

# Joel Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations

## Joel 1

### Joel 1:1-7

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

Some counselors utilize a concept called “tough love”—a love that is strong enough to be tough when needed. Parents show tough love to a child when they refuse to give in to a temper tantrum. Tough love is strong enough to reprove one who needs correction, and it is willing to allow others to suffer the consequences of their foolish actions in the hope that they will learn from their experiences.

God often expresses tough love in the form of divine discipline. Jesus told the church of Laodicea, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent” (Rev 3:19) (**See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metaneo; the noun Repentance = metanoia**). This was also God’s message to His people through the prophet Joel.

We do not know when the book of Joel was written. The lack of any reference to Judah’s king has prompted some scholars to suggest that it was written during the time when Joash, the boy king, ruled Judah (835-739 B.C., see 2Ki 11–12). Other scholars think that the book was written some time after the Babylonian exile. All that is known of the book’s author is that his name was Joel and that he was the son of Pethuel (Joel 1:1).

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - Can you think of the events in your life that God has used to get your attention? Perhaps He has used the consequences of your own actions to help you see the folly of making sinful choices. Or He may have used circumstances that are beyond your control to show you your need for His power and grace. Such experiences are not for your benefit alone. Like the tough love experienced by those in Joel’s day, these lessons can benefit others. Ask some trusted friends to share some things God has used to get their attention and the lessons they learned as a result. Share your story and thank God together for His tough love.

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### Joel 1:3

#### Morning and Evening

#### C H Spurgeon

“Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.” — Joel 1:3

In this simple way, by God’s grace, a living testimony for truth is always to be kept alive in the land—the beloved of the Lord are to hand down their witness for the gospel, and the covenant to their heirs, and these again to their next descendants. This is our first duty, we are to begin at the family hearth: he is a bad preacher who does not commence his ministry at home. The heathen are to be sought by all means, and the highways and hedges are to be searched, but home has a prior claim, and woe unto those who reverse the order of the Lord’s arrangements. To teach our children is a personal duty; we cannot delegate it to Sunday school teachers, or other friendly aids; these can assist us, but cannot deliver us from the sacred obligation; proxies and sponsors are wicked devices in this case: mothers and fathers must, like Abraham, command their households in the fear of God, and talk with their offspring concerning the wondrous works of the Most High. Parental teaching is a natural duty—who so fit to look to the child’s well-being as those who are the authors of his actual being? To neglect the instruction of our offspring is worse than brutish. Family religion is necessary for the nation, for the family itself, and for the church of God. By a thousand plots Popery is covertly advancing in our land, and one of the most effectual means for resisting its inroads is left almost neglected, namely, the instruction of children in the faith. Would that parents would awaken to a sense of the importance of this matter. It is a pleasant duty to talk of Jesus to our sons and daughters, and the more so because it has often proved to be an accepted work, for God has saved the children through the parents’ prayers and admonitions. May every house into which this volume shall come honour the Lord and receive his smile.

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**Joel 1 - Story** - When I was 5 years old standing in my backyard in Whittier it happened...A large grasshopper landed on my left shoulder! He was the size of a small Mack truck. He had armor plating all over his body. He was huge, mean, & he was going to eat me alive. I hate them still to this day. I've grabbed a rattle snake by his tail once(explain) but I don't do grasshoppers! An old Arabian proverb claims(picture this), "In the locust, slight as it is, is the nature of 10 of the larger animals - the face of a horse, the eyes of an elephant, " the neck of a bull, the horns of a deer, the chest of a lion, the belly of a scorpion, the wings of an eagle, the thighs of a camel, the feet of an ostrich, the tail of a serpent." Ok, Joel's only dealing with their cousin, the locusts here, & not a black Momba,

or a spitting cobra, or the 2 step snake! But were not talking about 1 locust in a jar but billions swarming & devouring! Joel is writing in-between invasions: Between a locust plague recently past & future judgments of a military invasion, & ultimately "The Day of the Lord." ([Brian Bell - Joel 1](#))

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## Joel 1 - When Your Work Is Done

Read: Psalm 78:1-8

We will [tell] to the generation to come the praises of the Lord. —Psalm 78:4

The heritage of Christian workers never ends, though their work sometimes must.

I thought of this recently after hearing of an elderly woman who no longer feels useful. Despite her years of service as a Sunday school teacher (for which she is remembered fondly), as well as the spiritual influence she has already had on her children and grandchildren, she feels as if she isn't helpful anymore. But it's not true.

The Bible reminds us that God's people are to pass along to the next generation the stories of God and His people. In Joel 1, for example, the inhabitants of Judah were told to convey a story about locusts to their children. Because the story had prophetic implications, it was an important part of the heritage of the people and thus it had to be passed on. In our reading for today, Psalm 78, the message is similar. The older Israelites were to tell the young people the story of God's work in Israel's past.

Today we have a message of salvation through Jesus and an opportunity to demonstrate a life of devotion to God. If you have passed the gospel to the next generation, your impact lingers. Even when your work is done, it keeps going. Your influence will never die. By Dave Branon

I love to tell the story,  
It did so much for me;  
And that is just the reason  
I tell it now to thee. —Hankey

Telling what Christ has done for us leaves signposts for those who follow.

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## Joel 1:8-12

### TODAY IN THE WORD

Godly sorrow brings repentance (**See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia**) that leads to salvation and leaves no regret. - 2 Corinthians 7:10

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the British painter and poet, was so desolate when his wife committed suicide after only two years of marriage that he vowed to bury the poems he had written for her. He placed the book in the coffin, wrapped in the tresses of her long hair. But after a few years Rossetti regretted his decision. He believed that the poems were some of the best he had ever written. It seemed senseless to leave them buried. After a lengthy court battle Rossetti won the legal right to open the grave and recover the book.

Rossetti's change of heart is similar to the way some people approach repentance. They may resolve to make changes or take action. But when the initial discomfort of their guilt dies down, they may have second thoughts and regret their decision. Others would prefer to avoid the discomfort of repentance altogether. They prefer a painless faith without the anguish of repentance. God, however, values repentance. One reason He allowed the people of Joel's day to experience the devastation of the locust plagues was to bring them to a point of genuine grief over their sins (Joel 1:8). The resulting cessation of grain and drink offerings served as a painful reminder of the way their sins had hindered their fellowship with God (cf. Nu 29:39). These were hard measures designed to shatter their complacency. God intended for His people to feel remorse for their sin. The Hebrew term that is translated "despair" in Joel 1:11 might also be translated "be ashamed." But this was not His only purpose. He did not merely hope that these experiences would make people feel badly about their sins. He also wanted them to "wail" or lament (Joel 1:11). True repentance expresses sorrow for sin.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - Can you think of a time when you felt sorrow for sin? How did you respond to the sense of guilt and shame that you experienced? Not all sorrow for sin is true repentance. Genuine repentance may be painful, but it will enable you to see your need for the forgiveness that only Christ can offer. It is not too late to express your repentance for sin and to ask for God's help in making the necessary changes in your life. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9).

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## Joel 1:13-15

### TODAY IN THE WORD

Just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ. - Ro 5:21

When Arthur Andersen auditing firm was indicted for destroying documents related to a Federal investigation of one of its clients, some of the firm's employees staged a public protest. One employee even wrote to the President of the United States, complaining that the indictment was unfair because of what it implied about the thousands of honest employees who worked for the company. "They are casting doubt on our honesty and our integrity," he wrote. Some of the people of Joel's day would identify with this complaint. They too may have wondered whether it was fair for many to suffer for the sins of a few.

The plague of locusts that had so devastated Israel's crops carried an important lesson. Sin is not just an individual matter—it is a corporate one as well. The proper response was for God's people to take responsibility for the sins of their nation and seek God's forgiveness. Speaking through the prophet, the Lord called for Israel's national and religious leaders to publicly express their grief for their sin in a "holy fast" and a "sacred assembly" (Joel 1:14). The priests were instructed to take the lead and summon both the elders and the people to the sanctuary in order to fast and cry out to God for deliverance.

The Bible supports the idea of corporate guilt. Israel's defeat at Ai is a good example (see Josh 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Only one man violated God's command not to take any of the plunder from the defeat of Jericho, yet the Lord spoke in plural terms when He apportioned the blame (Josh 7:1). Only one man had sinned, yet both the guilt and its consequences were shared.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - Just as in Joel's day, one way that God's people can express their grief over sin is through fasting. Fasting does not remove guilt—only God's grace could do that for them. But it is a way to express repentance (**See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia**). If your physical health permits, why not skip a meal and spend that time confessing sin to the Father? Pray for yourself, your church, and your nation—God is pleased by our recognition of our corporate responsibility and our heartfelt repentance. When you are finished, thank God for His grace and mercy.

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### Drawn by Disaster

Lord, help us! Joel 1:19NLT

Today's Scripture & Insight: Joel 1:1–7, 19–20

In 1717, a devastating storm raged for days, leading to widespread flooding in northern Europe. Thousands of people lost their lives in the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark. History reveals an interesting and customary—for that time—response by at least one local government. The provincial authorities of the Dutch city of Groningen called for a "prayer day" in response to the disaster. A historian reports that the citizens gathered in churches and "listened to sermons, sang psalms, and prayed for hours."

The prophet Joel describes an overwhelming disaster faced by the people of Judah that also led to prayer. A massive swarm of locusts had covered the land and "laid waste [its] vines and ruined [its] fig trees" (Joel 1:7). As he and his people reeled from the devastation, Joel prayed, "Lord, help us!" (1:19 nlt). Directly and indirectly, both the people of northern Europe and Judah experienced disasters that originated with the effects of sin and this fallen world (Genesis 3:17–19; Romans 8:20–22). But they also found that these times led them to call out to God and seek Him in prayer (Joel 1:19). And God said, "Even now . . . return to me with all your heart" (2:12).

When we face difficulties and disaster, may we turn to God—perhaps in anguish, perhaps in repentance. "Compassionate" and "abounding in love" (v. 13), He draws us to Himself—providing the comfort and help we need. By: Tom Felten

Why do people often turn to God when they face disaster? How can He use difficult times to draw us to Himself?

Heavenly Father, in the face of difficulty, help me to call out to You and find the hope You alone can provide.

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## Joel 1:14

### F B Meyer

#### Our Daily Homily

Joel 1:14 Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, and cry unto the Lord. (r.v., marg.)

It was a terrible invasion. The locusts had lighted down upon the land of Israel; so that the seeds rotted under the clods; garners

were desolate; the barns were broken down. Despair took hold of the husbandman; and the herds and flocks panted out their anguish. At this juncture the prophet called for a national fast.

Whenever our life is visited by special trials and perplexities, we should withdraw ourselves from common pursuits, and lay bare our heart-secrets, so that we may learn the cause of God's controversy with us. There is a reason and a needs-be; because He does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men.

From time to time a call for prayer has issued from the hearts of men closest in touch with heaven. In the middle of the eighteenth century Jonathan Edwards issued such an appeal; and this led to that union of prayer, which played so significant a part in the origination of the great missionary societies. It was notably the effect of that appeal on Sutcliffe, Rylands, Fuller, and Carey, that led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society at the close of the eighteenth century.

It may be that a wave of prayer is again about to break over the Church. There are many signs of it. We hear Christian people saying on all hands that they want to get back to God; and surely it would be one of the most significant signs of the unity of the Church and the power of the Holy Spirit, if such a prayer wave were to lift us all on to a new level of intercession for the Church of God and the world around us. We need not wait for the Church to appoint.

### **Joel 1:15 - Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand.**

Joel was, a prophet to Judah. His message, as found in this book, seems to be one; rather than the notes of a long period of ministry as in the case of Hosea to Israel. The occasion of its delivery was that of the desolation of the land by a locust plague. In the beginning of this chapter, we have his description of that desolation, and from it we learn how terrible it was. It was an hour in which men would be likely to brood upon the calamity, moved very largely by pity for themselves. Then the prophet spoke, and his word interpreted the, situation, and called men to recognize the real meaning of the calamities in the midst of which they were living. This was the Day of Jehovah, which meant that it was the Day of Divine government and activity. The coming of the locusts was no accident. They came in ranks, in order; and they wrought the will of God. Therefore the prophet called the priests and the people to humiliation. Here then is the first note of this prophecy. The burden of Joel from first to last was that of the Day of Jehovah, that is, the fact of the Divine government of human affairs; and his first application of that burden was that of calling the people to a recognition of the fact that the Day of Jehovah • was then present, it was at hand: that is, it was near, not in the sense of approaching, but rather in the sense of actual and immediate activity. There is more to say—as we shall see—but let this first fact be carefully noted. The Day of Jehovah is here and now. He is reigning today. The calamities through which men pass, are all under His control. Instead of mourning over sorrow, men should mourn over sin, and cry unto Jehovah. - G Campbell Morgan

### **Joel 2.1 The Day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand.—**

In these words we have the same fundamental idea, but stated with a variation in method. Having interpreted the locust plague, by declaring that the Day of Jehovah was at hand, the prophet now said: "The Day of Jehovah cometh, for it is nigh at hand." In that sentence the word "for" has the force of "because." The truth emphasized now was not so much that of the actuality of the Divine government, as that of its continuity. Joel declared that the Day of Jehovah was not over. There were still other experiences before them of the Divine judgment. Under the figure of the locust plague, he described the imminent invasion of a foe which would bring far more terrible desolations to the people. Therefore again he called the nation to repentance, and declared the way by which they might change the very character of the Divine government into that of mercy, and healing, and restoration. Here again is a matter for our careful attention. The Day of Jehovah is not only present; it is always coming. When some great activity of God has ended, His government has not ceased. He proceeds upon His way without intermission. If by one manifestation of His power and majesty, men do not learn the lessons He would teach, then they have not escaped from Him. By yet other means, more terrible than those already experienced, He will make Himself known. This is the story of humanity; and so it will continue until "the great and terrible Day of Jehovah come," the day of the final putting forth of His judgment of evil in order to the establishment of His Kingdom upon earth according to the grace of His heart.- G Campbell Morgan

### **Joel 3.14 The day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.**

Once again we have the same burden, but in its final application. The prophet having interpreted the locust plague and foretold a further activity of God in government, was lifted up, and borne along far beyond his own immediate times. That movement began in the previous chapter, at verse 28, with the words, "And it shall come to pass after-ward." That afterward carried his vision forward to the age of the Spirit which commenced on the day of Pentecost. Two verses only deal with that age (28 and 29). He then told of the signs which would indicate the ending of that age, and the ushering in of another which he described as "the great and terrible day of Jehovah." The final movement in his message has to do with that ultimate Day of Jehovah, the day of decision. In that day, Jehovah will restore Judah and Jerusalem, find His lost people Israel, deal with the nations through the processes of war, make Zion the centre of His earthly Kingdom, and Israel as a complete nation the instrument of His government. Thus to Joel was given the plan of the ages. He saw the near, the imminent, and the ultimate; and he saw that the Day of Jehovah was present, persistent, powerful, to the complete realization of Divine purpose. It was a great vision, and our secret of confidence is found in walking in its light. We live

in the unmeasured age of the Spirit. It has lasted over nineteen hundred years. We know not when it will end; but we do know that beyond it is "the great and terrible day of Jehovah"; and therefore we are sure of the ultimate realization of all His purposes for men.-  
G Campbell Morgan

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## Joel 1:16-20

### TODAY IN THE WORD

God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. - Hebrews 12:10b

A mother was working in the kitchen when she heard the sound of whimpering on the back porch. When she opened the door, she saw her small son sitting on the steps nursing a bruised finger and crying. He and a friend had been loading rocks in a basket when one of the rocks had landed on his hand. "Why didn't you tell me you were hurt?" his mother asked. The boy sheepishly replied that he had been afraid to come to her. "Afraid?" she said in amazement. "Why would you be afraid?" "I thought you might be angry," the boy explained. The mother bandaged her son's finger and as she hugged him she said, "You never have to be afraid to come to us when you are hurt."

The consequences of Israel's disobedience in Joel's day had been painful for both man and beast. A combination of locusts and drought had destroyed the crops. Men and animals alike were suffering. What is more, the shortage of food had interrupted the cycle of temple sacrifices and festivals (Joel 1:16). The pitiful lowing of hungry cattle and the bleating of starving sheep mirrored the anguished cries of God's people (Joel 1:18). As Joel watched wild fires consume land and crops, he added his voice to this chorus of suffering (Joel 1:19). This was God's intention. His design was that Israel's suffering would make them aware of their own sin and would instill in them a longing for restoration. These sufferings prompted God's creation to "pant" or long after God (Joel 1:20). It could only be hoped that His people would be as wise as the animals they tended.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - How have you responded to the difficult circumstances in your life? Would you say that they have drawn you closer to God, or are you in danger of being driven away from Him? Take time to examine the difficulties you face. How has God been using them to teach you more about His faithfulness and forgiveness? While not every problem you meet may be a case of divine discipline, you can have confidence that God is lovingly working through the events that come your way to produce righteousness and peace in your life.

## Joel 2

God's judgment is a waiting, wise judgment. It is never at the mercy of an irrational temper, impulsiveness, or misinformation. It always responds at exactly the right time & in exactly the right measure. And when His people repent, God's judgment steps aside to let His mercy & grace flow! - Chuck Swindoll

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## Joel 2:1-11

### TODAY IN THE WORD

Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand. - Joel 2:1b

When a case is examined in a courtroom, not everyone arrives with the same agenda. The prosecutor hopes to make a case to convict the defendant. The accused, if innocent, looks for vindication. The defendant who is guilty may look for mercy. The judge, on the other hand, should be interested only in seeing that justice is done. Unfortunately, in human affairs this doesn't describe every judge. The Persian ruler Cambyses II, the son of Cyrus the Great, discovered that a judge in his kingdom was notoriously corrupt. He had the man flayed alive and then ordered that his skin be used to cover the seat upon which his successors would render their decisions. Though not every unjust judge will receive rebuke here on earth--certainly not to the extent exercised by Cambyses II--they will answer to the justice of God.

The Old Testament phrase "Day of the Lord" refers to a time when God will judge the nations. God's judgment is always just, and for this reason the prophet Joel warned that the Day of the Lord would be "a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness" (Joel 2:2). Just as the locust plague in Joel's day blotted out the light of the sun, the future day of the Lord would be a day of disaster for sinners. Other prophets describe this as a time when men's hearts will melt with fear and sinners will be judged (Is 13:6, 7, 8, 9). In particular, they predict that it will be a time when the Gentile nations will be called to account (Ezek 30:3; Obadiah 1:15). The devastation and darkness of the locust plague of Joel's day brought to mind cosmic disturbances that would accompany the coming Day of the Lord. They compelled the prophet to make this observation: "The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can

endure it?" The implied answer: "Nobody!"

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - If the Day of the Lord were to come today, how would you fare? Only those who have been declared righteous by faith in Christ will be able to endure that day.

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### **The Gift of Repentance**

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate. Joel 2:13

Today's Scripture & Insight: Joel 2:12–14

"No! I didn't do it!" Jane heard her teenage son's denial with a sinking heart, for she knew he wasn't telling the truth. She breathed a prayer asking God for help before asking Simon again what happened. He continued to deny he was lying, until finally she threw her hands up in exasperation. Saying she needed a time out, she began to walk away when she felt a hand on her shoulder and heard his apology. He responded to the convicting of the Holy Spirit, and repented.

In the Old Testament book of Joel, God called His people to true repentance for their sins as He welcomed them to return to Him wholeheartedly (2:12). God didn't seek outward acts of remorse, but rather that they would soften their hard attitudes: "Rend your heart and not your garments." Joel reminded the Israelites that God is "gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love" (v. 13).

We might find confessing our wrongdoing difficult, for in our pride we don't want to admit our sins. Perhaps we've fudged the truth, and we justify our actions by saying it was only "a little white lie." But when we heed God's gentle yet firm prompting to repent, He'll forgive us and cleanse us from all our sins (1 John 1:9). We can be free of guilt and shame, knowing we're forgiven. By: Amy Boucher Pye ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How did you feel when you told a "little white lie?" How did the realization of what you did bring conviction and ultimately repentance?

Jesus, You died on the cross so I'd be able to live in harmony with You and the Father. May I accept Your gift of love as I speak truthfully.

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### **Joel 2:8**

#### **Morning and Evening**

#### **C H Spurgeon**

"Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path." — Joel 2:8

Locusts always keep their rank, and although their number is legion, they do not crowd upon each other, so as to throw their columns into confusion. This remarkable fact in natural history shows how thoroughly the Lord has infused the spirit of order into his universe, since the smallest animate creatures are as much controlled by it as are the rolling spheres or the seraphic messengers. It would be wise for believers to be ruled by the same influence in all their spiritual life. In their Christian graces no one virtue should usurp the sphere of another, or eat out the vitals of the rest for its own support. Affection must not smother honesty, courage must not elbow weakness out of the field, modesty must not jostle energy, and patience must not slaughter resolution. So also with our duties, one must not interfere with another; public usefulness must not injure private piety; church work must not push family worship into a corner. It is ill to offer God one duty stained with the blood of another. Each thing is beautiful in its season, but not otherwise. It was to the Pharisee that Jesus said, "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." The same rule applies to our personal position, we must take care to know our place, take it, and keep to it. We must minister as the Spirit has given us ability, and not intrude upon our fellow servant's domain. Our Lord Jesus taught us not to covet the high places, but to be willing to be the least among the brethren. Far from us be an envious, ambitious spirit, let us feel the force of the Master's command, and do as he bids us, keeping rank with the rest of the host. To-night let us see whether we are keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, and let our prayer be that, in all the churches of the Lord Jesus, peace and order may prevail.

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### **Joel 2:11**

#### **Morning and Evening**

#### **C H Spurgeon**

"His camp is very great." — Joel 2:11

Consider, my soul, the mightiness of the Lord who is thy glory and defence. He is a man of war, Jehovah is his name. All the forces of heaven are at his beck, legions wait at his door, cherubim and seraphim;, watchers and holy ones, principalities and powers, are all attentive to his will. If our eyes were not blinded by the ophthalmia of the flesh, we should see horses of fire and chariots of fire round about the Lord's beloved. The powers of nature are all subject to the absolute control of the Creator: stormy wind and tempest, lightning and rain, and snow, and hail, and the soft dews and cheering sunshine, come and go at his decree. The bands of Orion he looseth, and bindeth the sweet influences of the Pleiades. Earth, sea, and air, and the places under the earth, are the barracks for Jehovah's great armies; space is his camping ground, light is his banner, and flame is his sword. When he goeth forth to war, famine ravages the land, pestilence smites the nations, hurricane sweeps the sea, tornado shakes the mountains, and earthquake makes the solid world to tremble. As for animate creatures, they all own his dominion, and from the great fish which swallowed the prophet, down to "all manner of flies," which plagued the field of Zoan, all are his servants, and like the palmer-worm, the caterpillar, and the cankerworm, are squadrons of his great army, for his camp is very great. My soul, see to it that thou be at peace with this mighty King, yea, more, be sure to enlist under his banner, for to war against him is madness, and to serve him is glory. Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, is ready to receive recruits for the army of the Lord: if I am not already enlisted let me go to him ere I sleep, and beg to be accepted through his merits; and if I be already, as I hope I am, a soldier of the cross, let me be of good courage; for the enemy is powerless compared with my Lord, whose camp is very great.

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### **Joel 2:12-17 Warning Lights**

"Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." —Joel 2:12

I didn't think that the hesitation in my car engine and that little yellow "check engine" light on my dashboard really needed my immediate attention. I sang it away, saying that I would get to it tomorrow. However, the next morning when I turned the key to start my car, it wouldn't start. My first reaction was frustration, knowing that this would mean money, time, and inconvenience. My second thought was more of a resolution: I need to pay attention to warning lights that are trying to get my attention—they can mean something is wrong.

In Joel 2:12-17, we read that God used the prophet Joel to encourage His people to pay attention to the warning light on their spiritual dashboard. Prosperity had caused them to become complacent and negligent in their commitment to the Lord. Their faith had degenerated into empty formalism and their lives into moral bankruptcy. So God sent a locust plague to ruin crops in order to get His people's attention, causing them to change their behavior and turn to Him with their whole heart.

What warning lights are flashing in your life? What needs to be tuned up or repaired through confession and repentance? By Marvin Williams

God's love is not some fuzzy thing  
That lets us do what we think best;  
It guides and warns, and shows the way,  
And always puts us to the test. —D. De Haan

Conviction is God's warning light.

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### **Joel 2:12-17 Rend Your Heart**

#### **Our Daily Bread**

So rend your heart, and not your garments (Joel 2:13).

The Baouli people of West Africa describe repentance this way: "It hurts so much I want to quit it."

Genuine repentance (See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia) hurts our pride and wounds our ego. But it's a necessary and healing hurt.

John Calvin said,

"Let everyone search himself and he will find that he labors under this evil—that he would rather rend his garment than his heart." Calvin was thinking of the time God brought His people Israel to repentance by sending a vast army of locusts to invade the land. The insects consumed all vegetation and stripped fruit trees and gardens bare. Man and animals languished under the effects of this widespread devastation. The prophet Joel seized the occasion to call Israel to repentance, to "rend your heart, and not your garments."

According to the record, they heeded his warning and turned from their sin (Joel 3:18, 19).

Sometimes we find ourselves hemmed in by economic or domestic pressures. And sometimes accidents or natural tragedies disrupt our lives. Through these events we recognize our need for God. It's as if He is saying, "Examine your life and conduct. Are you walking with Me, obeying My commands, putting Me first?"

God pleads with us to "rend our heart" when we sin so He can relieve our pain and show Himself as a gracious God, ready to forgive, slow to anger, and full of mercy. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### **Repentance is sorrow for the deed, not for being caught!**

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#### **Joel 2:12-17**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. - Joel 2:13

A businessman whose unethical practices were widely known once told Mark Twain of the pilgrimage he hoped to make some day. "Before I die," he said, "I will climb Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud at the top." Twain was not impressed. "I have a better idea" he retorted. "You could stay at home in Boston and keep them."

Religious observances like fasting can have great value. But they were never meant to serve as a substitute for genuine repentance (See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia). In Joel's day God's people engaged in religious rituals like fasting and tearing their garments. The problem with these efforts was that they were not performed with a repentant heart (Joel 2:12). As far as God was concerned, the outward form of such rituals was not nearly as important as the attitude of the heart. He challenged them saying, "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (Joel 2:13). He also reminded them of the description of His compassion that He gave to Moses after Israel had sinned with the golden calf (Ex. 34:6, 7). This description underscored the folly of their mechanical approach to worship.

True repentance is not a matter of perfunctory observance of certain rituals but is grounded in relationship. Those who turn to God in repentance do not base their appeal for forgiveness on their own performance but upon God's character. In Joel 2:13 the prophet gives them five reasons for "rending their hearts": God's grace, compassion, patience, love, and mercy. Based upon this, the prophet called upon the priests to declare a sacred assembly in the hope that sincere repentance would result in restoration. This was to be a universal expression of grief over sin. Although public and formal, it was also to be sincere (Joel 2:12).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - We are to approach God with the confidence that He sees what is done in secret and knows all that we truly need. As you approach God in prayer today, ask yourself whether you are merely going through the motions. Has your devotional life become too mechanical? Perhaps it is time to make a change. Take a walk and use what you see as a basis for prayer. Find a hymn and let its words guide your devotional time. Whatever you choose to do, be sure that you engage your heart first.

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#### **Joel 2:13**

#### **Morning and Evening**

#### **C H Spurgeon**

"Rend your heart, and not your garments." — Joel 2:13

Garment-rending and other outward signs of religious emotion, are easily manifested and are frequently hypocritical; but to feel true repentance (See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia) is far more difficult, and consequently far less common. Men will attend to the most multiplied and minute ceremonial regulations—for such things are pleasing to the flesh—but true religion is too humbling, too heart-searching, too thorough for the tastes of the carnal men; they prefer something more ostentatious, flimsy, and worldly. Outward observances are temporarily comfortable; eye and ear are pleased; self-conceit is fed, and self-righteousness is puffed up: but they are ultimately delusive, for in the article of death, and at the day of judgment, the soul needs something more substantial than ceremonies and rituals to lean upon. Apart from vital godliness all religion is utterly vain; offered without a sincere heart, every form of worship is a solemn sham and an impudent mockery of the majesty of heaven.

Heart-rending is divinely wrought and solemnly felt. It is a secret grief which is personally experienced, not in mere form, but as a deep, soul-moving work of the Holy Spirit upon the inmost heart of each believer. It is not a matter to be merely talked of and believed in, but keenly and sensitively felt in every living child of the living God. It is powerfully humiliating, and completely sin-



purging; but then it is sweetly preparative for those gracious consolations which proud unhumiliated spirits are unable to receive; and it is distinctly discriminating, for it belongs to the elect of God, and to them alone.

The text commands us to rend our hearts, but they are naturally hard as marble: how, then, can this be done? We must take them to Calvary: a dying Saviour's voice rent the rocks once, and it is as powerful now. O blessed Spirit, let us hear the death-cries of Jesus, and our hearts shall be rent even as men rend their vestures in the day of lamentation.

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## Joel 2:12–17 From the Heart

October 18, 2016

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate. Joel 2:13

In many cultures, loud weeping, wailing, and the tearing of clothing are accepted ways of lamenting personal sorrow or a great national calamity. For the people of Old Testament Israel, similar outward actions expressed deep mourning and repentance for turning away from the Lord.

An outward demonstration of repentance can be a powerful process when it comes from our heart. But without a sincere inward response to God, we may simply be going through the motions, even in our communities of faith.

God wants to hear your heart.

After a plague of locusts devastated the land of Judah, God, through the prophet Joel, called the people to sincere repentance to avoid His further judgment. “ ‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning’ ” (Joel 2:12).

Then Joel called for a response from deep inside: “Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity” (v. 13). True repentance comes from the heart.

The Lord longs for us to confess our sins to Him and receive His forgiveness so we can love and serve Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Whatever you need to tell the Lord today, just say it—from the heart.

Lord, please give me a heart of repentance to see myself as You do. Give me the grace to respond to Your merciful call for change.

God wants to hear your heart.

INSIGHT: In today's reading we find remarkable insights on the theme of repentance. Key phrases punctuate this exhortation. “Even now” (Joel 2:12): Despite a pattern of disobedience that has merited the righteous judgment of God, He extends grace to a repentant heart. “Return to me with all your heart” (v. 12): The repentance God is calling for is not lukewarm but rather a full commitment of the heart. “Declare a holy fast” (vv. 15–17): The act of fasting does not carry a meritorious element but is a means of self-denial and sets the foundation for turning from selfishness to God. In the spiritual life of Israel both a national and individual repentance were keenly related.

By David McCasland

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## Joel 2:13 Delayed Consequences

Read: Ezekiel 12:21-28

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. —Joel 2:13

As a child, I learned to behave properly when adults rewarded my good behavior and punished my bad behavior. This worked pretty well because the reward or punishment generally came quickly after the behavior, making the relationship between the cause and effect unmistakable. When I became an adult, however, life got more complex, and the consequences of my actions were not always immediate. When I behaved badly without getting in trouble for it, I began to think that it didn't matter to God what I did.

Something similar happened to the children of Israel. When they disobeyed God and didn't suffer any bad consequences right away, they said, “The Lord has forsaken the land, and the Lord does not see!” (Ezek. 9:9), indicating their belief that God had lost interest in them and didn't care about their bad behavior. But they were wrong. Weary of their waywardness, God finally said, “None of My

words will be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be fulfilled” (Ezek 12:28 niv).

When God delays discipline, it’s not due to indifference; it’s due to His very nature—He is gracious and slow to anger. Some see that as permission to sin, but God intends it to be an invitation to repent (Rom. 2:4). By Julie Ackerman Link

A Prayer: Lord, thank You for being slow to anger and filled with compassion. May I not presume upon Your mercy by assuming that there will be no consequences to my sin. Help me instead to confess it. Amen.

The only way to make things right  
is to admit you’ve been wrong.

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**Joel 2:13**

**September 27, 2003**

**Happy New Year!**

**READ: Joel 2:12-17**

Rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful. —Joel 2:13

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is regarded as the anniversary of the day that God created the world. The celebration begins with a blast of the shofar (ram's horn) to announce that the God who created the world is still the One ruling it. The blowing of the horn also begins a 10-day period of self-examination and repentance (See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia) leading to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:23-32; Nu 29:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

The prophet Joel urged people not to just go through the motions of repentance, but to turn from their sins and obey God (Joel 2:13). In his day, tearing garments was a sign of sorrow for sin. It made a good show, but it didn't impress God. He was more concerned with their hearts.

Especially interesting is the basis for Joel's appeal. It wasn't only to avoid God's wrath, but also to enjoy God's grace, compassion, and love. Sometimes we think of God as being heavy-handed with punishment and tight-fisted with mercy. The words of Joel remind us that the opposite is true. The Lord is slow to punish and eager to forgive.

There's no better way to celebrate God's creation than to let Him re-create your heart through faith in Jesus the Messiah and turn your desires toward Him. —Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When I tried to cover my sin,  
My guilt I could not shake;  
But when I sought Your mercy, Lord,  
My sin I did forsake. —Hess

**Confession is the key  
that opens the door to forgiveness.**

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**Joel 2:14**

**August 23, 2006**

**God Fights Against Us**

**READ: Joel 2:12-17**

Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him? —Joel 2:14

In Joel’s book of prophecy, God declared: “I am in the midst of Israel . . . My people shall never be put to shame” (Joel 2:27). But earlier in the chapter God promised to fight against His people. A plague of locusts would descend like a ravenous army on the nation (Joel 2:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

It’s hard to fathom that the Lord would fight against His chosen people. But Israel had given their affections to other gods.

In fact, God had fought against them before. “Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity” (Jdg 2:15).

I have learned that if my own heart wanders away from God, I can count on Him to fight to bring me back. If I become proud and self-assured, if reading God's Word and spending time in prayer seem like a waste of time, God will step in and deal with me.

God will fight against us for our good. He permits us to experience defeat so that we will listen to Him when He says, "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" (Joel 2:13).

Don't wait for God to fight against you before you seek His face. Return to Him today. —Albert Lee [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Because our Father's heart is grieved  
Each time we go astray,  
He lifts His chastening hand in love  
To help us find His way. —D. De Haan

### **God's hand of discipline is a hand of love**

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#### **Joel 2:18-27**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

Never again will my people be shamed. - Joel 2:26b

In the magazine Today's Christian Woman, Linore Burkhard wrote of the time she went for a walk with her two-year-old daughter. Suddenly the toddler let go of her mother's hand and began to run ahead, with her frantic mother chasing close behind. The little girl was just about to step into a busy street when she lost her balance and fell. As Burkhard stooped to pick her up, she shuddered to think about what might have happened. She recognized a surprising blessing and a valuable spiritual lesson in her daughter's bruises that she now attempted to soothe. "What we don't see while we're feeling pain is God's hidden purpose" Burkhard explained. "Sometimes, the very incident we see as hurtful is God's way of protecting us from worse harm."

As we have seen, the devastation of the locust plague was intended to move God's people to genuine repentance (**See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metaneo; the noun Repentance = metanoia**). The wonderful promise was that God would respond with zeal for the devastated land and pity for His afflicted people, both objects of God's jealousy and covenant promises (Joel 2:18). This may seem surprising. The Bible often condemns jealousy in human relationships (Ro 13:13; 1Co 3:3; 2Co 12:20). Yet our God is a jealous God (Ex 34:14; 1Co 10:22). One of the chief differences between divine and human jealousy is that human jealousy is self-centered. God's jealousy is directed toward the best interests of His people. Some have suggested that it might be easier to understand God's jealousy as zeal for those He loves. God does not want His people to have anything other than Himself as the object of their worship. He alone is God!

God's ultimate desire was not to punish His people but to restore them. He promised to send new wine, grain, and oil, He promised never to make them an object of scorn among the nations. In addition, He promised to drive the "army"

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - God may not shield us from the results of our sinful actions, but He will forgive and accept as His children all those who come to Him by faith in Christ.

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#### **Joel 2:21-27 - Making Up For Lost Time**

I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. —Joel 2:25

None of us can say that we have no regrets. Often we are led down paths of bad choices—some paths longer than others—which can have a lingering effect on the mind, body, and soul.

A friend of mine spent a number of years living a life of alcohol and drug abuse. But God did an amazing work in his life, and he recently celebrated 25 years of being free from substance abuse. He now runs a successful business, has a devoted wife, and his children love Jesus. He has a passion to reach out to others who are in the ditch of life, and he serves as a wise and loving mentor in the rescue operations of their lives.

God never gives up on us! Even if we've made poor choices in the past that have left us with regret, we can choose how we will live now. We can choose to continue destructive living, simply wallow in regret, or we can run to Christ believing that He has ways to "restore . . . the years that the swarming locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25). When we repentantly seek His healing and freeing power, He

is merciful.

While some consequences from the past may remain, we can be confident that God has a good and glorious future for those who trust in Him! By Joe Stowell

Lord, it is with humble and grateful hearts that we come to You and lay all that we have been in the past at Your feet. Take us as we are and make something beautiful out of our lives that brings glory to You!

God never gives up on making something beautiful out of our lives.

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### **Joel 2:18-27 Everything Is Beautiful**

I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. —Joel 2:25

The beauty of the black lacy design against the pastel purple and orange background grabbed my attention. The intricacy of the fragile pattern led me to assume that it had been created by a skilled artist. As I looked more closely at the photo, however, I saw the artist admiring his work from a corner of the photo. The “artist” was a worm, and its work of art was a partially eaten leaf.

What made the image beautiful was not the destruction of the leaf but the light glowing through the holes. As I gazed at the photo, I began thinking about lives that have been eaten by the “worms” of sin. The effects are ravaging. Sin eats away at us as we suffer the consequences of our own bad choices or those of others. We are all its victims.

But the photo also reminded me of the hope we have in God. Through the prophet Joel, God said to Israel, “I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten” (Joel 2:25). And from Isaiah we learn that the Lord appointed him to “console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes” (Isa. 61:3).

Satan does everything he can to make us ugly, but the Light of the World can make us beautiful—despite Satan’s best efforts. By Julie Ackerman Link

Sin ravages a fruitful life  
When it is not addressed;  
But God restores and makes us right  
Once sin has been confessed. —Sper

God doesn’t remove all of our imperfections,  
but He makes us beautiful by shining through them.

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### **Joel 2:25**

**F B Meyer**

#### **Our Daily Homily**

Joel 2:25 I will restore to you the peace that the locusts hath eaten.

How many years of our life have been consumed by the locust! Self in one form or another has sorely robbed us of our golden sheaves, reducing them to dust. Self-indulgence, frivolity, wanton spend-thriftiness of time, and talent, and opportunity, sloth and lethargy, mixed and evil motives, secret sins—what a crew are there! They have played the part of the caterpillar, the cankerworm, and the palmerworm with the green promise and the yellow produce of our lives.

But God waits to forgive; to put away from his mind the memory of the wasted past; to place the crown of a new hope upon our brow—yea, more, to restore to us the years that the locust hath eaten. There shall be a revenue of glory to Him even from those wasted years. Either in the experience they shall have communicated to us for dealing with other men, or in the penitential and broken-hearted temper they shall have begotten in ourselves; those years shall yet yield crops of praise to God, and of fruitfulness to us. And, also, God is prepared so to add his blessing to us, in the present and future, as to give us in each year not only the years produce, but much more, so that each year will be laden and weighted with the blessing of three or four beside. Where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound. Where we have sown, we shall reap; not thirty-fold only, but a hundred-fold. God is so anxious to give us as large a result as possible to show for our life’s work, though we may have sadly wrecked its earlier portions. Did He not restore to Peter at Pentecost what he wasted in the hall of judgment? Did not Paul win harvests for Christ out of the years which preceded his conversion?

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## Reclaiming Our Time

I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten. . . . You will have plenty to eat, until you are full. Joel 2:25–26

Today's Scripture & Insight: Joel 2:21–27

My mother shared with me how she chose not to attend college so she could marry my father in the 1960s, but she always held on to her dream of becoming a home economics teacher. Three children later, though she never received a college degree, she did become a nutritionist aide for the state of Louisiana's health system. She cooked meals to demonstrate healthier meal choices—much like a home economics teacher. As she shared her dream with me after recounting the events of her life, she proclaimed that God had indeed heard her prayers and given her the desires of her heart.

Life can be like that for us. Our plans point one way, but reality goes another way. But with God, our time and lives can be turned into beautiful displays of His compassion, love, and restoration. God told the people of Judah (Joel 2:21) that He would “repay” them for their lost or destroyed years—brought about by a “locust swarm” (v. 25). He continues to work to help us in the challenges and unfulfilled dreams we face. For we serve a Redeemer God who honors and rewards our sacrifices for Him (Matthew 19:29).

Whether we're facing a devastating challenge or a time of unrealized dreams, may we call out to the God who restores and give Him praise. By: Katara Patton ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What are you waiting for God to restore or redeem? How would you describe your attitude as you wait?

Mighty God, thank You for Your promises of redemption and restoration. Help me to trust in Your timing in each area of my life.

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## Restored

I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten. Joel 2:25

Today's Scripture & Insight: Joel 2:18–27

A 2003 infestation of Mormon crickets caused more than \$25 million in lost crops. The crickets came in such numbers that people couldn't so much as take a step without finding one underfoot. The grasshopper-like insect, named for attacking the crops of the Utah pioneers in 1848, can eat an astounding thirty-eight pounds of plant material in their lifetimes, despite being merely two to three inches long. The impact of infestations on farmers' livelihoods—and the overall economy of a state or country—can be devastating.

The Old Testament prophet Joel described a horde of similar insects ravaging the entire nation of Judah as a consequence for their collective disobedience. He foretold an invasion of locusts (a metaphor for a foreign army, in the minds of some Bible scholars) like nothing previous generations had seen (Joel 1:2). The locusts would lay waste to everything in their path, driving the people into famine and poverty. If, however, the people would turn from their sinful ways and ask God for forgiveness, Joel says the Lord would “repay [them] for the years the locusts have eaten” (2:25).

We too can learn from Judah's lesson: like insects, our wrongdoings eat away at the fruitful, fragrant life God intended for us. When we turn toward Him, and away from our past choices, He promises to remove our shame and restore us to an abundant life in Him.

By: Kirsten Holmberg ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What can you ask God's forgiveness for today?

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## Joel 2:25

### Losses Overcome

### Faith's Checkbook

### C H Spurgeon

“And I will restore to you the years that the locusthath eaten.”—Joel 2:25

YES, those wasted years over which we sigh shall be restored to us. God can give us such plentiful grace that we shall crowd into

the remainder of our days as much of service as will be some recompense for those years of unregeneracy over which we mourn in humble penitence.

The locusts of backsliding, worldliness, and lukewarmness are now viewed by us as a terrible plague. Oh that they had never come near us! The Lord in mercy has now taken them away, and we are full of zeal to serve Him. Blessed be His name, we can raise such harvests of spiritual graces as shall make our former barrenness to disappear. Through rich grace we can turn to account our bitter experience and use it to warn others. We can become the more rooted in humility, childlike dependence, and penitent spirituality by reason of our former shortcomings. If we are the more watchful, zealous, and tender, we shall gain by our lamentable losses. The wasted years, by a miracle of love, can be restored. Does it seem too great a boon? Let us believe for and live for it; and we may yet realize it, even as Peter became all the more useful a man after his presumption was cured by his discovered weakness. Lord, aid us by thy grace.

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**Joel 2:25**

**January 1, 2004**

**Restoring The Years**

**READ: Joel 2:12-27**

I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. — Joel 2:25

How many years have you lost to the locust? Have self-indulgence, sensuality, sinful motives, and personal ambition robbed you of joy, peace, and fruitfulness? Perhaps you feel discouraged when you think of all the time that seems to have been wasted, never to be reclaimed.

If so, consider the words of the Lord through the prophet Joel. God told the people of Israel that even though they had been disobedient to Him and had been disciplined through a plague of locusts, there was still hope. The Lord said that He is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (Joel 2:13). Then He promised, "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25).

When we confess our sin to the Lord, He is quick to forgive our past and fill our future with hope. He can bring good out of our wasted years. He does that by teaching us humility through our failures, and by helping us to understand the weaknesses we have in common with others.

Although our previous years may have been blighted by sin, God is eager to restore us and give us much fruit from our labor. What we have learned from the past can now result in productive service for Him and heartfelt praise to Him. The year ahead is filled with hope! —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Forgive me, O Lord, for all of my sin,  
Please make my heart pure and cleanse me within;  
To You I confess, my ways have been wrong;  
Restore now my joy and fill me with song. —Fitzhugh

**No matter how dark your past,  
with Christ your future is bright.**

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**Joel 2:25**

**September 27, 1998**

**Locust Years**

**READ: Joel 2:12-27**

I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. --Joel 2:25

A British newspaper reported that a woman had hidden \$20,000 worth of jewelry in a plastic bag, hoping to prevent burglars from finding it. Later, having forgotten about it, she accidentally threw the bag out with her garbage. Several workmen searched for 9 hours in a landfill before finding her treasure and restoring it to her.

Some people throw away God's abundant and gracious blessings in their lives through blatant sin. There was a time in my life when

I wasn't experiencing the blessing of God because of worry and bitterness. When I finally realized that I couldn't help myself, I turned to God, repentant (**See in depth word studies on The verb Repent = metanoeo; the noun Repentance = metanoia**) and broken. Gradually, as He taught me through His Word to rely on Him for all things, I experienced a full restoration of His hand of blessing.

In Joel 2, an invasion of locusts had stripped God's people of everything. What those swarming locusts did to them, our persistent sins will do to us. Our only hope is to heed God's call: "Turn to Me with all your heart" (Joel 2:12).

To those who turn to the Lord in repentance, regardless of the sins that plague them, He promised, "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25).

Do you need to get rid of "locusts" in your life? —Joanie Yoder

Our sinful ways can sap our joy  
And isolate us from the Lord;  
Confession and repentance, though,  
Provide the way to be restored. --Sper

**When God forgives,  
He removes the sin and restores the soul**

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**Joel 2:28-32**

### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

In his book entitled *Keep in Step With the Spirit*, J. I. Packer notes, "For most people nowadays Spirit is a vague and colorless word." More often than not, he explains, they associate it with a mood or attitude.

When some Christians hear the word spirit, they think primarily in terms of power. But when the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit, it reveals that He is a Person. When we are born again, we do not merely receive power to live the Christian life, we are indwelt by a divine Person--the Holy Spirit. This is the unique privilege of all those who trust in Christ. This privilege was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel.

The material blessings upon the land predicted in the previous verses only foreshadowed a much greater blessing that was to come "afterward" (Joel 2:28). Joel's use of this term signals a general shift in focus. The coming outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the rest of the events he will discuss in the remainder of this book primarily pertain to a time later in the future than the events predicted in the earlier half of the book.

Although the Holy Spirit had been active in Joel's day, the prophet foretold that in the age to come His ministry would be characterized by three important features. First, Joel promised that it would be an inclusive ministry. Previously, the Holy Spirit had worked through specific individuals. In the coming age He would be poured out "on all people" (Joel 2:28). Joel speaks of the Spirit being poured out on sons and daughters, as well as on old men and young men. All the people of God, regardless of age or gender, are in view.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - The apostle Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the blessing given to everyone who is in Christ (Ro 8:9). He also spoke of the need to be "filled with the Spirit" (Ep 5:18). This is not a contradiction. Once we know that the Holy Spirit lives within us, we need to depend upon His power daily to live a life that brings glory to Christ. Pray and ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and to help you rely upon Him today.

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Joel 2:28-32 - Holy Spirit Poured Out!

Dorothy Sayers tells of a Japanese convert struggling to grasp Christian theology. "Honorable Father, very good. Honorable Son, very good. But Honorable Bird, I do not understand at all." ...Do you have any Holy Spirit hang ups?

How can we sum up the Spirit's work in our lives?

The Spirit created us in His very image; then we chose to abandon that love relationship & went our own way.

So, He gave us the revelation of truth (this exposed our true condition & God's salvation...thus hope was born!).

In responding to His truth w/repentance & faith we realize the Holy Spirit regenerated us, forgave us, redeemed us, changing our very nature & came to live in us.

He transforms us; He fills us; He makes us overcomers; He gifts us; He sends us; & He glorifies us.

He Teaches us; Sanctifies us; Illuminates us; Baptizes us; & He brings us Comfort!

Q: How much time do you give in thinking about the Holy Spirit?

Q: How about thanking Him for all He has done or is doing in your life?(I know not to pray to him per se) - ([Brian Bell](#))

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## Joel 2:32

### Even the Faintest Call

#### Faith's Checkbook

#### C H Spurgeon

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”—Joel 2:32

WHY do I not call on His name? Why do I run to this neighbor and that, when God is so near and will hear my faintest call? Why do I sit down, and devise schemes, and invent plans? Why not at once roll myself and my burden upon the Lord? Straight-forward is the best runner—why do I not run at once to the living God? In vain shall I look for deliverance anywhere else; but with God I shall find it; for here I have His royal shall to make it sure.

I need not ask whether I may call on Him or not, for that word “&whosoever&” is a very wide and comprehensive one. Whosoever means me, for it means anybody and everybody who calls upon God. I will therefore follow the leading of the text, and at once call upon the glorious Lord who has made so large a promise.

My case is urgent, and I do not see how I am to be delivered; but this is no business of mine. He who makes the promise will find out ways and means of keeping it. It is mine to obey His commands; it is not mine to direct His counsels. I am His servant, not His solicitor. I call upon Him, and He will deliver me.

## Joel 3

### Joel 3:1-16

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. - Joel 3:14

Philip Ryken, senior pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, tells of the time he was leading his family in a study of the books of Kings. He read about the death of wicked king Ahab and how his evil wife Jezebel was thrown to her death from a parapet. As he described how the wild dogs licked up Ahab's blood and devoured Jezebel's flesh, his four-year-old son let out a spontaneous cheer. “Frankly, I was shocked,” Ryken writes. “Ahab and Jezebel met such bloody ends, it hardly seemed right to celebrate. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized God's victory is something to cheer about.”

Joel's purpose in today's passage was to give God's beleaguered people something to cheer about. Although things looked bleak, the prophet promised them that a time was coming when God would judge their enemies. He predicted that this would take place at a time when the Lord would “restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem” (Joel 3:1). At that time, all the Gentile nations that had gloated over Judah's destruction and exile would be gathered together for judgment in “the Valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3:2). The name of this valley, which literally means “Jehovah judges” or “Jehovah has judged,” appears to be symbolic. It is also called “the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14).

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - Have you been hurt or mistreated by someone who does not know Christ? God will hold them accountable for what they have done

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**Joel 3 - Story** – Farmer whose fields of grain caught on fire. Saw the charred body of a hen. He kicked it over, & out ran 5 little chicks from under it.

The wrath of God is an **all consuming fire!**

Nevertheless, it **need not touch** those who are **covered** by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is refuge in Him.

**The full wrath of God is revealed at 2 points of history: at His final judgment** (described here); & **at the cross** of Jesus Christ, where it has already been poured out for those who trust in Jesus.

**Your choice:** Wait the final judgment, face it alone, & be condemned by Christ.



Or, take refuge in Christ who has already faced it for you, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." -([Joel 3 - Brian Bell](#))

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### **Joel 3:21a Acquit – pardon, clear.**

Story - King Frederick II, an eighteenth-century king of Prussia, was visiting a prison in Berlin, the inmates tried to prove to him how they had been unjustly imprisoned. All except one. That one sat quietly in a corner, while all the rest protested their innocence. Seeing him sitting there oblivious to the commotion, the king asked him what he was there for. "Armed robbery, Your Honor." The king asked, "Were you guilty?" "Yes, Sir," he answered. "I entirely deserve my punishment." The king then gave an order to the guard: "Release this guilty man. I don't want him corrupting all these innocent people." ([Joel 3 - Brian Bell](#))

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Philip Yancey(in His Image)said, "No cell lies more than a hair's breath from a blood capillary..." Therefore, your blood is quick to cleanse any & every cell. Christ's blood is even quicker to cleanse & drive out any & every sin. ([Joel 3 - Brian Bell](#))

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### **Joel 3:17-21**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

Then you will know that I, the LORD your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. - Joel 3:17a

Several years ago Amos Elon commented in the New Yorker about the unrest that has been a feature of the city of Jerusalem for so long. "Hardly a day passes in the 'holy city' without a riot or a stoning, without cars being torched or firebombs thrown, without attempted lynchings or the stabbing of an Israeli by a Palestinian (or vice versa)," he noted. "After each incident, municipal cleaning machines, marked 'CITY OF PEACE' in three languages, appear on the scene to wash the blood from the streets in time for the next group of tourists to pass by."

This is still true today--Jerusalem is a place of conflict. Yet it will not always be the case. Speaking through the prophet Joel, God promised to make Jerusalem His dwelling place once again (Joel 3:17). (See Multiple OT Passages that describe the future earthly 1000 year Messianic Age)

In the time of David, the Lord chose to reveal Himself in a special way in Jerusalem. In 1Ki 11:36 He called it "the city where I chose to put my Name." David relocated the tabernacle there, and it was the place where his son Solomon later built the temple. Because of this, the Psalmist described the Lord as "him who dwells in Jerusalem" (Ps 135:21).

Unfortunately, the people of Judah came to view the presence of the temple as a talisman. They believed that it made them exempt from divine judgment. But, in 586 B.C. God allowed the city of Jerusalem to fall to the Babylonians.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - Joel's promises for Jerusalem are also relevant for us. God will dwell with His people in the New Jerusalem, and He promises to wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev. 21:3, 4)

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### **Joel 3:17**

#### **F B Meyer**

#### **Our Daily Homily**

Joel 3:17 I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain.

This will be the lot of the chosen people in the millennial age. The Holy God will make the city in which He resides a Holy place. But it is true universally. Wherever the Holy God dwells, there you have holiness—for it is the attribute of his nature, as heat is of fire. Holiness is not It, but He. Do you want it? Then you must invite Him to come.

When God comes into a day, it becomes holy unto Him. When his presence is revealed in a bush, it is holy ground. When He descends on a mountain, the fences are erected, that unhallowed feet may not draw nigh. When He fills a building like Solomon's Temple, the whole is consecrated, and may not be employed for sacrilegious purposes. Best of all, if He dwell in our hearts, they too are rendered holy to Himself.

When the apostle prays that the God of Peace should sanctify us wholly, he goes on to ask that spirit, soul, and body, should be as a temple filled with God. The holy man is he who is God-filled and God-possessed. It is not enough to possess God; we must be

possessed by Him. He who has more of God is surely holier than other men; and he is the holiest who has most. Behold, Christ stands at the door and knocks: He longs to come in and abide, never again to depart; He brings with Him the holiness for which He has taught us to yearn.

“Is it true, Ignatius,” said the Roman emperor to the Christian martyr, “that you carry about your God within you?” “It is even so,” replied the bishop, “for it is written, I will dwell in thee, and walk in thee.” And for that answer they cast him to the wild beasts. But what they deemed blasphemy is literally true of the Holy Spirit.