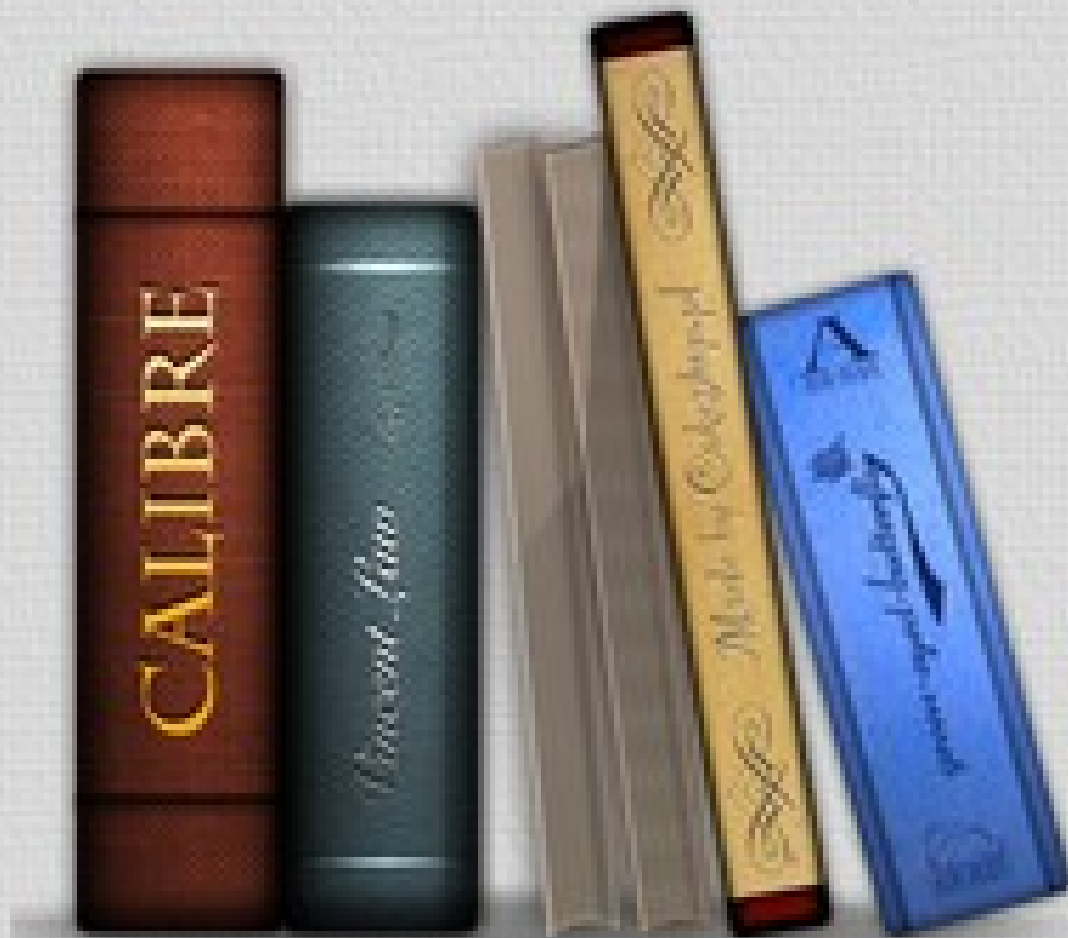


DGuzik 29 Joel

David Guzik

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David Guzik



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(Joe 1:1)

Introduction

This¹ is the LORD's message² that was given³

to Joel⁴ the son of Pethuel:
(Guzik)

Joe 1:1-20

JOEL 1 - THE DAY OF THE LORD BRINGS JUDAH LOW

A. Locusts devastate the land of Judah.

1. (Joe_1:1-4) The remarkable plague of locusts upon Judah. The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has *anything like* this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation. What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

a. **The word of the LORD that came to Joel:** The prophet Joel spoke to the southern kingdom of Judah, and makes no reference to the northern kingdom of Israel. It's hard to pin down his exact time, because he doesn't mention any other kings or prophets. Many scholars date the book of Joel to 835 B.C.

i. This makes Joel a *pre-exilic* prophet, who ministered before the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel (721 B.C.) or the southern kingdom of Judah (586 B.C.). Other pre-exilic prophets include Obadiah, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and

Micah. Joel is one of the earliest prophets - only Obadiah prophesied before his time (845 B.C.).

ii. 835 B.C. was a time of turmoil and transition in Judah, at the end of the reign of the Queen Mother Athaliah and the beginning of the reign of King Joash. Athaliah seized power at the sudden death in battle of her son Ahaziah, who only reigned one year (2Ki_8:26, 2Ki_11:1). Athaliah killed all her son's heirs, except for one who was hidden in the temple and escaped - one-year-old Josiah (2Ki_11:3). Her six-year reign of terror ended in 835 B.C. when the High Priest Jehoiada overthrew Athaliah and set the seven-year-old Josiah on the throne (2Ki_11:4-21).

iii. During her six years as queen over Judah, Athaliah reigned wickedly. She was the granddaughter of the wicked King Omri of Israel - making her daughter or niece to Ahab, one of Israel's worst kings (2Ki_8:26). Athaliah raised her son Ahaziah to reign in the wicked pattern of Ahab, and even brought in Ahab's counselors to advise him (2Ch_22:2-4). When Ahaziah was killed in battle and she seized power, she set her other sons to evil, even desecrating the temple and its sacred things (2Ch_24:7).

iv. If we are accurate in thinking that Joel prophesied in 835 B.C. then the judgment he described came toward the end of the six-year reign of ungodliness under Queen Athaliah. No wonder God brought a heavy hand on Judah!

v. "The name Joel means 'Jehovah is God' and therefore constitutes a short confession of faith, somewhat like the primary New Testament confession, 'Jesus is Lord.'" (Boice)

b. **What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten:** Joel isn't announcing a coming judgment of the Lord. He describes their *present state* - devastated by successive swarms of locusts, first **chewing**, then **swarming**, then **crawling**, and finally **consuming**. Judah will experience a time of famine and financial ruin because of these locusts.

i. This plague was so unusual that Joel says, “**tell your children about it.**” The times were so remarkably difficult that parents would tell their children, “I lived through the plagues of locusts.”

ii. In 1915 a devastating plague of locusts covered what is modern-day Israel and Syria. The first swarms came in March, in clouds so thick they blocked out the sun. The female locusts immediately began to lay eggs, 100 at a time.

Witnesses say that in one square yard, there were as many as 65,000 to 75,000 eggs. In a few weeks they hatched, and the young locusts resembled large ants. They couldn't fly yet, and got along by hopping. They marched along 400 to 600 feet a day, devouring every speck of vegetation along the way. After two more stages of molting they became adults who could fly - and the devastation continued.

2. (Joe_1:5-7) An army of locusts against Judah.

Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; his teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has laid waste My vine, and ruined My fig tree; he has stripped it bare and thrown *it* away; its branches are made white.

a. **Awake, you drunkards:** Joel tells the **drunkards** to wake up and see the devastation the locusts caused. They came like a mighty **nation**, a fierce army against Judah.

b. **My vine . . . My fig tree:** God looks at the vines and fig trees of Judah and says they belong to Him, even in judgment.

3. (Joe_1:8-12) Judah mourns because of the locusts' destruction.

Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering have been cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests mourn, who minister to the LORD. The field is wasted, the land

mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree; all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

a. **Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth:** Joel tells Judah that they should look at their condition and mourn, with all the emotion and passion of a young widow. They should not receive this plague of locusts stoically, with false bravado.

i. In this, Joel doesn't minimize the suffering at all. He isn't like the dentist who says, "This may cause a bit of discomfort" when he really means "This is going to hurt and I am going to make you suffer." He deals with the suffering in a real way and says, "Let's turn back to the LORD."

b. **The priests mourn . . . the land mourns . . . be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers . . . surely joy has withered away:** In vivid and poetic images, Joel shows how the whole nation mourns this great destruction brought by locusts.

i. **The grain and the drink offering have been cut off:** It's remarkable to see that these sacrifices to the LORD at the temple only stopped when there was no more grain or wine to give to God. Queen Athaliah's reign was wicked, but she allowed the temple ceremonies to continue. This shows us that the devil doesn't mind ceremonies in themselves, and that the devil is more interested in *corrupting* true religion than *eliminating* it.

B. Drought devastates the land of Judah.

1. (Joe_1:13-14) A call to repentance.

Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.

Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

a. **Gird yourselves and lament, you priests:** Joel calls the religious leaders to lead the nation in repentance. He tells the priests to **gird yourselves** for repentance, the idea being “prepare to do the work of repentance.”

i. Joel also tells them *how* to do the work of repentance.

• **Consecrate a fast:** Make getting right with God so important that even eating isn’t important • **Call a sacred assembly:** Call for God’s people to come together and repent • **Gather the elders:** The leaders of the people should make a special point to be part of the work of repentance • **Into the house of the LORD your God:** Come to the place where you *should* meet together with God

• **And cry out unto the LORD:** Finally, simply cry out to God and trust that He will respond in mercy b. **For the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God:** When there was grain and wine to bring the people of Judah still brought offerings to the temple, either out of tradition or godly obedience.

Now that there is no produce, there is no offering for **the house of your God.**

2. (Joe_1:15-20) The day of the LORD against Judah in drought.

Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty. Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; barns are broken down, for the grain has withered. How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment. O LORD, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field also cry out to

You, for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures.

a. **For the day of the LORD is at hand:** The idea behind the phrase **the day of the LORD** is that this is *Gods'* time. Man has his "day," and the LORD has His **day**. In the ultimate sense, **the day of the LORD** is fulfilled with Jesus judges the earth and returns in glory. In a lesser sense, a time of judgment as Judah experienced with the locusts and drought is also an example of **the day of the LORD**.

b. **The seed shrivels . . . they have no pasture . . . the flocks of sheep suffer punishment . . . fire has devoured the open pastures . . . the water brooks are dried up:** Joel vividly describes a devastating drought. It affects everything in Judah, and wildfires ravage the dry land.

c. **O LORD, to You I cry out:** In this time of drought, all Judah could do was **cry out** to God. They were powerless to "fix" the drought problem. God sent them to a place where only heaven could help them, so they would look no other place.

i. In Luk_13:1-5 Jesus was confronted with the problem of a disaster that killed 18 people. Instead of acting as if it were just an accident of blind fate, Jesus used it as a wake-up call for repentance. Jesus showed that "Why did this disaster happen to them?" is the wrong question. The right question is "Am I ready to face such a disaster in this fallen world?"

(Joe 1:2) ***A Locust Plague Foreshadows the Day of the Lord***

Listen to this, you elders;⁵

pay attention,⁶ all inhabitants of the land.

Has anything like this ever happened in your whole life⁷

or in the lifetime⁸ of your ancestors?⁹

(Joe 1:3) Tell your children¹⁰ about it,

have your children tell their children,

and their children the following generation.¹¹

(Joe 1:4) What the *gazam*-locust left the *'arbeh*-locust consumed,¹²

what the *'arbeh*-locust left the *yeleq*-locust consumed,
and what the *yeleq*-locust left the *hasil*-locust consumed!¹³
(Joe 1:5) Wake up, you drunkards,¹⁴ and weep!

Wail, all you wine drinkers,¹⁵

because the sweet wine¹⁶ has been taken away¹⁷ from
you.¹⁸

(Joe 1:6) For a nation¹⁹ has invaded²⁰ our²¹ land.

There are so many of them they are too numerous to
count.²²

Their teeth are like those²³ of a lion;

they tear apart their prey like a lioness.²⁴

(Joe 1:7) They²⁵ have destroyed our²⁶ vines;²⁷

they have turned our²⁸ fig trees into mere splinters.

They have completely stripped off the bark²⁹ and thrown
them aside;

the³⁰ twigs are stripped bare.³¹

(Joe 1:8) ***A Call to Lament***

Wail³² like a young virgin³³ clothed in sackcloth,

lamenting the death of³⁴ her husband-to-be.³⁵

(Joe 1:9) No one brings grain offerings or drink offerings

to the temple³⁶ of the LORD anymore.³⁷

So the priests, those who serve the LORD, are in mourning.

(Joe 1:10) The crops of the fields³⁸ have been destroyed.³⁹

The ground is in mourning because the grain has perished.

The fresh wine has dried up;

the olive oil languishes.

(Joe 1:11) Be distressed,⁴⁰ farmers;

wail, vinedressers, over the wheat and the barley.

For the harvest of the field has perished.

(Joe 1:12) The vine has dried up;

the fig tree languishes —

the pomegranate, date, and apple⁴¹ as well.

In fact,⁴² all the trees of the field have dried up.

Indeed, the joy of the people⁴³ has dried up!
(Joe 1:13) Get dressed⁴⁴ and lament, you priests!

Wail, you who minister at the altar!

Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you servants of my God,
because no one brings grain offerings or drink offerings

to the temple of your God anymore.⁴⁵
(Joe 1:14) Announce a holy fast;⁴⁶

proclaim a sacred assembly.

Gather the elders and⁴⁷ all the inhabitants of the land
to the temple of the LORD your God,

and cry out to the LORD.
(Joe 1:15) How awful that day will be!⁴⁸

For the day of the LORD is near;

it will come as destruction from the Divine Destroyer.⁴⁹
(Joe 1:16) Our food has been cut off right before our eyes!⁵⁰

There is no longer any joy or gladness in the temple of our
God!⁵¹

(Joe 1:17) The grains of seed⁵² have shriveled beneath their
shovels.⁵³

Storehouses have been decimated

and granaries have been torn down, for the grain has dried up.

(Joe 1:18) Listen to the cattle groan!⁵⁴

The herds of livestock wander around in confusion⁵⁵

because they have no pasture.

Even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

(Joe 1:19) To you, O LORD, I call out for help,⁵⁶

for fire⁵⁷ has burned up⁵⁸ the grassy pastures,⁵⁹

flames have razed⁶⁰ all the trees in the fields.

(Joe 1:20) Even the wild animals⁶¹ cry out to you;⁶²

for the river beds⁶³ have dried up;

fire has destroyed⁶⁴ the grassy pastures.⁶⁵

(Joe 2:1) ***The Locusts' Devastation***

Blow the trumpet¹ in Zion;

sound the alarm signal on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land shake with fear,

for the day of the LORD is about to come.

Indeed,² it is near!³

(Guzik)

Joe 2:1-32

JOEL 2 - THE DAY OF THE LORD AND THE RESTORATION OF THE LORD

A. A mighty army to invade Judah.

1. (Joe_2:1-5) What the mighty army looks like.

Blow 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 is coming, for it is at hand: A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains. A people *come*, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any *such* after them, even for many successive generations. A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land *is* like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array.

a. **Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand:** In Joel 1, the prophet spoke of the judgment that *had arrived* in Judah (a plague of locusts and drought). In Joel 2, he begins by describing judgment that *will come* - a mighty army set against Judah. Since this is all part of "God's day" not "man's day,"

it is described as **the day of the LORD**.

i. When we are right with God, we *want* **the day of the LORD**. We long for Him to show His strength because we know that we abide in Him. When we are not right with God, we *dread* **the day of the LORD**, because when God shows Himself strong, His strength may work *against* us. In Joel's

day Judah was not right with God, so **the day of the LORD** would be nothing but **darkness and gloominess** to them.

b. **A people come, great and strong:** It's hard to know what invasion Joel predicts. Probably Joel predicted an invasion that never happened because Judah responded to the invitation to repent and God held back this army. The 40-year godly reign of King Joash in Judah began right after the time of Joel's prophecy.

i. There are some commentators who believe that Joel is referring back to the army of locusts, and describing them poetically. This is possible, but it seems best on balance to say that he writes of a literal human army that will come against an unrepentant Judah.

c. **A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns:** The urgent nature of this prophecy probably spurred Jehoiada to depose the wicked Queen Athaliah and set Joash on the throne, even though he was only seven years-old (2Ki_11:4-21). Perhaps he would have waited until Joash was older, but Joel's prophecy showed him that it had to be done immediately.

2. (Joe_2:6-11) What the mighty army will do.

Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color. They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong *is the One* who executes His word. For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; who can endure it?

a. **They do not break ranks . . . everyone marches in his own column:** With a chilling poetic flair, Joel describes

the discipline and effectiveness of this army. Because they keep ranks and work with energy (**they run to and fro in the city**) they bring a devastating attack on Judah.

i. If we consider the people of God to be like an army - perhaps based on the military images Paul sprinkled through his letters - then this passage shows us two things that can make God's people more effective. First they must *keep order*, with every soldier keeping ranks. Second they must *work hard*, with every soldier serving with energy.

b. **The LORD gives voice before His army:** As impressive as this army is, Joel does not want Judah to forget that it's real power lies in that God has sent them. They will be His tool of judgment against Judah - unless they repent.

i. When the plague of locusts and the drought devastated Judah, you might have thought that Joel would encourage the people. He might have said, "Hang in there! Things are bad, but they will get better. Tough times don't last, but tough people do." Instead Joel said, "You think that was bad? Worse is to come if we don't repent."

B. A promise of help to a repentant Judah.

1. (Joe_2:12-17) The prophet calls God's people to repent.

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. Who knows *if* He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him; a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give

Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them.

Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where *is* their God?’”

a. **Now, therefore . . . Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning:**

Because they heard the warning of judgment, God’s people should repent. It’s doesn’t make their repentance less valid because they had to be “scared” into it. The important thing is that they turn back to the LORD in *sincerity*, and God tells them how.

i. Sincere repentance is to **turn to** God, and therefore *away from* our sin.

ii. Sincere repentance is done **with all your heart**, giving everything you can in surrender to God.

iii. Sincere repentance is marked by *action* (**with fasting**) and *emotion* (**with weeping . . . mourning**). Not every act of repentance will include **fasting** and **weeping**, but if *action* and *emotion* are absent, it isn’t real repentance.

b. **Rend your heart, and not your garments:** One expression of mourning in Jewish culture is tearing the clothes. It was a way to say, “I am so overcome with grief that don’t care if my clothes are ruined and I look bad.” Joel knew that one could tear their **garments** without tearing their **heart**, and he describes the kind of heart-repentance that really pleases God.

i. Spurgeon tells the story of a woman who came seeming to be in great sorrow, saying what a great sinner she was, but Spurgeon suspected her repentance wasn’t sincere. He said, “Well, if you are a sinner of course you have broken God’s laws. Let’s read the Ten Commandments and see which ones you have broken.” They started at the first: “You shall have no other gods before Me,” and Spurgeon asked her if she ever broke that commandment. “Oh no,” she said, “not that I know of.” “‘You shall not make any graven image’ - did you ever break that one?” “Never, sir,” she answered. As you

might suppose, Spurgeon went through all Ten Commandments and she could not find a single one that she had broken, and what he suspected was true. She didn't really consider herself a sinner, and she was making a show of repentance because she thought it was expected of her.

c. **Return to the LORD your God, for He *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm:** Knowing the goodness and mercy of God is another motive for true repentance. We come to Him confident that He will heal and forgive, and that He may relent from the judgment He announced.

i. We don't repent with the idea "God is so mean that if I don't return to Him, He will squash me." Instead the idea is "God is so **gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness** that He will spare me from what I deserve if turn back to Him." Ultimately, it is His goodness that leads us to repentance (Rom_2:4).

d. **Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room:** In addition to the same pattern of repentance he presented in Joe_1:14, Joel adds the ideas relevant to the **bridegroom** and the **bride**. The idea with these images is that in a time of repentance God's people cannot carry on "as usual." Usually the **bridegroom** belongs in **his chamber** and the **bride** belongs in **her dressing room**, but not now - it is time to repent. True repentance does not carry on with business as usual.

e. **Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar:** Leaders among God's people must especially lead in repentance. They can't come with the attitude that "the people" must repent. They must regard themselves as the people and the people as themselves and lead in repentance.

f. **Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach:** Joel puts a rich prayer of repentance into the mouths of God's priests. It as if the

priests should pray with the thought, “How can we persuade God to have mercy on us?”

i. **Spare:** This implies that God’s people deserve judgment, but they plead for mercy.

ii. **Your people:** This reminds God that they belong to Him, and provides another motivation for mercy.

iii. **Do not give Your heritage to reproach:** This tells God that mercy unto His people will bring Him glory among the nations and that judgment may bring His name into discredit.

2. (Joe_2:18-20) God promises to defend His repentant people against the mighty army.

Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. The LORD will answer and say to His people, “Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations. But I will remove far from you the northern *army*, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea; his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things.”

a. **Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people:** Judah could know that when God’s people sincerely repent, He notices from heaven. His zeal and pity are then turned *for* His people.

b. **I will send you grain and new wine and oil . . . I will remove far from you the northern army:** God promised to restore material prosperity to a repentant Judah, and to defeat the mighty army from the north. Because this mighty army had **done monstrous things**, God would turn the attention of His judgment away from His people and now against this mighty army.

3. (Joe_2:21-27) Confidence in God’s promise of restoration.

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;

for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you; the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame."

a. **Be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things!** Joel looks forward to the restoration that God has promised, and he tells Judah to look forward in faith, and to praise God for the restoration He promises - even before they see it with their own eyes.

b. **The open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit:** With the eye of faith, Joel can already see it happening. All around him are the lush, fruitful pastures and trees that God has restored after the destruction of the locusts.

c. **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 (Deu_11:14, Hos_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 Heb_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”

iii. Many researchers - and many within these modern groups today - believe that many modern “revival” movements are really just a continuation of the Latter Rain movement. Movements such as “Joel’s Army,” the Manifest Sons of God, the Dominion Movement, the Kansas City Prophets, the Toronto Blessing, the Pensacola Revival are connected in some way to the Latter Rain movement. For example, Paul Cain - later to re-emerge as head of the Kansas City Prophets in 1989 - traveled with William Branham and called him “the greatest prophet that ever lived.”

d. **I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten:** God promises to **restore** what was taken away in chastisement. When the locusts did their work, it looked complete and final, but God promises that He can even restore **the years that the swarming locusts has eaten.**

i. "It will strike you at once that the locusts did not eat the years: the locusts ate the fruits of the years' labor, the harvests of the fields; so that the meaning of the restoration of the years must be the restoration of those fruits and of those harvests which the locusts consumed. You cannot have back your time; but there is a strange and wonderful way in which God can give back to you the wasted blessings, the unripened fruits of years over which you mourned. The fruits of wasted years may yet be yours." (Spurgeon)

4. (Joe_2:28-32) The ultimate restoration and the ultimate day of the LORD.

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls."

a. **It shall come to pass afterward:** After the restoration Joel spoke of previously in the chapter, there will come a time of ultimate restoration and blessing. This latter time will be marked by an outpouring of God's **Spirit on all**

flesh - not only selected men at selected times for selected duties.

i. The Old Testament has a rich record of the work of the Spirit, but He was not poured out **on all flesh** under the Old Covenant. Instead, certain men were filled with the Spirit at certain times and only for certain duties. It was rather selective:

- Joseph was filled with the Spirit of God (Gen_41:38)
- The craftsmen who built the tabernacle were filled with the Spirit of God (Exo_31:3) · Joshua was filled with the Spirit of God (Num_27:18)
- The judge Othniel was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg_3:10)
- The judge Gideon was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg_6:34)
- The judge Jephthah was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg_11:29)
- The judge Samson was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg_13:5; Jdg_14:6; Jdg_14:19; Jdg_15:14) · Saul was filled with the Spirit of God (1Sa_10:9-10)
- David was filled with the Spirit of God (1Sa_16:13)

ii. Here, Joel looks forward to the glorious New Covenant, when the Spirit of God would be poured out **on all flesh**. Why, even **your sons and daughters, your old men**, and **your young men** would be filled with the Spirit of God.

iii. This was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples gathered in the upper room, waiting in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised would come (Act_1:4-5). When the outpouring of the Spirit came, the 120 followers of Jesus were all filled with the Spirit and began to praise God in other tongues.

Jerusalem was crowded at that time, because of the feast of Pentecost - so a crowd quickly gathered because of the commotion. Those who heard the disciples praise God in these miraculous languages began to mock them, claiming they were drunk. Peter stood up and boldly set the record

straight: the disciples were not drunk at all, but this was a fulfillment of Joel's great prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit.

iv. At first, any Jew would scoff at the idea of 120 followers of a crucified man being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Based on their understanding of the Old Testament they would think, "These 120 people are not kings or prophets or priests; God only pours out His Spirit on special people for special duties. These are common folk, and God doesn't pour out His Spirit on them." Peter uses the prophecy of Joel to show them that things are different now, just as God said they would be. Now, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all who believe and receive, even the common folk. Now God offered a New Covenant relationship, and part of the New Covenant was the outpouring of the Spirit for all who receive in faith.

v. Peter's sermon of the Day of Pentecost also shows us that there is *never* any disparity between the work of the Spirit and the work of the Word. When Peter was filled with the Spirit of God in the midst of miraculous signs and wonders as he had never experience before, what did he do? He said, "Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Joel."

He had a Bible study, one that both *taught the 120 disciples* (they better understood their experience according to the Scriptures) and *called the lost* to salvation.

vi. We also notice that Peter's application was exactly the same as the application made by the Prophet Joel: *repent*.

Joel said, "*Now, therefore,*" says the LORD, "*Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.*" *So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God* (Joe_2:12-13) Peter said, *Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* (Act_2:38)

b. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants: In this latter time, all the servants of the

LORD will be filled with His Spirit in this unique and powerful way. Under the New Covenant, every believer can receive the full measure of the Spirit, and be used in a special and wonderful way.

i. Sometimes the common churchgoer simply wants a building to worship in, a nice service that isn't too offensive, and a good sermon - after that he thinks, *leave me alone*. That isn't New Covenant Christianity, which sees the work of the ministry as belonging to the people, not the "clergy."

ii. Some people have taken this idea and run too far with it saying, "Therefore we don't need ministers or clergy. We believe in the priesthood of all believers, so there is no room for offices of any kind in the church." This ignores the clear teaching of Scripture, which says that the work of the ministry belongs to all the people of God, but the work of equipping the saints belongs to God-appointed offices and ministries (Eph_4:7-16). It is *because* the ministry belongs to all Christians that God has appointed offices and ministries to equip every saint to fulfill their role.

Act_2:42-47 describes a wonderful fulfillment of this ideal.

c. **I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:** This time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God will culminate with cataclysmic signs in the heavens and **the great and awesome day of the LORD**.

i. On the Day of Pentecost, the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, but not consummated. Peter rightly saw that this was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, given freely upon all who believe and receive as was promised in the New Covenant (Eze_11:19; Eze_36:24-28). The prophecy of Joel was also especially appropriate, because the Day of Pentecost ushered in the last days - with history now moving along the edge of the consummation of all things, not rushing towards it as a distant point.

d. **Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved:** This is another glorious promise associated with the time Joel said **shall come to pass afterward**. In this time

of the poured-out Spirit of God, salvation will no longer be a matter of association with national Israel. Instead, **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved** - no matter what nation they come from.

i. This is a broad call - **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. “‘Ah!’ you say, ‘I wish my name was written down in the Bible.’ Would it comfort you at all? If it were written in the Scripture, ‘Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall be saved,’ I am afraid I should not get much comfort out of the promise, for I should go home, and fetch out the London Directory, and see if there was not another person of that name, or very like it.

How much worse would it be for the Smiths and the Browns! No, my brethren, do not ask to see your name in the inspired volume; but be content with what you do see, namely, your character! When the Scripture says, ‘Whosoever,’ you cannot shut yourself out of that.” (Spurgeon)

ii. This is a call to prayer - **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. “You cannot perish praying; no one has ever done so. If you could perish praying, you would be a new wonder in the universe. A praying soul in hell is an utter impossibility. A man calling on God and rejected of God! - the supposition is not to be endured. ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ God himself must lie, he must quit his nature, forfeit his claim to mercy, destroy his character of love, if he were to let a poor sinner call upon his name, and yet refuse to hear him.” (Spurgeon)

iii. This is a call to come to the true God - **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. Coming to a false god, a god of your own imagination will do you no good. The god of your opinion does not exist and cannot save you. You must come to the God of the Bible. “The pity of it is that the most of people in these days worship a god of their own invention. They do not make an image of clay, or of gold, but they construct a deity in their minds according to their own thoughts. They

proudly judge as to what God ought to be, and they will not receive God as he really is. What is this but a god-making as gross as that which is performed by the heathen? What can be more wicked than to attempt to imagine a better god than the one true and living God? As the deity of your fancy has no existence, I would not recommend you to trust in him.” (Spurgeon)

iv. This is a call to come to God intelligently - **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. “Now, by the word ‘name’ we understand the person, the character of the Lord. The more, then, you know about the Lord, and the better you know his name, the more intelligently will you call upon that name. If you know his power, you will call upon that power to help you. If you know his mercy, you will call upon him in his grace to save you. If you know his wisdom, you feel that he knows your difficulties, and can help you through them.” (Spurgeon) v. This is a certain promise - **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. It is a profound mystery why all do not receive this great invitation, but the text itself tells us that only a remnant receives it (**among the remnant whom the LORD calls**). Yet all who do come are certainly saved. “Suppose we, who trust alone in Jesus, should perish, what then? Why, it would be to the everlasting dishonor of the Lord in whom we trusted. We should lose our souls certainly, but he would lose his honor. Think of one of us being able to say in hell, ‘I trusted in the boasted Savior’s aid, and rested myself on God, and yet I am lost.’ Sirs, heaven itself would be darkened, and the crown jewels of God would lose their lustre, if that could once be the case! But it cannot be. If you trust in the Lord God Almighty, he will save you as surely as he is God.” (Spurgeon) (Joe 2:2) It will be⁴ a day of dreadful darkness,⁵

a day of foreboding storm clouds,⁶

like blackness⁷ spread over the mountains.

It is a huge and powerful army⁸ —

there has never been anything like it ever before,

and there will not be anything like it for many generations to come!⁹

(Joe 2:3) Like fire they devour everything in their path;¹⁰

a flame blazes behind them.

The land looks like the Garden of Eden¹¹ before them,

but behind them there is only a desolate wilderness —

for nothing escapes them!¹²

(Joe 2:4) They look like horses;¹³

they charge ahead like war horses.

(Joe 2:5) They sound like¹⁴ chariots rumbling¹⁵ over mountain tops,

like the crackling¹⁶ of blazing fire consuming stubble,

like the noise of¹⁷ a mighty army¹⁸ being drawn up for battle.¹⁹

(Joe 2:6) People²⁰ writhe in fear when they see them.²¹

All of their faces turn pale with fright.²²
(Joe 2:7) They²³ charge²⁴ like warriors;

they scale walls like soldiers.²⁵

Each one proceeds on his course;

they do not alter²⁶ their path.
(Joe 2:8) They do not jostle one another;²⁷

each of them marches straight ahead.²⁸

They burst through²⁹ the city defenses³⁰

and do not break ranks.
(Joe 2:9) They rush into³¹ the city;

they scale³² its walls.

They climb up into the houses;

they go in through the windows like a thief.
(Joe 2:10) The earth quakes³³ before them;³⁴

the sky reverberates.³⁵

The sun and the moon grow dark;

the stars refuse to shine.³⁶
(Joe 2:11) The voice of the LORD thunders³⁷ as he leads his
army.³⁸

Indeed, his warriors³⁹ are innumerable;⁴⁰

Surely his command is carried out!⁴¹

Yes, the day of the LORD is awesome⁴²

and very terrifying — who can survive⁴³ it?
(Joe 2:12) ***An Appeal for Repentance***

"Yet even now," the LORD says,

"return to me with all your heart —

with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Tear your hearts,⁴⁴

not just your garments!"
(Joe 2:13) Return to the LORD your God,

for he is merciful and compassionate,

slow to anger and boundless in loyal love⁴⁵ — often
relenting from calamitous punishment.⁴⁶
(Joe 2:14) Who knows?

Perhaps he will be compassionate and grant a reprieve,⁴⁷

and leave blessing in his wake⁴⁸ —

a meal offering and a drink offering for you to offer to the
LORD your God!⁴⁹

(Joe 2:15) Blow the trumpet⁵⁰ in Zion.

Announce a holy fast;

proclaim a sacred assembly!
(Joe 2:16) Gather the people;

sanctify an assembly!

Gather the elders;

gather the children and the nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom come out from his bedroom

and the bride from her private quarters.⁵¹

(Joe 2:17) Let the priests, those who serve the LORD, weep

from the vestibule all the way back to the altar.⁵²

Let them say, "Have pity, O LORD, on your people;

please do not turn over your inheritance to be mocked,

to become a proverb⁵³ among the nations.

Why should it be said⁵⁴ among the peoples,

"Where is their God?"

(Joe 2:18) ***The Lord's Response***

Then the LORD became⁵⁵ zealous for his land;

he had compassion on his people.

(Joe 2:19) The LORD responded⁵⁶ to his people,

"Look! I am about to restore your grain⁵⁷

as well as fresh wine and olive oil.

You will be fully satisfied.⁵⁸

I will never again make you an object of mockery among the nations.

(Joe 2:20) I will remove the one from the north⁵⁹ far from you.

I will drive him out to a dry and desolate place.

Those in front will be driven eastward into the Dead Sea,⁶⁰

and those in back westward into the Mediterranean Sea.⁶¹

His stench will rise up as a foul smell."⁶²

Indeed, the LORD⁶³ has accomplished great things.

(Joe 2:21) Do not fear, my land!

Rejoice and be glad,

because the LORD has accomplished great things!
(Joe 2:22) Do not fear, wild animals!⁶⁴

For the pastures of the wilderness are again green with grass.

Indeed, the trees bear their fruit;

the fig tree and the vine yield to their fullest.⁶⁵
(Joe 2:23) Citizens of Zion,⁶⁶ rejoice!

Be glad because of what the LORD your God has done!⁶⁷

For he has given to you the early rains⁶⁸ as vindication.

He has sent⁶⁹ to you the rains —

both the early and the late rains⁷⁰ as formerly.
(Joe 2:24) The threshing floors are full of grain;

the vats overflow with fresh wine and olive oil.
(Joe 2:25) I will make up for the years⁷¹

that the '*arbeh*-locust⁷² consumed your crops⁷³ —

the *yeleq*-locust, the *hasil*-locust, and the *gazam*-locust —
my great army⁷⁴ that I sent against you.

(Joe 2:26) You will have plenty to eat,

and your hunger will be fully satisfied;⁷⁵

you will praise the name of the LORD your God,

who has acted wondrously in your behalf.

My people will never again be put to shame.

(Joe 2:27) You will be convinced that I am in the midst of
Israel.

I am the LORD your God; there is no other.

My people will never again be put to shame.

(Joe 2:28) ***An Outpouring of the Spirit***

(3:1)⁷⁶ After all of this⁷⁷

I will pour out my Spirit⁷⁸ on all kinds of people.⁷⁹

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your elderly will have revelatory dreams;⁸⁰

your young men will see prophetic visions.

(Joe 2:29) Even on male and female servants

I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

(Joe 2:30) I will produce portents both in the sky⁸¹ and on the earth —

blood, fire, and columns of smoke.

(Joe 2:31) The sunlight will be turned to darkness

and the moon to the color of blood,⁸²

before the day of the LORD comes —

that great and terrible day!

(Joe 2:32) It will so happen that

everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered.⁸³

For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem⁸⁴ there will be those who survive,⁸⁵

just as the LORD has promised;

the remnant⁸⁶ will be those whom the LORD will call.⁸⁷

(Joe 3:1) ***The Lord Plans to Judge the Nations***

(4:1)¹ For look! In those² days and at that time

I will return the exiles³ to Judah and Jerusalem.⁴

(Guzik)

Joe 3:1-21

JOEL 3 - JUDGMENT IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

A. A warning to the nations.

1. (Joe_3:1-3) A promise to bring back scattered and mistreated Israel.

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather

all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.”

a. **In those days and at that time:** Joel’s prophecy still concerns the time period connected with *it shall come to pass afterward* mentioned in Joe_2:28. This is the broad period of the Last Days, initiated by the Ascension of Jesus and the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost.

i. Many have the wrong idea of the “last days,” thinking only in terms of the final years or months immediately before the return of Jesus in glory to this earth, or the rapture of the Church. Scripturally, we can think of the last days as an *era*, one that began with the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. Since that time, the Church has not been rushing towards a distant edge that represents the consummation of all things. Instead, at the Day of Pentecost the Church came to the edge - and has run parallel to the brink for some 2,000 years.

b. **When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem:** In a lesser, immediate sense this was fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian exile. In the greater, ultimate sense it will be fulfilled in the end-times regathering of Israel, to the point where an expectant Israel welcomes Jesus saying, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Mat_23:39) and salvation comes to Israel as a whole (Rom_11:26-27).

c. **I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat:** Joel here describes the final gather of the nations in rebellion against God at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev_16:12-16). There is no place in Israel known as the **Valley of Jehosphaphat** but the name

Jehoshaphat means, “The Lord Judges.” It describes God’s place of judgment.

i. “There is no such valley in the land of Judea; and hence the name must be *symbolical*. It signifies the *judgment of God*, or *Jehovah judgeth*.” (Clarke) ii. This is a judgment of **all nations**. Joel was written at a time when a terrible plague of locusts brought the judgment of God upon the people of God. At a time like that, it is easy to think “God, You are dealing harshly with us, but what about the ungodly nations? We may be bad, but they are worse. Don’t you care about them?” God uses Joel 3 to assure Israel that the **nations** will be dealt with.

d. **I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people**: God’s complaint against the nations is that they have mistreated His **people**. Primarily, this has in view the way the nations treat Israel, but also extends to how the nations treat the Church. When God’s people are mistreated, God takes it personally and will avenge it.

i. In the judgment of the nations Jesus described in Mat_25:31-46, the criteria is not faith in Jesus Christ but how the nations have treated the people of Israel - the *brethren* of Jesus. Held on the earth after His return in glory, this judgment determines who is allowed to enter into the Millennial Earth, and who goes straight to judgment.

ii. **They have cast lots for My people**: It is bad enough for man to regard any human life as cheap; it is worse to regard the **people** of God as cheap. God remembers and will repay.

2. (Joe_3:4-8) God warns the nations that He will retaliate against those who have mistreated His people.

“Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; because you have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your

temples My prized possessions. Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders. Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retaliation upon your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the LORD has spoken.”

a. **Will you retaliate against Me?** God virtually challenges the nations to come against Him or His people. He vows to **return your retaliation upon your own head** to those who come against Him or His people.

i. Judgment is about the only aspect of God’s plan of the ages that is plainly logical. The grace and mercy of God is not plainly logical. Salvation by grace through faith is not plainly logical. The high standing and destiny of the believer in Jesus is not plainly logical. Judgment - God simply giving those who reject Him what they deserve - *is plainly logical*. It is as if God says to the wicked, “You rejected the saving logic of heaven, so I will give you the plain logic of earth: you will receive what you deserve before the holy court of My justice.”

b. **I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah:** The nations treated God’s people with contempt, and had no sense of their worth. Therefore, God will repay them with the contempt they put upon His people, vowing to **return your retaliation upon your own head**.

i. Trapp details the horrors that befell the ten Emperors of the Roman Empire that persecuted Christians:

- Nero lost 30,000 of his subjects by pestilence, had his armies utterly defeated in Britain, suffered a revolution in Armenia, and was so hated by the senators of Rome that they forced him to kill himself
- Domitian was butchered by his own soldiers
- Trajan died of a foul disease
- Severus died miserably on a military campaign in Britain

- Maximus was cut in pieces, together with his own son
- Decius died as an exile in a far country
- Valerian was whipped to death by the King of Persia who captured him
- Aurelian was killed by his own soldiers
- Dioclesian poisoned himself
- Maximum hanged himself

ii. “Ye cannot tread upon the least toe in Christ’s mystical body, but the head cries out from heaven, *Why hurtest thou me?*” (Trapp) Paul found this out on the road to Damascus, when Jesus asked him *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?* (Act_9:4)

B. A proclamation to the nations.

1. (Joe_3:9-13) Gathering the nations for a war of judgment. Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up.

Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’” Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.”

a. **Prepare for war!** God challenges the nations to **prepare for war** against Him. They will do this exact thing (Rev_16:12-16), but God will simply laugh at the puny and futile preparations by the nations (Psalms 2).

i. **Beat your plowshares into swords:** If you are going to go into battle against God, you should have every weapon available! You should also practice your best positive thinking: **let the weak say, “I am strong.”**

Nevertheless, the most positive attitude can’t work when man sets himself against His Maker. There was a Broadway

play titled "Your Arms are Too Short to Box with God." This is what the nations don't know, but will learn the hard way.

b. I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations:

Though the nations come against God and His Messiah with every weapon and the most positive frame of mind, it is all for nothing. They will be plucked like a ripe harvest and crushed in judgment.

ii. Psalms 2 beautifully expresses the folly of the nations and the triumph of the LORD: *Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion."*

(Psa_2:1-6)

c. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full: Rev_14:14-20 also uses this image of the winepress of the wrath of God to describe Jesus' judgment on the nations at Armageddon.

2. (Joe_3:14-17) The Day of the LORD in the valley of decision.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. "So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

a. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!

Joel looks out upon the Valley of Jehoshaphat at the Battle of

Armageddon, and sees **multitudes** facing their eternal fate - truly, it is a **valley of decision**, and those who fight against the LORD and His Messiah are in the wrong place in the **valley of decision**, ultimately fulfilled at the Battle of Armageddon.

i. The idea of the “Valley of Decision” has been used in countless evangelistic meetings to show people that *they* stand in the “Valley of Decision,” and must decide for or against Jesus. Joel’s context is exactly the opposite. Man does indeed stand in the **valley of decision**, but it is God who does the deciding, not man. It is a valley of judgment - and we should decide for Jesus right now so we never stand in this **valley of decision**.

b. **The heavens and earth will shake**: Joel goes back to the descriptions of cosmic cataclysm that were mentioned in Joe_2:30-31. In the midst of it all, **the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel**, and He will restore both His people and His city to glory.

3. (Joe_3:18-21) Blessing on God’s people, desolation for the nations.

And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Acacias. “Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

a. **The mountains shall drip with new wine . . . all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water**: After God’s final victory, there is lasting abundance and the days of drought are just a distant memory. Instead, **Egypt shall**

be a desolation, along with the other enemies of the LORD and His people.

i. **A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD:** Ezekiel 47 describes waters flowing **from the house of the LORD** in the time after Jesus' triumphant return, in the Millennium. Zec_14:8 also speaks of a great flow of water from Jerusalem, emptying both into the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

ii. The **Valley of Acacias** (Valley of Shittim) was a place associated with both failure and victory. It is located on the eastern side of the Jordan River, to the north of the Dead Sea. It was where the King of Moab sent his young women to the men of Israel to seduce them into idolatry and sexual immorality (Num_25:1-3). It was also the launching place for the armies of Israel when they set out against Jericho and Canaan in the days of Joshua (Jos_2:1 and Jos_3:1). When water **from the house of the LORD** flows down to **the valley of Acacias**, then God's grace and provision covers the past - every sin, every victory is covered over by Him.

b. **But Judah shall abide forever . . . for the LORD dwells in Zion:** God will show mercy to His people, and grant them forgiveness. This prophecy of Joel, which began with the desperate plague of locusts, ends with a promise of restoration and redemption.

i. "This is the last promise, but not the least. It referreth, saith Danaeus, to Christ taking our flesh, by which he dwelt among us being God manifest in the flesh . . . since he dwelleth with his Church for ever, as it is in the precedent verse, and maketh her a true Jehovah Shammah, as she is called Eze_48:35." (Trapp) ii. "This prophet, who has many things similar to Ezekiel, ends his prophecy in nearly the same way: *Ezekiel* says of the glory of the Church, *Yehovah shammah*, THE LORD IS THERE. *Joel* says, *Yehovah shochen betsiyon*, THE

LORD DWELLETH IN ZION. Both point out the continued indwelling of Christ among his people." (Clarke) (Joe 3:2)

Then I will gather all the nations,
and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.⁵
I will enter into judgment⁶ against them there
concerning my people Israel who are my inheritance,⁷
whom they scattered among the nations.

They partitioned my land,
(Joe 3:3) and they cast lots for my people.

They traded⁸ a boy for a prostitute;
they sold a little girl for wine so they could drink.⁹
(Joe 3:4) Why are you doing these things to me, Tyre and
Sidon?¹⁰

Are you trying to get even with me, land of Philistia?¹¹

I will very quickly repay you for what you have done!¹²
(Joe 3:5) For you took my silver and my gold

and brought my precious valuables to your own palaces.¹³
(Joe 3:6) You sold Judeans and Jerusalemites to the Greeks,

removing them far from their own country.¹⁴
(Joe 3:7) Look! I am rousing them from that place to which
you sold them.

I will repay you for what you have done!¹⁵

(Joe 3:8) I will sell your sons and daughters to¹⁶ the people of Judah.¹⁷

They will sell them to the Sabeans,¹⁸ a nation far away.

Indeed, the LORD has spoken!

(Joe 3:9) ***Judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat***

Proclaim this among the nations:

"Prepare for a holy war!

Call out the warriors!

Let all these fighting men approach and attack!¹⁹

(Joe 3:10) Beat your plowshares²⁰ into swords,

and your pruning hooks²¹ into spears!²²

Let the weak say, 'I too am a warrior!'²³

(Joe 3:11) Lend your aid²⁴ and come,

all you surrounding nations,

and gather yourselves²⁵ to that place."

Bring down, O LORD, your warriors!²⁶

(Joe 3:12) Let the nations be roused and let them go up

to the valley of Jehoshaphat,

for there I will sit in judgment on all the surrounding nations.
(Joe 3:13) Rush forth with²⁷ the sickle, for the harvest is ripe!

Come, stomp the grapes,²⁸ for the winepress is full!

The vats overflow.

Indeed, their evil is great!²⁹
(Joe 3:14) Crowds, great crowds are in the valley of decision,

for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision!³⁰
(Joe 3:15) The sun and moon are darkened;

the stars withhold³¹ their brightness.
(Joe 3:16) The LORD roars from Zion;

from Jerusalem³² his voice bellows out.³³

The heavens³⁴ and the earth shake.

But the LORD is a refuge for his people;

he is a stronghold for the citizens³⁵ of Israel.
(Joe 3:17) ***The Lord's Presence in Zion***

You will be convinced³⁶ that I the LORD am your God,

dwelling on Zion, my holy mountain.

Jerusalem³⁷ will be holy —

conquering armies³⁸ will no longer pass through it.
(Joe 3:18) On that day³⁹ the mountains will drip with sweet wine,⁴⁰

and the hills will flow with milk.⁴¹

All the dry stream beds⁴² of Judah will flow with water.

A spring will flow out from the temple⁴³ of the LORD,

watering the Valley of Acacia Trees.⁴⁴

(Joe 3:19) Egypt will be desolate

and Edom will be a desolate wilderness,

because of the violence they did to the people of Judah,⁴⁵

in whose land they shed innocent blood.

(Joe 3:20) But Judah will reside securely forever,

and Jerusalem will be secure⁴⁶ from one generation to the next.

(Joe 3:21) I will avenge⁴⁷ their blood which I had not previously acquitted.

It is the LORD who dwells in Zion!