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JOEL

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INTRODUCTION:

Joel was a prophet to the nation of Judah, also known as the Southern Kingdom. The author of this prophecy is identified only as "Joel the son of Pethuel." His name contains both the names Jehovah and Elohim, meaning Jehovah is God or Jehovah is my God. Aside from this, nothing is known about him. The locust plague was only a foretaste of the judgment to come in the Day of the Lord. Joel describes the coming of an army; an unprecedented locust invasion, whose arrival may yet be averted by their wholehearted return to the Lord. The purpose of Joel's prophecy is to turn the nation back to God in preparation for the coming of the great Day of the Lord.

The trumpet was accustomed to sound in Zion, only for religious uses; to call together the congregations for holy meetings, to usher in the beginnings of their months and their solemn days with festival gladness, but here, they were to blow the trumpet and sound the alarm in the holy mountain, warning those that the crisis was at hand, terror was to spread to all the inhabitants of the land, fear and trembling, to repent for the Day of the Lord approached (2:1). Darkness will cover the land, fire before them and behind them, and nothing shall escape them (2:2-3). Their appearance is like that of horses running, like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains, having the appearance of a mighty army moving into battle, and the faces of the people shall be in much pain becoming black (2:4-6). Joel still describe the locusts like mighty men running, climbing the wall like warriors not breaking rank. They shall be invincible and no one shall be able to wound them (2:7-8). ¹Cities, walls, houses and windows will be at their mercy and the entire earth shakes and trembles (2: 9-10). Then the Lord will move forward to meet them. Nothing will be able to withstand His might. Just as the locust army marches under God's control, so will the army of men in the great "*Day of the Lord,*" and no flesh will be able to survive (2: 11). The calamities that come to our lives should awaken us, and remind us that the Lord is in control.

2: 1 2 Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:— Because of the above verse, even now there is still time to turn hearts to the Lord. Not just that, but Joel insists on them coming back with fasting and weeping and mourning; that is, with repentant hearts. God's purpose is to bring restoration and healing to His people. His invitation to repentance is extended in verses 12-13a. They are to Fast now, so that they may be filled later. Weep now, so that they can laugh later. And mourn now, so that they can be comforted later.

2: 1 3 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. "*Rend*" means to rip, tear, split, or shred. However, he

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/the-coming-day-of-the-lord/>
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said rend your heart and not your garments. The customary way for the Jew to show his grief was to tear his outer garment which was an external sign of deep remorse. So, instead of an external ceremonial sign, showing, God wanted inward (internal) repentance of the heart when returning to Him. ²The tearing of the outer garment is useless unless the heart is broken in repentance. This could be compared to people today who carry their Bibles and go to church every time the doors are opened, but never respond to the message they hear. Then this verse goes on to tell what kind of God has brought the plague and what kind of God waits for the proper response of repentance and remorse. He is a God who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, has great kindness, and is repentant of the evil plague which He has to send. He loves His people so much that He will cause them to face their sin, and then will bring them to the place of repentance, confession, and restoration.

2:14 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?— "*Who knows*", leaves the door open because you **don't** know. This was a time to take their chance to see if God will turn devastation into blessing. And then, they might be able to make (leave) a meat or drink offering unto Him for repentance.

2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: 2:16 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. This is a second invitation—Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, and sanctify the congregation. The trumpet signaled the people to come together. To get their act together before it's too late. The people to be assembled together were the elders, children, nursing infants, even the bridegroom and bride who were not supposed to be disturbed during their first year of marriage, not even to go out for war. From oldest to youngest they were to come Why? They are to prepare themselves, set themselves apart unto God; humble their hearts before God; readying themselves to call upon the Lord with a fast. Even the children and nursing infants were not exempt.

2:17 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?— The priests, the ministers of the Lord were to weep between the porch (doorway with a roof) of the temple, and the altar praying mightily. In this prayer they would ask God to spare His heritage people; to not give them over to the reproach (scold, rebuke, and taunt) of the heathen, so that the heathen wouldn't rule over them and say among the people, *Where is your God? (it's like saying, He must be helpless)*. The Jews are indeed God's special treasure and heritage. To Israel He gave His laws, His covenants, the temple and priesthood, a special land, and the promise that they would bless the whole world. Israel was called to bear witness to the other nations that their God was the only true God. The nation had to choose between getting right with God or reproach (robbing God of glory).

2:18 Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Did it have to come to this for the Lord to be

² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/a-call-to-repentance-joel-2/>
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jealous for his land, and pity His people? They knew they would have to return and repent. Why? ³Their land was an heritage from God. God had separated them from the pagans, and revealed Himself to them, had made His people and His land His special heritage. Then, yes, God would be jealous for His land and drive out the invading army. And He would pity His people by delivering them.

2:19 *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:—And God will answer their prayers and say to the people, "Look, I will send you corn, wine, and oil, satisfying the people: and I will not make you a reproach any more among the heathen."*

SYNOPSIS:

2:20-27

*God will remove the locust army and utterly destroy it (2:20). Three assurances are given...

1. to the land (2:21). They will not fear, but rejoice and be glad because God has done great things for it, and whereas it has been completely devastated, it will be completely restored.
2. to the beasts of the field (2:22). God will restore all vegetation so the beasts of the field will have ample food to eat.
3. to the sons (children) of Zion (2:23-27). God makes five specific promises:
 1. He will provide rain for crops (2:23).
 2. He will provide abundant harvests of grain and grapes (2:24).
 3. He will make up for the devastation suffered by the locust plague (2:25).
 4. He will provide abundant food and end the famine (2:26).
 5. And most of all, He will achieve His purpose and cause His people to know that He is in the midst of Israel, even during a locust plague (2:27a), that He is Jehovah their God (2:27b), that there is no other God than He (2:27c), and that He will protect His people and they will never again be put to shame (2:27d).

With these assurances of restoration from the locust plague, the prophet now turns to give attention to his ultimate concern: the day of the Lord (*The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary).

2:28 *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:—* It is this prophecy for which Joel has become most famous in modern days. It must be considered in the light of its context and in the light of its New Testament usage. This passage relates to the immediate restoration following the locust plague. This differentiates the locust plague from the Day of the Lord. The locust plague was preceded by nothing; the Day of the Lord follows the locust plague and will be preceded by the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh. This outpouring of the Spirit is to be universal: your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and their young men shall see visions. This makes it known that God will heal the nation, but, not right away.

³ <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/22329/eVerseID/22329/RTD/barnes>
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2:29 **And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.** The Spirit of God will continue to pour, even upon male and female servants and handmaids. In those days, the outpouring of His Spirit is available, even to the lowliest people in society.

2:30 **And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.** Joel promised that before the Day of the Lord begins, there will be a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by signs in the heavens and on earth; blood, fire, and pillars of smoke will manifest. All of this will be preliminary to the coming of the Day of the Lord.

2:31 **The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.** The planetary elements: the sun is turned to darkness and the moon is turned to blood. They will appear before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

2:32 **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.** Deliverance will be possible by the hand of God before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord; whosoever will have a change of heart; whosoever believes and accepts the outpouring of the Spirit of God will be delivered! God shall send a great moving of His Spirit, and many sinners will turn to the Savior before the awful Day of the Lord is ushered in. He will move upon men to call upon His name, for God desires that all men be saved, not to perish. In this prophecy, God provides now for Judah to be delivered, but it's also a future deliverance. When Joel gives this prophecy, the death of the Messiah had not taken place and the availability of the Holy Spirit won't be fulfilled until the Day of Pentecost (after the death of Jesus). In the words of Peter, Acts 2:14-16— *14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.* Thus God's fulfillment takes place of the outpouring of the holy Spirit. And thus the Day of the Lord is yet to come— (1) the Lord's return, (2) the world as we know it will end, or (3) God will rid the world of evil once and for all. God makes it plain. In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance! We have to have His spiritual power to witness to others in the Day of the Lord.

SUMMARY:

Even now, there is a need for God's merciful love before the Day of the Lord comes. There is still time to return hearts to the Lord with fasting, praying, and mourning. Many times the people would "*rend*" their garments to show deep remorse of their sin when returning to the Lord. But God wants His people to "*rend*" their hearts instead. He didn't want an external ceremonial façade of ripping their clothes. He wants an internal brokenness of their heart that causes change, because the God whom they will serve is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, has great kindness, and repentant of the evil (**2:12-13**).

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In their repentance, this was their time to see if God will turn devastation into blessings and leave something that they could make an offering unto God. As the trumpet blows in Zion, it signaled the people to come into a solemn assembly sanctifying a fast. The priests and ministers of the Lord were to weep and pray for God's heritage people to be spared and not become a reproach or be ruled by the heathen (2:14-17).

When their hearts changed, then God would be jealous for the land and pity His people. And His answer will be that He will send corn, wine, and oil satisfying the people (2:18-19).

⁴God will remove the locust army for the Lord works wonders and does great things. The land which had been devastated will be completely restored and the fruit trees will prosper. Rain will fall to irrigate the parched soil, and the land will once more be productive. The destruction brought by the locusts will be more than matched by the years of plenty ahead. Even more important than this, He will achieve His purpose and cause His people to know that He is in the midst of them and that He is their God (2:20- 27).

Joel promised that before the Day of the Lord begins, there will be a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, upon all flesh, accompanied by signs in the heavens and on earth; blood, fire, and pillars of smoke will manifest. The planetary elements: the sun is turned to darkness and the moon is turned to blood. However, deliverance will be possible for those who call on the name of the Lord before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. *"For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls"* (2:28-32).

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⁴[http://www.family-times.net/commentary/forgiveness-and-restoration/
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html](http://www.family-times.net/commentary/forgiveness-and-restoration/http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html)