to blood, nations gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat—creates an apocalyptic atmosphere that transcends his historical moment. The Day of the LORD encompasses both God's intervention in Joel's time and the ultimate day when all nations will be judged and God will dwell with His people in Zion. **The book teaches that God uses crises to call His people back to Himself and that authentic spiritual renewal releases both present and eschatological blessings.**

The promise that 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved' becomes a central gospel invitation, quoted by Paul in Romans 10:13. Joel's vision of Jerusalem as the holy mountain from which living waters flow anticipates the New Jerusalem and the river of life. Though the book is among the shortest of the prophets, its theological impact is immense, bridging Old Testament covenant faithfulness and New Testament Spirit empowerment, linking locust devastation to cosmic upheaval, and connecting heartfelt repentance to heaven-sent restoration.

Book Outline

- **The Locust Plague** (1:1-20) — Description and call to lament
- **The Day of the LORD** (2:1-17) — Invasion described, call to repentance
- **God's Response** (2:18-32) — Restoration promised, Spirit outpoured
- **Final Judgment and Blessing** (3) — Nations judged, Judah restored

Key Themes

- **The Day of the LORD—Judgment and Salvation:** The 'Day of the LORD' appears throughout Joel as a day of darkness and terror, yet also deliverance for God's people. This day operates on **multiple levels**—the immediate locust invasion, the coming Babylonian conquest, and the ultimate eschatological judgment. The day is 'great and very terrible; who can endure it?' yet those who call on the LORD's name will be saved. This dual nature reveals that God's day brings wrath on rebellion but rescue for the repentant.
- **Authentic Repentance:** Joel's call to 'rend your heart and not your garments' (2:13) distinguishes **genuine spiritual transformation from mere external ritual**. Corporate fasting and solemn assembly are valuable only when accompanied by heartfelt turning to God. The prophet envisions the entire community—elders, children, priests, even bridegrooms and brides—gathering in repentance. True repentance involves both acknowledgment of sin and active return to the LORD with expectation of His gracious response.
- **Divine Restoration:** God's promise 'I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten' (2:25) reveals His power to **redeem wasted time and reverse devastating loss**. The restoration is comprehensive: agricultural abundance, material prosperity, spiritual renewal, and ultimately the Spirit's outpouring. This theme assures believers that no season of judgment need be permanently destructive—God can transform desolation into fruitfulness, turning mourning into joy.
- **The Outpouring of the Spirit:** Joel 2:28-29 prophesies the democratization of the Spirit—God will pour out His Spirit on **all flesh without regard to age, gender, or social status**. Sons and daughters will prophesy, old men dream dreams, young men see visions, and even servants receive the Spirit. This breaks the Old Testament pattern where the Spirit came upon select individuals for specific tasks, anticipating the New Testament reality where all believers are Spirit-indwelt.
- **God's Compassion and Mercy:** Joel grounds his call to repentance in God's revealed character: 'gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster' (2:13). This echoes Exodus 34:6 and shows that **God's essential nature is compassionate, not vindictive**. He desires to relent from judgment when people turn to Him. The question 'Who knows whether he will not turn and relent?' (2:14) expresses hopeful faith that God's mercy may triumph over deserved wrath.
- **Cosmic Signs and Universal Judgment:** The sun darkening, moon turning to blood, and stars withdrawing their shining signal **cosmic upheaval accompanying**

the Day of the LORD. These signs transcend natural phenomena, pointing to the unraveling of creation's order when God intervenes in judgment. Joel envisions all nations gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat for final judgment, where God will vindicate His people and punish their oppressors. The cosmic scope emphasizes that no corner of creation escapes God's sovereignty.

- **Zion as God's Holy Dwelling:** Joel repeatedly emphasizes that **the LORD dwells in Zion**, making Jerusalem the center of His redemptive activity. From Zion God roars as a lion, yet Zion becomes a refuge for His people. The holy mountain from which living waters flow represents God's life-giving presence among His people. This theme anticipates the New Testament vision of the church as God's temple and the eschatological New Jerusalem where God dwells with humanity.
- **Call and Response Pattern:** The book demonstrates a clear **call-response dynamic**: God calls through crisis, people respond in repentance, God responds with restoration. The locust devastation is God's wake-up call, the solemn assembly is Israel's response, and the promised blessings are God's gracious reply. This pattern models the divine-human relationship—God initiates, humanity responds, God completes. It shows that while judgment is real, it serves the purpose of restoration rather than destruction.

Key Verses

That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

— Joel 1:4 (This verse introduces the **unprecedented devastation** that drives the entire prophecy. The four-stage locust plague (different life stages or species) leaves absolutely nothing—what one stage misses, the next consumes. This complete stripping becomes a metaphor for God's thorough judgment and sets up the miracle of restoration. The systematic destruction demonstrates that this is no ordinary natural disaster but divine intervention designed to capture attention and prompt repentance.)

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 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.

— Joel 2:12-13 (This is Joel's central call to repentance, distinguishing **authentic spiritual transformation from empty ritual**. The command to 'rend your heart and not your garments' confronts the human tendency toward external religion divorced from internal reality. The motivation for repentance is not fear but faith in God's character—He is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and may relent from judgment. This verse grounds all authentic revival in God's nature rather than human merit.)

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.

— Joel 2:25 (God promises to **restore the years consumed by judgment**, demonstrating that His purpose in discipline is always redemptive. The locusts are called 'my great army,' revealing that natural disasters can be divine instruments. Yet God's restorative power exceeds His destructive judgment—He can redeem wasted time, repair devastation, and transform desolation into abundance. This promise gives hope to all who have experienced seasons of loss or spiritual barrenness.)

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

— Joel 2:28-29 (This prophecy, **fulfilled at Pentecost** (Acts 2:16-21), revolutionizes the Spirit's work by removing all human barriers. Age, gender, and social status become irrelevant—the Spirit is poured out on 'all flesh.' The democratization of prophecy, dreams, and visions signals the new covenant reality where all believers have direct access to God through the indwelling Spirit. This verse marks the transition from the Spirit coming upon select individuals to the Spirit dwelling in all God's people.)

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.

— Joel 2:32 (This promise becomes a **central gospel invitation** (Romans 10:13), extending salvation to 'whoever' calls on the LORD's name. The universal scope ('whosoever') breaks ethnic and religious barriers, making deliverance available to all who genuinely seek God. Yet it maintains particularity—deliverance comes through Zion/Jerusalem (ultimately Christ) and among the remnant whom the LORD calls. This balances divine sovereignty (God calls) and human responsibility (we must call on His name).)

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

— Joel 3:14 (The repeated 'multitudes, multitudes' creates **dramatic urgency** as nations gather for final judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Called the 'valley of decision,' it represents the place where God's verdict is rendered, not where humans choose their fate. This emphasizes that history moves toward divine judgment when God will settle all accounts, vindicate His people, and punish their oppressors. Every generation stands in this valley, facing the nearness of the Day of the LORD.)

The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

— Joel 3:16 (God's roar from Zion **signals both terror and comfort**—the same voice that shakes heaven and earth becomes hope and strength for His people. This demonstrates the dual nature of God's day: wrath toward His enemies, refuge for His children. The imagery of God as a roaring lion echoes Amos and anticipates Revelation, showing that divine judgment and divine protection are two sides of the same sovereign power.)

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

— Joel 3:18 (This **vision of eschatological abundance** reverses the locust devastation, portraying paradise restored. Mountains dripping wine, hills flowing with milk, and a fountain from God's house watering even the dry valley represent complete material and spiritual blessing. The fountain from the LORD's house anticipates Ezekiel 47 and Revelation 22—the river of life flowing from God's presence. This demonstrates that God's ultimate purpose is not judgment but restoration and abundance for His redeemed people.)

Historical Context

Joel's date is disputed because the book lacks historical markers. The locust plague was a real disaster that prompted Joel's message. The agricultural devastation affected every aspect of life, including temple worship. Joel uses this crisis to teach about the ultimate Day of the LORD—when God will judge evil and vindicate His people.

Literary Style

Joel moves from immediate crisis (locusts) to cosmic eschatology (the Day of the LORD). The imagery is vivid—locusts as an invading army, darkened sun, blood moon. The structure is concentric: lament-call to repentance-promise-fulfillment. Joel quotes and alludes to other prophets, weaving together prophetic tradition. The book contains some of Scripture's most memorable lines about restoration and the Spirit.

Theological Significance

Joel makes profound contributions to biblical theology, particularly regarding the Day of the LORD, divine judgment as catalyst for repentance, and the universal outpouring of the Spirit. The book establishes that **the Day of the LORD operates on multiple chronological levels**—near fulfillment, intermediate fulfillment, and ultimate eschatological realization. This interpretive pattern becomes crucial for understanding all prophetic literature and prevents both purely historical and purely futuristic readings.

Joel's theology of **judgment as divine wake-up call** reveals God's redemptive purposes even in catastrophe. The locust invasion is both natural disaster and divine intervention ('my great army'), demonstrating that God can use any means to capture His people's attention. This prevents naturalistic dismissal of divine providence while avoiding the opposite error of seeing every difficulty as direct punishment. Judgment serves restoration, not mere retribution.

The prophecy of the **Spirit's universal outpouring** revolutionizes Old Testament pneumatology. Previously, the Spirit came upon select individuals (prophets, priests, kings, artisans) for specific tasks and often temporarily. Joel envisions a radical democratization—all flesh, without regard to age, gender, or social status, receiving the Spirit and prophesying. This anticipates the new covenant reality and makes Pentecost the hinge between testaments.

Joel contributes significantly to understanding **authentic versus superficial repentance**. The command to 'rend your heart, not your garments' exposes the human tendency toward externalized religion. True repentance involves wholehearted return to God motivated by faith in His gracious character, not merely fear of consequences. The corporate nature of the call—gathering the entire assembly from elders to nursing infants—shows that genuine spiritual renewal must encompass the whole community.

The book's teaching on **divine restoration** demonstrates that God's power to redeem exceeds His power to judge. The promise to restore 'the years the locusts have eaten' reveals that no devastation is beyond God's redemptive reach. What seems irretrievably lost—time, opportunity, blessing—God can recover and multiply. This restoration theology grounds Christian hope in God's character rather than human merit or achievement.

Finally, Joel's vision of **Zion as the source of living waters** anticipates the New Testament temple theology. From the place where God dwells flows life-giving water that transforms even the Valley of Shittim (a dry, barren place). This theme, developed

in Ezekiel 47, John 7:37-39, and Revelation 22, identifies God's presence as the source of all spiritual vitality and eschatological blessing.

Christ in Joel

Joel foreshadows Christ and illuminates His work in multiple profound ways. Most directly, **Peter identifies Joel 2:28-32 as fulfilled at Pentecost** (Acts 2:16-21), linking the Spirit's outpouring to Christ's ascension and exaltation. The Spirit poured out on all flesh is Christ's gift to His church, the promised Counselor sent after Jesus returns to the Father. What Joel glimpsed prophetically becomes reality through Christ's redemptive work.

The promise that **'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved'** (2:32) becomes a central gospel invitation in Romans 10:13. Paul applies this universal offer to both Jew and Gentile, grounding salvation in calling on Christ's name. The 'LORD' whose name saves is identified with Jesus, demonstrating early Christian conviction that Jesus shares the divine identity and that calling on His name brings salvation.

The **cosmic signs** Joel describes—sun darkened, moon turned to blood, stars falling—appear in Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25-26) and in Revelation's apocalyptic visions. These signs accompany both Christ's first coming (darkness at the crucifixion) and anticipate His second coming. The Day of the LORD thus encompasses Christ's entire redemptive work from incarnation to parousia.

Joel's vision of the **fountain flowing from the LORD's house** finds fulfillment in Christ, from whose pierced side flow blood and water (John 19:34). Jesus declares Himself the source of living water (John 7:37-39), explicitly connecting this to the Spirit given after His glorification. The temple from which life flows is ultimately Christ's body, and the water is the Spirit He pours out on all who believe.

The pattern of **judgment followed by restoration** models the gospel sequence. Christ bears the judgment (the locust devastation) so that believers receive the restoration (abundant blessing and the Spirit). The 'years the locusts have eaten' represent the devastation of sin, which Christ redeems, restoring the years and granting life abundant.

The call to **authentic heart repentance** rather than external ritual anticipates Jesus' confrontation of Pharisaic religion. Jesus, like Joel, emphasizes that God desires mercy and internal transformation, not mere ceremonial correctness. The heart-rending repentance Joel calls for becomes possible through the new covenant in Christ's blood, which writes God's law on hearts rather than stone tablets.

Relationship to the New Testament

The New Testament's engagement with Joel demonstrates the book's foundational importance for understanding the church age and eschatology. **Acts 2:16-21** represents the most extensive Old Testament quotation in Peter's Pentecost sermon. Peter declares 'this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel,' identifying the Spirit's outpouring as Joel's prophecy fulfilled. The inclusivity Joel predicted—sons and daughters, young and old, servants receiving the Spirit—becomes visible reality in the nascent church.

Peter's application shows that **the 'last days' begin at Pentecost**, not at some future tribulation period. Joel's 'afterward' (2:28) becomes 'in the last days' (Acts 2:17), indicating that the church age is the eschaton's inauguration. The cosmic signs Joel mentions haven't fully occurred, showing that prophetic fulfillment can be inaugurated (already) while awaiting consummation (not yet). This establishes the 'already/not yet' tension fundamental to New Testament eschatology.

Romans 10:13 quotes Joel 2:32 as the gospel invitation extended to all: 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Paul uses this to demonstrate that salvation comes through faith expressed in calling on Christ's name, available equally to Jew and Gentile. The universal scope of Joel's 'whoever' grounds Paul's mission to the nations and undermines any ethnic restriction on gospel access.

Matthew 24:29 (paralleled in Mark 13:24-25 and Luke 21:25-26) echoes Joel's cosmic signs in Jesus' apocalyptic discourse. The sun darkened, moon not giving light, and stars falling describe the upheaval accompanying the Son of Man's coming. This links Joel's Day of the LORD to Christ's parousia, identifying Jesus as the one who executes final judgment and establishes God's kingdom.

Revelation repeatedly draws on Joel's imagery: the sixth seal (6:12-17) describes the sun becoming black and moon like blood; the trumpet and bowl judgments echo Joel's locust army and cosmic disasters; the river of life flowing from God's throne (22:1-2) fulfills Joel's fountain from the LORD's house. These allusions show that Joel's eschatological vision shapes John's understanding of history's culmination in Christ's return.

The theme of **God roaring from Zion** appears in Revelation's portrait of Christ as the Lion of Judah who conquers (5:5) and whose voice is like a roar (10:3). The dual image of God as both roaring lion (terror to enemies) and refuge for His people (comfort to believers) describes Christ's role as judge and savior.

Joel's teaching on **heart repentance** influences New Testament calls to genuine conversion. Paul's contrast between circumcision of the heart versus flesh (Romans

2:28-29) and Jesus' denunciation of externalized religion echo Joel's 'rend your heart, not your garments.' True Christianity involves internal transformation by the Spirit, not merely external conformity to ritual.

Practical Application

Joel's message remains powerfully relevant for contemporary believers, addressing both personal spirituality and corporate church life. First, **the book teaches us to interpret crises theologically**. The locust plague was a natural disaster, yet Joel saw it as God's intervention designed to prompt repentance. Modern believers face the challenge of neither dismissing God's hand in difficulties (naturalism) nor crudely attributing every problem to direct divine punishment (simplistic cause-effect theology). Joel models seeking God's purposes in trials while maintaining hope in His restorative character.

The distinction between authentic and superficial repentance challenges contemporary religious culture. Joel's command to 'rend your heart, not your garments' exposes how easily we substitute external religious activities for genuine heart transformation. Going through spiritual motions—attending services, participating in rituals, even emotional experiences—without wholehearted return to God is the empty religion Joel denounces. This calls us to examine whether our faith involves real relationship with God or merely performance of religious duties.

The promise that **God can restore wasted years** offers profound hope to those experiencing regret over lost time or squandered opportunities. Whether through sin, foolish choices, or circumstances beyond our control, many believers grieve over years that seem irretrievably lost. Joel's assurance that God restores what the locusts consumed grounds hope not in our ability to make up for lost time but in God's power to redeem and multiply. No season of devastation is beyond His restorative reach.

The call to corporate repentance and renewal challenges individualistic Western Christianity. Joel envisions the entire community gathering—from elders to nursing infants, from priests to bridegrooms. Authentic spiritual renewal cannot be merely individual; it must encompass the whole body. This calls churches to seasons of corporate prayer, fasting, and repentance, recognizing that God's blessing often awaits community-wide heart preparation.

Joel's teaching on **the Spirit's universal availability** encourages all believers that spiritual gifts and empowerment are not reserved for an elite few. Age, gender, and social status create no barriers to the Spirit's work. Young and old, men and women, all can prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams. This democratization challenges both clericalism (only professionals do ministry) and cessationism (spiritual gifts ended with the apostles), affirming that all Spirit-filled believers participate in God's prophetic community.

The book's **dual vision of judgment and salvation** prevents unbalanced theology. The Day of the LORD brings terror to God's enemies but refuge for His people. This balanced view challenges both cheap grace (ignoring judgment) and fear-based religion (ignoring refuge). Believers can rest secure in God's protection while recognizing the seriousness of judgment for those outside Christ.

The invitation to call on the LORD's name remains the gospel's core. Joel's 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved' offers hope to all—no sin too great, no person too far gone, no ethnic or social barrier insurmountable. This universal invitation challenges us to proclaim the gospel confidently to all people, trusting that God's saving grace extends to everyone who genuinely calls on Christ.

Finally, **the vision of eschatological abundance**—mountains dripping wine, hills flowing with milk, fountains from God's house—fuels Christian hope. Present difficulties are real and painful, yet temporary. God's ultimate purpose is not devastation but restoration, not judgment but blessing. This vision of future glory empowers believers to endure present trials with patient hope, knowing that the best is yet to come for those who love God.

Chapter 1

The Locust Plague

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

2 Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

3 Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

4 That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

5 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.

6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

9 The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.

10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

11 Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.

12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

A Call to Repentance

13 Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

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

15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

16 Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

17 The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.

18 How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

20 The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Chapter 2

The Day of the Lord

- 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;
- 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.
- 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.
- 4 The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.
- 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.
- 6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.
- 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:
- 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.
- 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.
- 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:
- 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?

Return to the Lord

- 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:
- 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.

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?

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

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.

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?

18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

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:

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 savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

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

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.

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.

24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

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.

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.

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.

The Promise of the Spirit

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:

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

30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

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

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.

Chapter 3

Judgment on the Nations

1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

4 Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

5 Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

6 The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.

7 Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:

8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken it.

The Valley of Decision

9 Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.

11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.

12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

17 So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

Blessings for God's People

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

19 Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

21 For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.