

# Joel 2 Commentary

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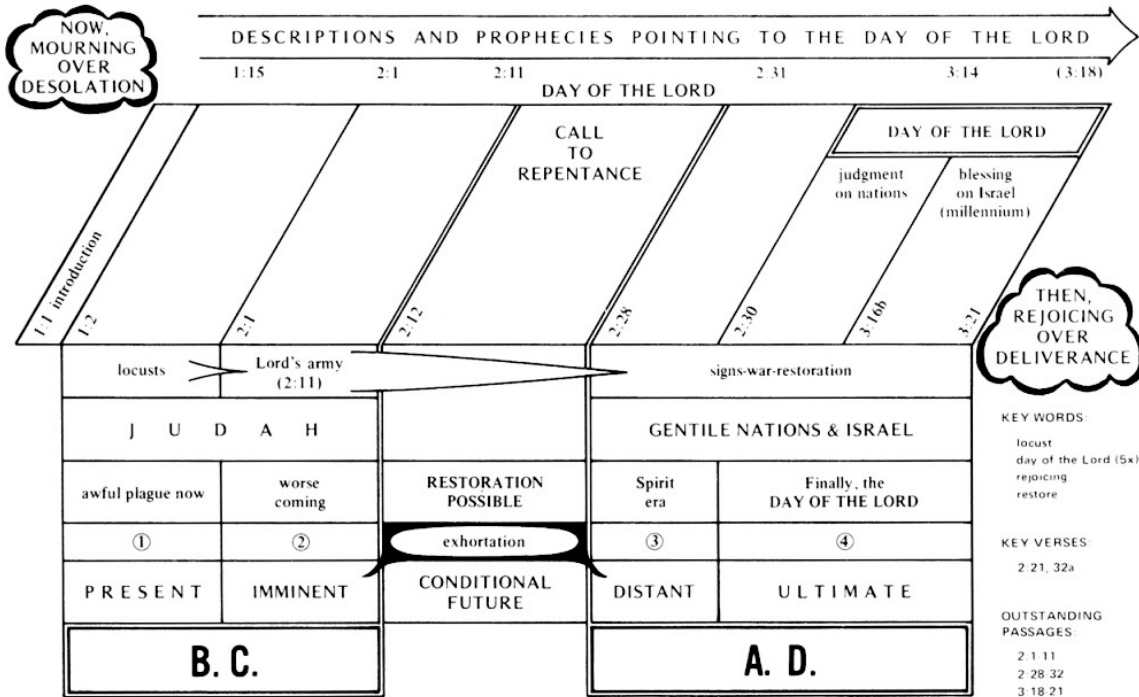
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Click chart to enlarge

Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Joel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

- **John MacArthur's** [Introduction to Book of Joel](#)
- **Chuck Swindoll's** [Introduction to the Book of Joel](#)

### John Phillips Outline Joel: Prophet Of The Plague

1. Day of the Locust (Joel 1:1-14)
  1. Divine Displeasure Expressed (Joel 1:1-5)
    1. A Word for the Prophet (Joel 1:1)
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      1. Descendants (Joel 1:2-4)
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  2. Divine Displeasure Expanded (Joel 1:6-14)
    1. Desecration (Joel 1:6-7)
    2. Desolation (Joel 1:8-12)
    3. Desperation (Joel 1:13-14)
  3. The Day of the Lord (Joel 1:15-3:21)
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      1. A Day of Destruction (Joel 1:15-20)
      2. A Day of Darkness (Joel 2:1-10)
      3. A Day of Deliverance (Joel 2:11-32)
        1. A Call for Repentance (Joel 2:11-19)
        2. A Call for Rejoicing (Joel 2:20-27)
        3. A Call for Revival (Joel 2:28-32)
    2. Day of Antichrist (Joel 3:1-16)
      1. The Gathering of the Hebrew People (Joel 3:1)
      2. The Gathering of the Heathen Peoples (Joel 3:2-16)
        1. A Gathering of the Wicked (Joel 3:2-8)
        2. A Gathering of the Warmongers (Joel 3:9-13)
        3. A Gathering of the World (Joel 3:14-16)
    3. Day of Anticipation (Joel 3:17-21)  
(Exploring the Minor Prophets: An Expository Commentary)

**Joel 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near,**

- **Blow** : Joel 2:15 Nu 10:3,8 Jer 4:5 Ho 8:1
- **trumpet**: 1Ch 15:28 Ho 5:8
- **sound an alarm**: Nu 10:5-7,9 Eze 33:3,6 Am 3:6 Zep 1:16
- **on My holy mountain**: Joe 3:17 Ps 87:1 Da 9:16,20 Zep 3:11 Zec 8:3
- **Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble**: Eze 9:3,4 Ps 119:120 Isa 66:2,5 Jer 5:22 16:7,10 Da 6:26 Php 2:12
- **For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near**; Joe 1:15 Isa 2:12 Eze 7:5-7,10,12 12:23 Am 8:2 Ob 1:15 Mal 4:1 1Th 5:2 Jas 5:8 1Pe 4:7

## **BLOW A TRUMPET IN ZION**

Before you read these notes on Joel 2 you must realize that this chapter is difficult to interpret and there is a range of opinions on what Joel's vivid descriptions represent, especially the descriptions in verses 2-10. That said, my approach to this chapter is first to read it in the plain, literal sense (and if you have not done so, you might do that before you read any further!) and in the [context](#) of chapter 1 which clearly describes a literal "day of the locusts." In chapter 2 Joel continues to describe the "day of the locust" but now he adds some descriptions that are very difficult (when read literally) to ascribe fully and definitively to a description of the locust plague. And notice that in this section Joel 2:1 begins by calling our attention to **the Day of the LORD** and he says it is "**near**." Now think about that statement for a moment. What do we know about the "day of the locusts?" Their "day" is not **NEAR** but **HERE!** Chapter 1 describes the effects that are seen in their "day." Their "day" is not future in Joel 1, but is present (or recent past). Now Joel begins chapter 2 with a "time sensitive" word "**NEAR**" which in English means "not far distant in time, space, degree, or circumstances." Therefore it is fair to conclude that as he begins chapter 2, Joel is beginning to shift his focus away from the "day of the locusts" and toward the imminent "**Day of the LORD**." In light of this thought, it is interesting that all of his descriptions of the locusts in Joel 2:2-10 while descriptive of a literal locust invasion can also be understood as shadows of a future invasion of the land, an invasion which is "**NEAR**." In short, the descriptions of the army of locusts can be applied as a foreshadowing of a future army of invading peoples. There are other reasons that lead to this conclusion which I discuss on individual verses (e.g., the time phrase in Joel 2:2-[note](#), the "people" and the word "anguish" in Joel 2:6-[note](#)).

In **John MacArthur's** introductions to the books of the Bible, he always has a section subtitled "**Interpretative Challenges**." As you might guess, he addresses the difficulties with Joel 2 and follows with helpful notes on the outline of the book...

It is preferable to view chap. 1 as describing an actual invasion of locusts that devastated the Land. In chap. 2, a new level of description meets the interpreter. Here the prophet is projecting something beyond the locust plague of chap. 1, elevating the level of description to new heights, with increased intensity that is focused on the plague and the immediate necessity for true repentance. The prophet's choice of similes, such as "like the appearance of horses" (Joel 2:4) and "like mighty men" (Joel 2:7), suggests that he is still using the actual locusts to illustrate an invasion which can only be the massive overtaking of the final **Day of the Lord** ([see schematic below and Dr MacArthur's note on Day of the Lord](#)).

**Outline** - Following Joel 1:1, the contents of the book are arranged under 3 basic categories. In the first section (Joel 1:2–20) the prophet describes the contemporary Day of the Lord. The land is suffering massive devastation caused by a locust plague and drought. The details of the calamity (Joel 1:2–12) are followed by a summons to communal penitence and reformation (Joel 1:13–20).

The second section (Joel 2:1–17) provides a transition from the historical plague of locusts described in Joel 1 to the eschatological [Day of the Lord](#) in Joel 2:18–3:21. Employing the contemporary infestation of locusts as a backdrop, the prophet, with an increased level of intensity, paints a vivid and forceful picture of the impending visitation of the Lord (Joel 2:1–11) and, with powerful and explicit terminology, tenaciously renews the appeal for repentance (Joel 2:12–17).

In the third section (Joel 2:18–3:21), the Lord speaks directly, assuring His people of His presence among them (Joel 2:27; 3:17,21). This portion of the book assumes that the repentance solicited (Joel 2:12–17) had occurred and describes the Lord's zealous response (Joel 2:18,19a) to their prayer. **Joel 2:18–21 forms the transition in the message from lamentation and woe to divine assurances of God's presence and the reversal of the calamities, with Joel 2:19b,20 introducing the essence and nature of that reversal.** The

Lord then gives 3 promises to assure the penitents of His presence: material restoration through the divine healing of their land (Joel 2:21–27), spiritual restoration through the divine outpouring of His Spirit (Joel 2:28–32), and national restoration through the divine judgment on the unrighteous (Joel 3:1–21). ([Introduction to Book of Joel](#)) (Bolding added)

**Charles Feinberg's** interpretation of this controversial chapter

Just as the prophet Joel in the first chapter of the prophecy turned the minds of his contemporaries, who were filled with the sense of calamity because of the ruin wrought by the locust plague, from the visitation of the moment to a far worse judgment from the Lord, so he does throughout the second chapter of the book. There are men who have taken the position that the chapter deals solely with the locust plague; others maintain just as firmly that the passage is entirely future. Both views are extreme. As a matter of fact, Joel starts with the situation then existing in the land after the havoc of the locust plague and then goes on to picture the dreadful Day of Jehovah yet future, but imminent. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**NET Note** summarizes four of the interpretations that have been offered for Joel 2

- (1) Some commentators understand this section to be describing a human invasion of Judah on the part of an ancient army. The exact identity of this army (e.g., Assyrian or Babylonian) varies among interpreters depending upon issues of dating for the book of Joel.
- (2) Some commentators take the section to describe an eschatological scene in which the army according to some is human, or according to others is nonhuman (i.e., angelic).
- (3) Some interpreters argue for taking the section to refer to the potential advent in the fall season of a severe east wind (i.e., Sirocco) that would further exacerbate the conditions of the land described in chapter one.
- (4) Finally, some interpreters understand the section to continue the discussion of locust invasion and drought described in chapter one, partly on the basis that there is no clear exegetical evidence in Joel 2:1–11 to suggest a shift of referent from that of chapter one. ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**POSB** comments that "**Studying this passage, the reader should keep the following fact in mind: the locust invasion of Judah was only a foreshadowing of God's terrible judgment against sin that would come through various armies down through the ages:** the Assyrian army, the Babylonian army, the Roman army, the Armageddon army—the nations in the end times who will oppose the Lord and His people. The subject of the present Scripture is, The Coming Day of the Lord: A Warning to Escape the Coming Judgment, Joel 2:1-27. (The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum)

**Duane Garrett** favors Joel 2 describing a human invasion but links it in with a locust plague description writing that

Joel 1 consistently looks to the recent past, but 2:1–11 consistently looks to the future (Many scholars have pointed out the preponderance of perfect forms in chap. 1 in contrast to the shift to the imperfect in chap. 2). Attempts to account for this shift from the viewpoint of a "locust plague" interpretation of Joel 2:1–11 are unsuccessful. J. L. Crenshaw, for example, contends that chap. 1 describes a recent locust attack but that Joel 2:1–11 is a liturgical lament for such disasters in the future (Crenshaw correctly asserts: "*That the two accounts cannot refer to a single locust attack is obvious from the tenses of the verbs, completed action in chapter one and future events in chapter two.*"). It is scarcely reasonable, however, to imagine that Israel had in its liturgical arsenal some kind of "lamentation for future locust plagues." **Both grammar and content demand that a significant shift has taken place: the prophet is looking ahead now, and he sees a human army on the horizon. This does not mean that the figure of the locust plague has been abandoned entirely in chap. 2. To the contrary, Joel used locust imagery to shape the picture of the invading army. Looking upon the locust swarm, he saw with prophetic insight not just locusts but a mass of human soldiers bearing down on his city, and he described this future army in locust-like terms. It would indeed be strange if Joel, prophesying immediately after a locust plague, had described the human army without allowing the locust analogue to influence his language. Both are armies of the Lord.** ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

**David Hubbard** comments

The description of the plague continues but with a dramatic change: in vivid poetic imagery **the prophet compares the locusts to an invading army.** This attack is so awful in its scope that it must in some way be connected with the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1, 11), already announced (Joel 1:15). The locust army is the van, and the full revelation of God's wrath will follow in its train. The locusts are real, not images. But the reality itself is so overwhelming as **to carry overtones of an even larger reality—God's exercise of universal**

**judgment.** At this juncture in the text, commentators have a major choice to make. They can read Joel 2:1–11 as an account of a military invasion of which the locusts in Joel 1, are precursors (cf. Wolff, pp. 41–43) or they can read it as a more dramatic, semi-apocalyptic account of the locust invasion which itself is a harbinger of the Day (cf. Allen, pp. 64–65). The approach in the present Commentary is to follow the latter course. A third option would be to read the entire work as a cluster of figurative descriptions of military incursion; to do so, however, seems to find a fantastic visionary cast in the work for which the author has not given us adequate preparation....**The whole scene turns military and more than military as its cosmic implications begin to be grasped at Joel 2:10–11.**([Tyndale OT Commentary](#)) (Bolding Added)

**Lloyd Ogilvie** - Joel uses images from the locust plague, certainly connecting with his audience's situation, to communicate the much greater danger of the approaching day of the Lord. Here is more than an army of hungry locusts or the army of another monarch bent on conquest. Note that the descriptions of the invading army (Joel 2:4–7) use simile and metaphor repeatedly as if to say that this army bears some resemblance to armies that the people would recognize, but that it is really outside the realm of the people's experience. The final phrases of verse 2 underscore the uniqueness of the event—there is nothing like this army in the past nor will it be found in the future (“even for many successive generations” is a fairly mild translation; the RSV “through the years of all generations” catches the implication better). This is an even stronger statement of uniqueness than the one found in Joel 1:2, which introduces the extraordinarily severe locust plague. Moreover, the descriptive language of chapter 1 never moved beyond the level of the agricultural disaster that cut off the food supply of man and beast alike. Yet the coming of the day of the Lord described in chapter 2 results in a cosmic upheaval described in 2:10. This is more than the effect of locusts or even a powerful human army. ([The Preacher's Commentary - Joel](#))

**David Levy** - Like the keen-eyed Ezekiel, Joel was a watchman over the nation of Judah. The word of warning burned within him as a Jeremiah ready to come forth in prophetic proclamation concerning God's wrath. Feeling the winds of judgment on the horizon, in pungent prophetic tones Joel steps up his impassioned plea: “Blow the trumpet in Zion” (v. 1). (Friends of Israel)

Blowing a trumpet warned of enemy invasions (Hos. 8:1; Jer. 4:5; 6:1) and other calamities (e.g. Amos 3:6), including the Day of the LORD (Zeph. 1:16).

**L. C. Allen** has aptly commented that the blast of the horn from the tower was “the ancient equivalent of the modern air raid siren.”

Play [youtube video with pictures and sound of shofar being blown](#) - it has striking sound that grabs your attention!

**Blow a trumpet in Zion** - See [discussion of Zion](#) below. Why blow a trumpet? The ringing sound of a shofar was an unmistakable sound in the land giving a clear signal of some dramatic event, in this case the fact that **the Day of the LORD** was near and was coming, a prediction Joel gave in Joel 1:15-note “Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD is near**, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.” As horrible as the visitation of the locusts was, their destruction was a clear harbinger of what was in store for Israel in this future dread Day of the LORD.

Can you picture the sentry on the fortress walls enclosing Mount Zion, God's holy city Jerusalem? The watchman's task was only one thing - remain alert, continually scanning the horizon for dust or noise of horses' hoofs or other evidence of an approaching enemy force. And if anything was seen, his job was to sound the alarm loud and clear, so that the familiar sound of the shofar was heard by everyone in the city. Joel is that “watchman on the wall” much as his fellow prophet Ezekiel to whom Jehovah said ““Son of man, I have appointed you a **watchman** to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.” (Ezekiel 3:17) Later in Ezekiel, the Lord says

And the word of the LORD came to me (EZEKIEL), saying, 2 “Son of man, speak to the sons of your people and say to them, ‘If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their **watchman**, 3 and he sees the sword coming upon the land and **blows on the trumpet and warns the people**, 4 then **he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning** (LIKE 2/3'S OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL IN THIS FUTURE TIME [[Time of Jacob's Distress](#) - Jer 30:7 = [a time of distress](#) - Da 12:1 = [Great Tribulation](#) - Mt 24:15-note ] WHO WILL HEAR BUT NOT HEED - see Zechariah 13:8-9-note) **and a sword comes and takes him away**, his blood will be on his own head. 5 ‘He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life (AS WILL 1/3 OF ISRAEL WHO WILL LOOK WITH EYES OF FAITH TO MESSIAH WHOM THEY PIERCED AND BE CLEANSED OF THEIR SIN AND IMPURITY - Zechariah 12:10ff-note and Zechariah 13:1-note) . 6 ‘But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.’ 7 “Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me. (Ezek 33:1-7)

So Joel as Jehovah's faithful watchman **blows the trumpet and sounds the alarm** in his prophecy! While this warning is for everyone, it is especially directed to the rebellious nation of Israel in [the Last Days](#)! I have visited Israel and tried to share the Gospel from the Old Testament with Jews I met on the streets of Jerusalem but with virtually no success (still seeds were sown) in part because many with whom I dialogued were essentially Biblically illiterate and instead of the "-ism" of Judaism had substituted the false "-ism" of secularism! But in the last days the Spirit of God will give one-third of the nation spiritual eyes to read and spiritual ears to hear and spiritual hearts to heed the words of warning from their prophet Joel! (cf Zech 12:10ff-note; Zech 13:8-9-note) They will hear the shofar blow and heed the sounding of the alarm!

**In Zion** - Why Zion? Where is Zion? While Zion can have a number of nuances in Scripture (see [discussion of Zion](#) below) clearly Joel is referring to the general region of the Holy City of Jerusalem, to Mount Zion, to Temple Mount and the rebuilt Jewish Temple (cf Rev 11:1-2-note). Why? Because this will be the site from which the Antichrist launches his holy war, his Satanically inspired vendetta against the nation of Israel (cf Rev 12:6-note NB: 1260 DAYS, Rev 12:12-17-note NB: "TIME, TIMES, HALF A TIME." NOTE THAT THE "WOMAN" = ISRAEL, Rev 13:1-5-note - NB: "42 MONTHS"), seeking once and for all complete annihilation of the Chosen People, a holocaust that will be far greater than the horrible Nazi Holocaust (Zech 13:8-9-note)! For more detail of this horrible future day in Zion, see the notes below on Matthew 24:15-22.

**Trumpet** (07782) ([shophar/shopar/sopar](#)) is masculine noun referring to a trumpet or a ram's horn and is made out of a curved ram's horn. At Mt Sinai the trumpet was the signal that Israel could approach the awesome site (Ex 19:16; 19; 20:18). It was used to signal the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:9). Seven trumpets were to be carried before the Ark of the Covenant as the priests and blown on the seventh day after marching around the city seven times (Josh 6:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 16, 20). The trumpet was used by Gideon and his men to route the enemy (Jdg 7:8, 16, 18-20, 22). In short, these first three uses of the shophar were all associated with miraculous events! The shophar was sounded to announce a new king in Israel (1 Ki. 1:34, 39, 41; 2 Ki. 9:13). The trumpet was sounded at the celebration of God as King over all the earth (Ps. 47:5). The trumpet sound was used to warn of approaching danger (Hos. 5:8; 8:1), and here in Joel, to warn of the dread Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1, 15).

**Austel** notes that "The general word for the horn of an animal is **qeren**. This is used only once as a reference to a musical instrument. The word **yôbēl** means basically "ram" (so also in Phoenician and Arabic), but in the Old Testament it is used as an instrument and then as a name of the year whose beginning it signalled, the Jubilee (Year). The word **yôbēl** is seemingly interchangeable with **šôpār** (cf., for example, Exodus 19:13, 16; Joshua 6:4-5). Another word for "trumpet" is **hāšōšrâ**. This latter is a straight tube, often metallic." (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Ringgren** writes that "The **šôpār** was made of a ram's horn (cf. **qeren yôbēl**, Josh. 6:5), which in cultic use could neither be decorated nor altered with a metal mouthpiece. The horn was generally curved, though the Talmud also mentions straight horns. The horn functioned above all as a means of signaling. Guards used it to warn the people of advancing enemies (Neh. 4:18, 20; Isa. 18:3; Hos. 8:1; Am. 3:6; cf. Jer. 4:5, 19, 21; 6:1; Hos. 5:8; figuratively applied to the prophets as sentinels in Jer. 6:17; Ezk. 33:3-6). The horn was also used to assemble the army for battle (Jdg. 3:27; 6:34; cf. 2 Sa 20:1), to announce the beginning of battle, especially in a holy war (Jdg. 7:8, 16, 20; cf. Jer. 51:27), though also during the battle to signal, for example, the end of the battle (2 Sa 2:28; 18:16; 20:22), announce victory (1 Sa 13:3), or to fulfill an otherwise unidentified function (Job 39:24-25; Jer. 42:14; Am. 2:2). The account of the conquest of Jericho occupies special status in that here the sounding of horns clearly exhibits cultic features (Josh. 6:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 20). 2. Cult. The sounding of horns also announces the accession of a new king (2 S. 15:10, Absalom; 1 K. 1:34, 39, 41, Solomon; 2 K. 9:13, Jehu). Although Yahweh's epiphany at Sinai is also accompanied by the sounding of horns (Ex. 19:16, 19; 20:18), this account probably reflects a later cultic celebration. The sounding of the **šôpār** does, however, appear in various other purely cultic contexts. The commencement of the Year of Jubilee is announced by the sounding of horns (**šôpār tērû'â**, Lev. 25:9). According to Ps. 81:4(3), the day of the new moon is similarly celebrated with the sounding of the **šôpār**, and the same verse mentions the day of the full moon (**kēseh**) and "our festal day" (**hag**). Several expressions for shouts of joy, singing, and music appear in the context as well. The sounding of horns announces a general fast (Joel 2:15; perhaps Isa. 58:1). When David brings the ark up to Jerusalem, he does so amid the sounding of horns and shouts of joy (**tērû'â**, 2 S. 6:15). The parallel account in 1 Ch. 15:28 mentions other musical instruments as well. Ps. 47:6(5) probably also refers to a procession with the ark: "God has gone up (**'âlâ**) with a shout (**tērû'â**), Yahweh with the sound of a horn [NRSV 'trumpet'; **qôl šôpār**]." Since vv. 7-9(6-8) refer to Yahweh as king, this rejoicing is that which is appropriate for a king. The same applies to the royal psalm of Yahweh, Ps. 98, where v. 6 encourages the people "with trumpets (**hāšōšerôt**) and the sound of the horn make[s] a joyful noise (**rw' hiphil**) before the king, Yahweh." Ps. 150:3 mentions the **šôpār** along with other instruments as part of the musical accompaniment of praise. According to 2 Ch. 15:14, the music of horns and trumpets accompanies an oath ceremony. The "sounding of the horn" of the day of Yahweh combines motifs from the announcements of war with those of epiphanies (so Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:16; cf. also Isa. 18:3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14). (Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume 14, Revised)

**Shophar** - 71x in 63v - horn(4), horns(1), ram's horn(1), trumpet(46), trumpeter\*(1), trumpets(19).

Exod. 19:16; Exod. 19:19; Exod. 20:18; Lev. 25:9; Jos. 6:4; Jos. 6:5; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 6:8; Jos. 6:9; Jos. 6:13;

Jos. 6:16; Jos. 6:20; Jdg. 3:27; Jdg. 6:34; Jdg. 7:8; Jdg. 7:16; Jdg. 7:18; Jdg. 7:19; Jdg. 7:20; Jdg. 7:22; 1 Sam. 13:3; 2 Sam. 2:28; 2 Sam. 6:15; 2 Sam. 15:10; 2 Sam. 18:16; 2 Sam. 20:1; 2 Sam. 20:22; 1 Ki. 1:34; 1 Ki. 1:39; 1 Ki. 1:41; 2 Ki. 9:13; 1 Chr. 15:28; 2 Chr. 15:14; Neh. 4:18; Neh. 4:20; Job 39:24; Job 39:25; Ps. 47:5; Ps. 81:3; Ps. 98:6; Ps. 150:3; Isa. 18:3; Isa. 27:13; Isa. 58:1; Jer. 4:5; Jer. 4:19; Jer. 4:21; Jer. 6:1; Jer. 6:17; Jer. 42:14; Jer. 51:27; Ezek. 33:3; Ezek. 33:4; Ezek. 33:5; Ezek. 33:6; Hos. 5:8; Hos. 8:1; Joel 2:1; Joel 2:15; Amos 2:2; Amos 3:6; Zeph. 1:16; Zech. 9:14

**Here is an old song but it is too jubilant for the eschatological event it describes!** [Blow the Trumpet in Zion \(a different version\)](#)

**And sound an alarm-** So fierce will be this DAY that one warning (shofar sounding a war cry!) is not sufficient. This is a warning the wise dare not miss hearing and heeding! Why the strong, repetitive warnings? Because there will ensue serious times. While one cannot be dogmatic that the shofar and alarm will be sounded in the beginning of the Great Tribulation, Jesus clearly sounded a "shofar" blast in His Sermon on the Mount...

Matthew 24:15 (see in depth commentary) "Therefore **when** (NOT "IF" BUT "WHEN" - THIS EVEN WILL OCCUR!) you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (WHERE? "ON MY HOLY MOUNTAIN"! ON MOUNT ZION. ON TEMPLE MOUNT. ON THE SITE OF THE REBUILT TEMPLE. ANTICHRIST IN THE HOLY PLACE CLEARLY DESCRIBED BY PAUL = 2 Th 2:3-5-commentary) (let the reader understand = [WHICH IMPLIES THIS IS CLEARLY UNDERSTANDABLE TO THOSE WHO HEAR JESUS' PLAIN WORDS AS LITERAL TRUTH!!!]) (WHERE DID DANIEL SPEAK? Da 9:27-commentary - "he [ANTICHRIST] will make a firm covenant with the many for one week (SEVEN YEARS - SEE [Daniel's Seventieth Week](#)), but in the middle of the week (MIDDLE OF THE SEVEN AT 3.5 YEARS - compare [synonymous time phrases](#) = 1260 days, 42 months, "time, times, and half a time") he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."), 16 **then** (TIME PHRASE MARKING SEQUENCE IN A SERIES OF EVENTS!) those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains (NOT "SHOULD" OR "MIGHT CONSIDER" BUT MUST!!! JESUS IS SOUNDING AN ALARM ON HIS HOLY MOUNTAIN!). 17 "Whoever is on the housetop must (OBLIGATORY!) not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 18 "Whoever is in the field must (OBLIGATORY!) not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. 21 ([see commentary](#)) "For **then** (WHEN? THIS IS THE CRITICAL QUESTION!!! IN CONTEXT JESUS IS CRYSTAL CLEAR = WHEN YOU SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION...STANDING IN THE HOLY PLACE) there will be a GREAT TRIBULATION, **such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will** 22 "Unless those days (WHAT DAYS? THE DAYS OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION - [1260 days, 42 months, "time, times, and half a time"](#)) had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.(Mt 24:15-22-note)

**Sound an alarm** ([07321](#))(**rua**) verb meaning to raise a noise, shout, shout, raise a sound, cry out, to sound a blast.**Rua** was utilized primarily to convey the action of shouting or the making of a loud noise. One could "raise a noise" either by shouting or with a horn (Nu 10:7, or the shofar - Josh 6:5). Shouting often took place just before a people or army rushed into battle against opposition (JUST LIKE THOSE SCENES IN "BRAVEHEART!"). At other times the war cry became the signal used to commence engagement with the enemy (Josh. 6:10, 16, 20; Jdg. 15:14; 1 Sa. 4:5; 17:20; 2 Chr. 13:15). At other times **rua** represented a shout of joy, often in response to the Lord's delivering activity His people (Job 38:7; Ps. 47:1; 95:1, 2; Isa. 44:23; Zeph. 3:14). **Rua** was used in rituals of the Israelite tabernacle (1 Samuel 4:5) to describe the exaltation of the people of Israel when the ark of the covenant was brought to the camp. **Rua** is also used for cries of complaint and distress (Isaiah 15:4). But the most common usage of **rua** is in signals for war (Nu 10:7) and war cries (Josh 6:10).

In the Messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 we read "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!**Shout** in triumph (HAD THEY RECOGNIZED HIM THIS WOULD HAVE INDEED BEEN SINCERE, TRIUMPHAL SHOUTING), O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." **Rua** is used in the context of praise of God by the whole earth (Isaiah 44:23). In several other instances, the shout expressed triumph and victory over a foe (Ps. 41:11; 60:8; 108:9); and occasionally mourning (Isa 15:4; Mic. 4:9). A few times, the term denotes the "shout" (blast) of a trumpet, usually as a signal to begin battle (Nu 10:9; 2 Chr. 13:12; cf. Hos 5:8)

Numbers 10:7 is an interesting verse stating that ""When convening the assembly, however, you shall blow**without sounding an alarm.**" Clearly the shofar could be blown in ways that were not as alarming as other ways.**Wenham** says ""If we follow Jewish tradition, long blasts were used to assemble the people to Moses, to the tent of meeting and for worship. Short staccato blasts were

used in battle and to order the camps to move off." Nu 10:8 goes on to say "The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations." The blowing of the horns was to be a perpetual ordinance in Israel, calling the people to worship or to war. On the other hand Nu 10:9 says ""When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall **sound an alarm** with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies." In other words the Israelites would be spared because God remembered them. Apparently the sound of an alarm would be a signal to the people reminding them to seek God's help for deliverance. In response, He would remember them

**Gilbrant** - Rûa' is used frequently with reference to military activity, to give the call to battle or sound an alarm. Trumpets were to be sounded, enlisting the Lord's help prior to battle (Nu 10:9). About to suffer defeat against its northern neighbor, Samaria, Judah blew the trumpets (2 Chr. 13:12). Judah's people cried (v. 15) unto the Lord, and He granted victory at the appearance of the invaders (Joel 2:1). Sometimes trumpets were sounded as a signal for the people to gather (Num. 10:7). At Joshua's command, the people were to shout, setting the stage for the attack on Jericho (Josh. 6:10, 16). In each case, rûa' appears twice, the imperfect followed by an imperative form of the verb. David arrived just as the Israelites were moving into position against the Philistines, shouting the war cry (1 Sam. 17:20). At the sight of the sacred Ark, the men shouted with a great shout (1 Sam. 4:5). Rûa' occurs most often in the arena of Israel's religion and worship. The Hebrew language almost always employs the Hiphil imperative (masculine plural) in these instances: "shout to God" (Ps. 47:1), "make a joyful noise to God" (Ps. 66:1), and "shout aloud to the God of Jacob" (Ps. 81:1, NIV). Along with these are Pss. 98:4, 6; 100:1; Isa. 44:23; Zeph. 3:14; and Zech. 9:9. At the creation of the earth, the angels "shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). In some cases, rûa' means "to triumph." It may be stated with either a negative ("my enemy does not triumph," Ps. 41:11) or positive construction ("over Philistia will I triumph," Ps. 108:9). The cry is not always joyous: "Cry aloud at Beth-Aven" (Hos. 5:8); "Why do you cry out aloud?" (Mic. 4:9). Because of Judah's sins, captivity in Babylon was imminent. ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

**Rua** - in 40v - battle cry(1), cry(1), cry aloud(1), crying(1), jubilant shouting(1), raise your battle cry(1), raised a war cry(1), raised the war cry(1), shout(9), shout for joy(1), shout in triumph(1), shout aloud(1), shout joyfully(8), shout loud(1), shouted(8), shouted for joy(1), shouting the cry(1), sound an alarm(3), sound the alarm(1), sounding an alarm(1), utter a shout(1).

Num. 10:7; Num. 10:9; Jos. 6:5; Jos. 6:10; Jos. 6:16; Jos. 6:20; Jdg. 7:21; Jdg. 15:14; 1 Sam. 4:5; 1 Sam. 10:24; 1 Sam. 17:20; 1 Sam. 17:52; 2 Chr. 13:12; 2 Chr. 13:15; Ezr. 3:11; Ezr. 3:13; Job 30:5; Job 38:7; Ps. 41:11; Ps. 47:1; Ps. 60:8; Ps. 65:13; Ps. 66:1; Ps. 81:1; Ps. 95:1; Ps. 95:2; Ps. 98:4; Ps. 98:6; Ps. 100:1; Ps. 108:9; Isa. 15:4; Isa. 16:10; Isa. 42:13; Isa. 44:23; Jer. 50:15; Hos. 5:8; Joel 2:1; Mic. 4:9; Zeph. 3:14; Zech. 9:9

## **GOD'S HOLY MOUNTAIN: MT ZION, TEMPLE MOUNT, MT MORIAH**

**On My holy mountain** - First note that although the Jews, Christians and Muslims each lay claim to this **mountain**, none of them own it! It belongs to God Alone and so here God lays claim with the possessive phrase **My holy mountain**, but to which **mountain** does He refer? There are three answers to this question for all are the essentially the same mountain/region - First note that **Zion** is often called "**Mount Zion**" (21x - 2 Ki. 19:31; Ps. 48:2,11; 74:2; 78:68; 125:1; Isa. 4:5; 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; 24:23; 29:8; 31:4; 37:32; Lam. 5:18; Joel 2:32; Obad. 1:17,21; Mic. 4:7; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1). **Where is Mount Zion?** Today most scholars would say this is the area of "**Temple Mount**" the site of the Muslim's second holiest shrine, the Dome of the Rock. But it also is the site of another famous mountain from [Mount Moriah](#). **So God's holy mountain is Mount Zion, Mount Moriah and Temple Mount.** It is also notable that Calvary is also in this same mountain ridge! (See allusions to Mount Moriah in study of God's Name - [Jehovah-Jireh](#))

**Gotquestions** has an excellent summary description of Mount Moriah...

Mount Moriah's history begins in Genesis. In the twenty-second chapter, God commands Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you" (Genesis 22:2). The place God led Abraham was Mount Moriah. Abraham didn't fully understand what God was asking him to do in light of God's previous promise to establish an everlasting covenant with Isaac (Genesis 17:19); nonetheless, he trusted God and by faith offered Isaac as a sacrifice. Of course, God intervened and spared Isaac's life by providing a ram instead. Abraham thereafter called this place "The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided'" (Genesis 22:14). Because of Abraham's obedience on Mount Moriah, God told Abraham that his "descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me" (vv. 17, 18). About a thousand years later at this very location, King David bought the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite and built an altar to the Lord so that a "plague may be held back from the people" (2 Samuel 24:18, 21). After David's death, his son King Solomon



built a glorious temple on the same site. Solomon's temple lasted for over four hundred years until it was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar's armies in 587/586 B.C. Seventy years later the temple was rebuilt on the same site by the Jews who returned to Jerusalem following their Babylon captivity. Around the first century, King Herod made a significant addition to this structure, which then became known as Herod's Temple. It was this temple that Jesus cleansed (John 2:15). However, in A.D. 70, the Roman armies led by Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian, once again destroyed the temple. All that remains of the Temple Mount of that era is a portion of a retaining wall known as the "Western Wall" or the "Wailing Wall." It has been a destination for pilgrims and a site of prayer for Jews for many centuries. The God who first called Abraham to Mount Moriah still has plans for that place. The Bible indicates that a third temple will be built on or near the site of Solomon's temple (Daniel 9:27). This would seem to present a problem given the political obstacles that stand in the way: the religious activities on the Temple Mount are currently controlled by the Supreme Muslim Council (the Waqf). Yet nothing can put a wrinkle in God's sovereign plans. Thus, Muslim control of this area simply fulfills the prophecy of Luke 21:24 that "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." ([Gotquestions.org](http://Gotquestions.org))

**Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble** - This is an exhortation to the inhabitants (the Lxx actually has it as a command). The coming day of the Lord's holy anger should stir any sane heart with an emotion of fear. Yes, they are to tremble, but not let their trembling and fear keep them from exiting Jerusalem as quickly as is humanly possible! (cf Mt 24:16-20-note) Joel 2:2 also explains why the Israelites will tremble - "**A day of darkness and gloom**" - This would make most of us tremble!

The prophet **Amos** associates the blowing of the trumpet with trembling asking

If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people **tremble** (ragaz)? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it? (Amos 3:6, cf ragaz in Amos 8:8 = "land quake")

**Tremble** (0764)(**ragaz**) is a verb with the primary meaning to quake or shake, from which derive such ideas as shaking in anger, fear, or anticipation. Thus ragaz can mean to agitate or be agitated, quiver, quake, be excited, to provoke or perturb, to tremble, to disturb, to rouse up, to rage.

Most usages of **ragaz** express agitation growing out of some deeply rooted emotion. It most often expresses the idea of the physical moving or shaking of someone or something -- lands (1 Sa 14:15; Amos 8:8); mountains (Ps. 18:7; Isa. 5:25); heavens (2 Sa 22:8); kingdoms (Isa 23:11); whole earth (Joel 2:10). Often the shaking is the result of the Lord's anger. **Ragaz** may describe God's trembling or raging in anger (Isaiah 28:21).

Ragaz expresses the trembling of the world's inhabitants before God's appearance in judgment (Isa 64:2; Joel 2:1). People tremble at God's great works, both the destructive works (Dt. 2:25) and the beneficial ones (Jer 33:9). Trembling may be a reaction misfortune (Isa 32:10-11), bad news (2 Sa 18:33), some profoundly stirring revelation (Hab 3:16), or the prospect of God's rule (Ps 99:1).

Often people shake, being stirred by deep emotions in response to specific circumstances such as fear (Ex. 15:14; Dt. 2:25; Isa. 64:2; Joel 2:1; Mic 7:17), anger (Pr 29:9; Ezek. 16:43); even grief (2 Sa 18:33). God promised that Israel would not be disturbed from the Promised Land (2 Sa 7:10; 1 Chr. 17:9). David was disturbed at the death of his son (2 Sa 18:33). Ragaz can occasionally signify disturbing or rousing up of someone (1 Sa 28:15; 1 Chr. 17:9). Finally ragaz can convey the act of rebelling against another, literally, to shake oneself against someone (cf. 2 Ki. 19:27, 28; Isa. 37:28, 29).

**Ragaz** - 41x in 40v - come trembling(1), deeply moved(1), disturbed(2), enraged(1), excited(1), moved(1), provoke(1), quake(1), quaked(2), quakes(2), quarrel(1), rages(1), raging(4), shakes(1), stirred(1), tremble(11), trembled(3), trembling(3), troubled(2), turmoil(1).

Ge 45:24; Exod. 15:14; Deut. 2:25; 1 Sam. 14:15; 1 Sam. 28:15; 2 Sam. 7:10; 2 Sam. 18:33; 2 Sam. 22:8; 2 Ki. 19:27; 2 Ki. 19:28; 1 Chr. 17:9; Job 9:6; Job 12:6; Ps. 4:4; Ps. 18:7; Ps. 77:16; Ps. 77:18; Ps. 99:1; Prov. 29:9; Prov. 30:21; Isa. 5:25; Isa. 13:13; Isa. 14:9; Isa. 14:16; Isa. 23:11; Isa. 28:21; Isa. 32:10; Isa. 32:11; Isa. 37:28; Isa. 37:29; Isa. 64:2; Jer. 33:9; Jer. 50:34; Ezek. 16:43; Joel 2:1; Joel 2:10; Amos 8:8; Mic. 7:17; Hab. 3:7; Hab. 3:16

## **THE DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING AND IS NEAR**

**For** - [term of explanation](#). Explaining the reason for the alarm.

Like an air raid siren, with the blowing of the shofar comes the warning, "**for the day of the Lord is coming. Surely it is near!**" It is

worth noting that according to one source the Hebrew word "**is coming**" more literally reads "**has come.**" In other words although the judgment is still future, it is so certain to come to pass that God sees it as having already taken place.

Notice that in Joel 2, the two uses of the phrase **the Day of the LORD** is like a set of "Scriptural bookends" of this first section of the chapter 2 which goes from Joel 2:1 to Joel 2:11. This fact is another reason that Joel 2:1-11 is best interpreted not only as a description of the "day of the locusts" but as an apt illustration of the "Day of the LORD." Joel is reasoning from the lesser past destruction (from the locusts) to the greater future destruction (from the LORD). He is using the horrible things that his readers have seen and/or heard about (the locusts) to warn them of the most horrible event in world history, the destruction and devastation of the Day of the LORD. Joel is doing this not simply for dramatic effect, but for its spiritual impact which hopefully will serve to stimulate the people's hearts to the repentance he describes in the following section beginning in Joel 2:12.

**POSB** comments that the Day of the Lord "is one that must be learned and understood by the entire human race. The Day of the Lord refers to the terrifying judgment of God that will fall upon all the wicked of the universe—both nations and individuals. But we must always remember that the Day of the Lord also refers to the great deliverance of God's people from their enemies and from all the corruption of this world. Dramatically, the prophet Joel shifted the thrust of his message away from the locust invasion. He began to warn of the invasion by the powerful northern army that would soon sweep down upon the tiny nation of Judah. (The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum)

**The day of the LORD is coming** - Coming is the Hebrew verb **bo** ([0935](#)) and in the Septuagint is translated with [pareimi](#) which means to be present and here in the [present tense](#) could be paraphrased "is continually present!"

**Surely it is near** - or is "**at hand**" or is [imminent](#). The etymology of the English word **imminent** gives us an incredible sense of the idea Joel is attempting to convey, for our English word is from the Latin word **imminens** in turn from **imminere** a verb which means to hang or project over. The picture of this **imminent** Day of the LORD is that it is "hanging over" the heads of the reader, that it is [impending](#). Joel wants to make absolutely sure his readers do not miss this point so three times, once in each chapter, he says "the day of the LORD is NEAR!" (Joel 1:15-note, Joel 2:1, Joel 3:14-note).

See also previous comments on multiple resources on **the Day of the LORD** under Joel 1:15 commentary.

[Video on the Day of the LORD by Ray Bentley](#) - At Epicenter Conference with Joel Rosenberg

The **Day of the LORD** is mentioned five times in this short book:

Joel 1:15-note Alas for the day! For **the day of the LORD** is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For **the day of the LORD** is coming; Surely it is near,

Joel 2:11-note The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. **The day of the LORD** is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?

Joel 2:31-note "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before **the great and awesome day of the LORD** comes.

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

It is worth noting that each time the phrase **the day of the LORD is near** is used, it refers to sudden and terrifying judgment (cf. Joel 1:15; 3:14; Isaiah 13:6; Ezekiel 30:3; Zephaniah 1:7, 14).

**Near** ([07138](#)) see **discussion of the use of qarob** in Joel 1:15. Clearly the three uses of qarob by Joel (Joel 1:15, Joel 2:1, Joel 3:14) are all in the context of **the Day of the LORD** and signify that it is "at hand" or **imminent**.

**Chuck Swindoll** - 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 and in exactly the right measure. And when His people repent, God's judgment steps aside to let His mercy and grace flow!

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**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

## EXCURSUS ON THE MEANING OF ZION

### NORTH

### WEST

### Ancient City of David (Replica)

### EAST

See the pictures (above and below) to help you visualize **Zion** and **Mount Zion** and its relationship to the three major valleys. Notice that at the top of the picture is **Mount Moriah**, which is today known as **Temple Mount** (see picture and discussion). With the building of Solomon's Temple, **Mount Moriah** became known as **Mount Zion**. The Kidron Valley is on the East and the Central Valley (aka, Tyropean valley) is on the West as shown to better advantage in the schematic pictures below.

**Zion** ([06726](#))(**Tsiyyon**) is a proper noun the which may mean fortress (but this is debated). The name **Zion** does not occur at all from Genesis to 1 Samuel.

Summary - Zion is the mountain where Jerusalem and the Temple were built (and will be rebuilt). Zion sometimes refers to ancient Jerusalem and sometimes stands for the home where God's people will live with Him (see Isa 4:2-6; Isa 12:1-6; Isa 65:17-25).

**Zion** was originally associated with the hill **Ophel**, the fortified area just to the south of the field King David purchased from Ornan (eventual site of the Temple Mount), lying between the **Kidron Valley** on the East and the **Tyropeon Valley** to the West ([Here is an excellent schematic picture which shows the major valleys surrounding Jerusalem](#)). **Click** images below to enlarge for Ophel, Kidron and Tyropeon Valleys ([Here is a great schematic showing the valleys and the Temple Complex in the time of Jesus](#))

As discussed in the following section the meaning of **Zion** depends on the context. It is notable that there are no uses until the use in 2 Sa 5:7 "David captured (from the Jebusites) the stronghold (fortress) of **Zion**, that is the city of David (also referenced in 1 Ki 8:1, cf also parallel description in 1 Chronicles 11:5; 7)." So in that context, **Zion** is synonymous with "**The City of David**."

When Solomon's Temple was built on "Temple Mount" ("[Mount Moriah](#)" in picture above), the mountain became known as "**Mount Zion**." In Isaiah 24:23 Isaiah gives a prophecy of the [Millennial reign of Christ](#) recording that "the LORD of hosts (MESSIAH) will reign on **Mount Zion** (the rebuilt [Millennial Temple](#) on Temple Mount) and in Jerusalem," so in this passage there is a slight distinction between the site of Messiah's future throne and the city in which His throne is located, but other times these two designations merge or overlap.

Thus the distinction between the "mount" and the "city" is not always clear cut. For example **Mount Zion** is equated with **the city** of Jerusalem as in Ps 48:2 "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is **Mount Zion** in the far north, **the city** of the great King." Similarly in 2 Ki 19:31 we read "'For out of Jerusalem will go forth a REMNANT, and out of **Mount Zion** SURVIVORS." **Jerusalem and REMNANT** parallel **Mount Zion and SURVIVORS** (cf similar parallel in Isa 4:3 "he who is LEFT in **Zion** and REMAINS in **Jerusalem**"). Similarly in Isaiah 2:3-[note](#) (Context = Future reign of Messiah in the Millennium) the "law will go forth **from Zion** and the word of the LORD **from Jerusalem**." (cf "when the Lord has completed all His work **on Mount Zion** and **on Jerusalem**." = Isa 10:12) In summary, **Zion** (or Mount Zion) may refer specifically to the Temple vicinity ([Mount Moriah](#) in the picture above) or more generally to Jerusalem itself.

**Once Solomon's Temple was completed**, Zion began to take on a broader identity, being used as a **description of the entire city of Jerusalem**. It was the site of the Temple, the place where God dwelt. It is listed as God's abode in Ps. 76:2. Psalm 9:11 declares

that God dwells in Zion. There has been disagreement on whether these verses refer to the Temple itself, to the Temple Mount or to the city as the location of the Temple.

Sometimes **Zion** refers to the entire nation as in Isaiah 1:27 which says "**Zion** will be redeemed with justice and her repentant ones with righteousness."

In Ps 78:68 the psalmist equates "the tribe of Judah" with '**Mount Zion**.'

Ps 125:1 says "**Mount Zion**...cannot be moved but abides forever."

In Ps 2:6 God the Father declares ' I have installed My King Upon **Zion**, My holy mountain."

Isaiah 8:18 says "the LORD of hosts (MESSIAH)...dwells on **Mount Zion**."

In the glorious Millennium Isaiah 4:5 records that " the LORD will create over the whole area of **Mount Zion** and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy." ([See numerous other passages](#) that refer to Zion in the Millennium)

At times, "**Zion**" may refer to the **people of Jerusalem or its environs**. Messengers are to announce the triumph of the Lord to Zion (Isa. 52:7). God has redeemed Zion to be the tribe of his inheritance (Ps. 74:2). Psalm 78:68 equates **Zion** with the **tribe of Judah**, the special objects of God's love. And Ps. 48:11 mentions "the daughters of Judah," usually thought to be a reference to the villages surrounding Jerusalem.

The phrase "**Mount Zion**" occurs 21x in 21v especially in **Isaiah** -

2 Ki. 19:31; Ps. 48:2; Ps. 48:11; Ps. 74:2; Ps. 78:68; Ps. 125:1; Isa. 4:5; Isa. 8:18; Isa. 10:12; Isa. 18:7; Isa. 24:23; Isa. 29:8; Isa. 31:4; Isa. 37:32; Lam. 5:18; Joel 2:32; Obad. 1:17; Obad. 1:21; Mic. 4:7; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1

The phrase "**Daughter of Zion**" occurs 28x in 28v -

2 Ki. 19:21; Ps. 9:14; Isa. 1:8; Isa. 10:32; Isa. 16:1; Isa. 37:22; Isa. 52:2; Isa. 62:11; Jer. 4:31; Jer. 6:2; Jer. 6:23; Lam. 1:6; Lam. 2:1; Lam. 2:4; Lam. 2:8; Lam. 2:10; Lam. 2:13; Lam. 2:18; Lam. 4:22; Mic. 1:13; Mic. 4:8; Mic. 4:10; Mic. 4:13; Zeph. 3:14; Zech. 2:10; Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5; Jn. 12:15.

Note the phrase **virgin daughter of Zion**" occurs in 2 Ki. 19:21; Isa. 37:22; Lam. 2:13. Both phrases are figurative personifications of the city or the nation, as shown by the mention of Zion's wall (La 2:8) and gates (Ps. 9:14).

**See more detailed discussion of [Daughter of Zion](#).**

Other phrases refer to the people of the city: **'inhabitant of Zion'** (Isa. 12:6; Jer. 51:35), **'sons of Zion'** (Lam. 4:2; Joel 2:23; Zech. 9:13) or **'daughters of Zion'** (Isa. 3:16; 4:4). Senior citizens of Jerusalem are called **'the elders of the daughter of Zion'** in Lam. 2:10.

**Baker** explains that Zion " refers to (1) the city of Jerusalem, the City of David (2Sa 5:7); (2) the Temple Mount or Temple (Ps. 9:11); or (3) to the area or cities of larger Judah (Ps. 69:35). It was God's chosen location for His people. It was recognized ideally to be none other than a reference on earth to "the city of our God, His holy mountain" (Ps. 48:2), the city and country that God would show to Abraham and his descendants ([Ge 12:1](#))." ([The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament](#))

## ESCHATOLOGICAL USES OF ZION

**There may be other eschatological uses but here are some of the uses of Zion in the context of the [Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah](#)** - It is important to note that **Zion** is frequently mentioned in many eschatological passages, most of which describe **Zion** in the Millennial reign of Messiah. While you may not agree with all of these passages (be sure to check the context before you disagree), all have some elements that are difficult to explain other than ascribing them to a future time when Messiah returns to save Israel (Ro 11:26-28) and establish His Kingdom on earth where He will reign as King of kings for 1000 years -

2 Kings 19:31 Psalm 2:6-[note](#) Psalm 14:7 Psalm 20:2 Psalm 53:6 Psalm 69:35 Psalm 110:2 Isaiah 1:27-note  
Isaiah 2:3-note Isaiah 4:3-5-note Isaiah 18:7 Isaiah 24:23 Isaiah 33:5 Isaiah 33:20 Isaiah 34:8 Isaiah  
35:10 Isaiah 51:3 Isaiah 51:11 Isaiah 51:16 Isaiah 52:1 Isaiah 52:2, 7, 8 Isaiah 59:20 Isaiah 60:14 Isaiah  
61:3 Isaiah 62:1 Isaiah 62:11 Isaiah 64:10 Isaiah 66:8 Jeremiah 30:17-note Jeremiah 31:6-note Jeremiah  
31:12-note Jeremiah 50:5 Joel 3:16-note Joel 3:17-note Joel 3:21-note Obadiah 1:17 Obadiah 1:21 Micah

**Gilbrant - Zion** denotes some portion of the Jerusalem area or to Jerusalem itself. But it is far more than a mere location on a map. Its usage is interwoven with the monarchy of David, the activity of God and the divine plan for Israel (**ED: ESPECIALLY THE FUTURE PLACE FROM WHICH MESSIAH REIGNS DURING THE MILLENNIUM**). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Nave's Topical Summary of Zion is helpful in understanding the various uses of "Zion" in the Bible:**

- **ZION, called also Sion, stronghold of Jerusalem. Taken from the Jebusites by David** 2Sa 5:6, 7, 8, 9; 1Chr 11:5, 6, 7.
- **Called thereafter "the city of David,"** 2Sa 5:7, 9; 6:12, 16; 1Ki 8:1; 1Chr 11:5, 7; 15:1, 29; 2Chr 5:2.
- **Ark of the covenant placed in,** 2Sa 6:12, 16; 1Ki 8:1; 1Chr 15:1, 29; 2Chr 5:2;
- **Ark of Covenant removed from, to Solomon's temple on [Mount Moriah](#),** 1Ki 8:1; 2Chr 5:2, with 2Chr 3:1.
- **Collectively, the place, the forms, and the assemblies of Israel's worship** 2Ki 19:21, 31; Ps 9:11; 48:2, 11, 12; 74:2; 132:13; 137:1; Is 35:10; 40:9; 49:14; 51:16; 52:1, 2, 7, 8; 60:14; 62:1, 11; Je 31:6; 50:5; La 1:4; Joel 2:1, 15; Mt. 21:5; Jn 12:15; Ro 9:33; 11:26; 1Pe 2:6.
- **Name of, applied to Jerusalem,** Ps 87:2, 5; 149:2; Song 3:11; Is 33:14, 20; Je 9:19; 30:17; Zec 9:13.
- **Called the city of God,** Ps 87:2, 3; Is 60:14.
- **Restoration of, promised,** Is 51:3, 11, 16; 52:1, 2, 7, 8; 59:20; 60:14; Ob 17, 21; Zeph 3:14, 16; Zec 1:14, 17; 2:7, 10; 8:2, 3; 9:9, 13. ([See many more Scriptures above](#))
- **Name of, applied to the city of the redeemed,** He 12:22; Re 14:1

**Tsiyyon** - 154x in 154v - all the OT uses translated Zion (153), Zion's (1). Note the predominance of uses in the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations and the Minor Prophets - while not all uses speak of Zion's future, many do ([see list](#)) - **the point is that God has glorious future plans for Zion!**

2 Sam. 5:7; 1 Ki. 8:1; 2 Ki. 19:21; 2 Ki. 19:31; 1 Chr. 11:5; 2 Chr. 5:2; Ps. 2:6; Ps. 9:11; Ps. 9:14; Ps. 14:7; Ps. 20:2; Ps. 48:2; Ps. 48:11; Ps. 48:12; Ps. 50:2; Ps. 51:18; Ps. 53:6; Ps. 65:1; Ps. 69:35; Ps. 74:2; Ps. 76:2; Ps. 78:68; Ps. 84:7; Ps. 87:2; Ps. 87:5; Ps. 97:8; Ps. 99:2; Ps. 102:13; Ps. 102:16; Ps. 102:21; Ps. 110:2; Ps. 125:1; Ps. 126:1; Ps. 128:5; Ps. 129:5; Ps. 132:13; Ps. 133:3; Ps. 134:3; Ps. 135:21; Ps. 137:1; Ps. 137:3; Ps. 146:10; Ps. 147:12; Ps. 149:2; Cant. 3:11;

Isa. 1:8; Isa. 1:27; Isa. 2:3; Isa. 3:16; Isa. 3:17; Isa. 4:3; Isa. 4:4; Isa. 4:5; Isa. 8:18; Isa. 10:12; Isa. 10:24; Isa. 10:32; Isa. 12:6; Isa. 14:32; Isa. 16:1; Isa. 18:7; Isa. 24:23; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 29:8; Isa. 30:19; Isa. 31:4; Isa. 31:9; Isa. 33:5; Isa. 33:14; Isa. 33:20; Isa. 34:8; Isa. 35:10; Isa. 37:22; Isa. 37:32; Isa. 40:9; Isa. 41:27; Isa. 46:13; Isa. 49:14; Isa. 51:3; Isa. 51:11; Isa. 51:16; Isa. 52:1; Isa. 52:2; Isa. 52:7; Isa. 52:8; Isa. 59:20; Isa. 60:14; Isa. 61:3; Isa. 62:1; Isa. 62:11; Isa. 64:10; Isa. 66:8;

Jer. 3:14; Jer. 4:6; Jer. 4:31; Jer. 6:2; Jer. 6:23; Jer. 8:19; Jer. 9:19; Jer. 14:19; Jer. 26:18; Jer. 30:17; Jer. 31:6; Jer. 31:12; Jer. 50:5; Jer. 50:28; Jer. 51:10; Jer. 51:24; Jer. 51:35; Lam. 1:4; Lam. 1:6; Lam. 1:17; Lam. 2:1; Lam. 2:4; Lam. 2:6; Lam. 2:8; Lam. 2:10; Lam. 2:13; Lam. 2:18; Lam. 4:2; Lam. 4:11; Lam. 4:22; Lam. 5:11; Lam. 5:18;

Joel 2:1; Joel 2:15; Joel 2:23; Joel 2:32; Joel 3:16; Joel 3:17; Joel 3:21; Amos 1:2; Amos 6:1; Obad. 1:17; Obad. 1:21; Mic. 1:13; Mic. 3:10; Mic. 3:12; Mic. 4:2; Mic. 4:7; Mic. 4:8; Mic. 4:10; Mic. 4:11; Mic. 4:13; Zeph. 3:14; Zeph. 3:16; Zech. 1:14; Zech. 1:17; Zech. 2:7; Zech. 2:10; Zech. 8:2; Zech. 8:3; Zech. 9:9; Zech. 9:13

**Joel 2:2 A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.**

- **A day of darkness and gloom** Joe 2:10,31 3:14,15 Ex 20:21 Ps 97:2 Isa 5:30 8:22 Jer 13:16 Am 5:18-20 Zep 1:14,15 Heb 12:18 Jude 1:13
- **As the dawn is spread over the mountains** Am 4:13
- **So there is a great and mighty people:** Joe 2:5,11,25 1:6
- **There has never been anything like it:** Ex 10:6,14 Da 12:1 Mk 13:19
- **To the years of many generations:** De 32:7 Ps 10:6

**ESV** a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; **their like has never been before, nor will be again after them**

through the years of all generations.

**NLT** It is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of thick clouds and deep blackness. Suddenly, like dawn spreading across the mountains, a great and mighty army appears. **Nothing like it has been seen before or will ever be seen again.**

**CSB** a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and dense overcast, like the dawn spreading over the mountains; a great and strong people appears, **such as never existed in ages past and never will again in all the generations to come.**

**Keil & Delitzsch** "A day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and cloudy night: like morning dawn spread over the mountains, a people great and strong: **there has not been the like from all eternity, nor will there be after it even to the years of generation and generation.**

**NIV** a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, **such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.**

## **AN UNPRECEDENTED DARK DAY FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL**

**A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness** (cf Dt 4:11, Ex 10:22) - What had Joel just described? The Day of the LORD, and so here he adds that is a day of darkness and gloom. Now in chapter 1 Joel had been speaking of the "day of the locusts" and indeed a massive swarm of these flying critters can darken the sun because their numbers can be so large! But in the context of the rest of the passage, it becomes clear that Joel has been inspired by the Spirit to speak of a coming future **day of darkness** in Israel, specifically the "[Day of the Lord](#)". While he uses phraseology that can be descriptive of a "day of locusts," he is doing so to give his reader a sense of what it will be like in the future Day of the LORD.

We see a similar description in Joel 2:31 **The sun will be turned into darkness**, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome **day of the LORD** comes." So three times in Joel 2 (Joel 2:1, 11, 31) he mentions the **Day of the LORD**, and so clearly the "*theme*" of this chapter is this dreadful DAY! He describes this DAY by speaking metaphorically of the locust invasion in Joel 2:2-11 (keeping in mind that the events of Joel 1 would be fresh on his reader's minds), artfully and vividly integrating and interweaving these two days, the day of the locust descriptions giving us a precursor picture of what the **great and very awesome Day of the LORD** (Joel 2:11) will be like when it arrives. Remember, he has already warned this DAY is **coming** and is **near** (Joel 2:1-[note](#)). Now he gives a vivid portrayal of what this Day of the LORD will look like. But he is not giving his readers this incredible description in Joel 2:2-11 simply to terrify them, but to cause them to ponder why would Jehovah allow such devastating events to occur in Israel? Why did He allow the devastating "day of the locust"? But even more importantly why would He allow the future Day of the LORD? And of course the implicit answer is He has allowed it (and sent it) because of Israel's sin against Him, their repeated unfaithfulness to their covenant bonds of "marriage" to Jehovah (Jer 31:31, 32-note), their continual playing the harlot after other gods that are no gods, (cf Dt 8:19, 28:14, Dt 31:16, 17, 18, Jdg 2:17, 1 Chr 5:25, Jer 7:6, 9, 11:10, 13:10), etc, etc. How can we be so certain that God's objective in giving these frightening descriptions in Joel 2:2-11 is to stir their consciences and stimulate their sense of guilt? It is because of the wonderful phrase that follows the description of darkness and gloom like a shining shaft of sunlight in a dark room. And what is that great phrase? It is **YET EVEN NOW!** (Joel 2:12-[note](#)) The purpose of God is not to destroy but to deliver His people from the wrath to come (cf 1 Th 1:9,10-[note](#)).

Other OT prophets also describe this **day of darkness**...

Ezekiel 30:3 "For **the day** is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations.

Amos 5:18-20 Alas, you who are longing for the **day of the LORD**, For what purpose will the **day of the LORD** be to you? It will be darkness and not light; 19 As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. 20 Will not the **day of the LORD** be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?

Zephaniah 1:14; 15 Near is the great **day of the LORD**, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. 15 A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

**Charles Feinberg** observes that "**Darkness** is a figure in Scripture for misery and distress. (Note in this connection such passages as Is 8:22; 60:2; Jer 13:16; Amos 5:18; and Zep 1:15-16.) The figure is a most telling one because locust swarms by their density do obscure the light of the sun. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

See Whiting's descriptions of the sky growing dark with swarms of locusts - "Jerusalem's Locust Plague" J. D. Whiting - National Geographic 28 - December 1915: 511-50

**Garrett** - Clouds and darkness are a stock metaphor for the day of the Lord (cf. Isa 5:30; Jer 13:16; Amos 5:18–20; 8:9; Zeph 1:15), but this fact should not blind us to the theophanic significance of the language. In the exodus a "pillar of cloud" stood between the Israelites and the Egyptian chariots (Exod 14:19–20). When Yahweh gave the Ten Commandments at Sinai, the people were terrified at the thunder, lightning, and the sound of the ram's horn (Exod 20:18). Now, Joel implied, the Israelites, having failed to keep the covenant, had to face the wrath of Yahweh. ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#))

**ESV Study note** - Darkness recalls the Lord's appearance at Sinai (Ex. 19:16–19; Dt. 4:11; 5:22–23). God's appearance at Sinai foreshadows His "**day**" (**ED**: Day of the LORD) in the future (Amos 5:18–20; Zeph. 1:14–15).

**Darkness** ([02822](#)) (**choshek**) means darkness, an absence of light and figurative an absence of moral values. Choshek is first seen in Genesis 1:2 (cf Ge 1:4, 5, 18) describing "darkness... over the surface of the deep." As in English, the word has many symbolic uses. In its first occurrence, it is associated with disorder (Gen. 1:2) and is distinguished and separated from light (Ge 1:4). In subsequent uses, whether used in a physical or a symbolic sense, it describes confusion and uncertainty (Job 12:25; 37:19); evil done in secret (Job 24:16; Pr 2:13; Ezek. 8:12); obscurity, vanity, things forgotten (Job 3:4; 10:21; Eccl. 6:4); death (1 Sa 2:9; Ps. 88:12).

The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **choshek** with **skotos** which can describe physical darkness (eg, Jesus' crucifixion! = Mt 27:45, Mk 15:33, Lk 23:44) but also is used to describe spiritual darkness (And thus **skotos** is used in the NT quote from Isaiah 9:2= Mt 4:16, cp similar meaning of **skotos** in Jn 3:19, Acts 26:18, Ro 2:19, 2Cor 6:14, 1Pe 2:9, 1Jn 1:6).

**NET Note** - "darkness and gloom." These two terms probably form a hendiadys here. This picture recalls the imagery of the supernatural darkness in Egypt during the judgments of the exodus (Exod 10:22). These terms are also frequently used as figures (metonymy of association) for calamity and divine judgment (Isa 8:22; 59:9; Jer 23:12; Zeph 1:15). Darkness is often a figure (metonymy of association) for death, dread, distress and judgment (BDB 365 s.v. חֹשֶׁךְ, 3). ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**Hubbard on darkness...gloom...clouds...thick darkness** - all terms that signify the divine presence in the midst of his people, obscuring all light so that their focus of attention will be on him. ([Tyndale OT Commentary](#))

**As the dawn is spread over the mountains**- A [term of comparison](#) to describe the coming invasion of Israel. Think of the sun rising over the horizon, slowly but surely spreading from side to side so that the entire horizon is lit up by its brightness. In a similar way the **great and mighty people** will fill up the horizon as far as the eye can see from one side to another. And as the sun dawns incrementally in increasing brightness, so too the size of the **great and mighty people** will grow larger and larger to the eye of the beholders. **Feinberg** adds that "just as the dawn is sudden and widespread, so will the darkness of the Day of Jehovah be." (Ibid)

**So there is a great and mighty people** (It is a huge and powerful army = NET) - Joel says a **great and mighty people**. He literally wrote it so let us read it literally! This does not sound like a description of a horde of locusts! This is not a figurative description of a locust swarm (unless one spiritualizes Joel's description which can be interpreted literally in its plain sense!) but is a literal description of a godless Gentile "swarm!" **Joel** is referring to the horrible time period which includes the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) - "**Alas! for that day is great**, There is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it. (Jeremiah 30:7-[note](#))

**Zechariah** also prophesied of this time

For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. (Zechariah 14:2-note)

**Let me reiterate that there is a considerable difference of opinion about what Joel is describing in Joel 2, especially Joel 2:2-11** - It is simply an invasion of locusts or is it a future Babylonian (in 586 BC) or Assyrian invasion (721 BC) (which might be a reasonable interpretation given that Joel was written in 835 BC) or it might describe an future invasion at the end of the age just before Messiah returns. The time phrase in this passage ("*Nothing like it has been seen before or will ever be seen again*" - NLT) could hardly describe of the first two possibilities, as bad as both were. That is, they were not the worst destruction that would ever come to pass on the nation of Israel! No, Joel (using the metaphor of a locust invasion) describes an event which is unprecedented and unique in the history of Israel. And so as discussed below this description must point to a future, yet to be fulfilled event. To buttress this supposition, several other virtually identical time phrases are referenced below, all of which clearly describe a future unfulfilled day of destruction in Israel.

**Charles Feinberg** agrees with this assessment writing "What a **great and mighty people** the prophet is alluding to can be discerned from the latter part of the verse where it is clearly stated that there never has been the like nor will there be in the future.

We have proof here that an ordinary, or even extraordinary plague of locusts is **not the final and ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy**. The Spirit of God through the prophet is pointing to an unparalleled foe of the people of God who will in a coming day inflict greater desolation than did the locust plague. Who is this enemy? With many other students of the book we understand it to be the Assyrian power of the future, the northern power of the last days. Study carefully Isaiah 10:1-34 (notes) and Daniel 11:1-45 (See [Daniel 11:1-19 Commentary](#) and especially beginning in Da 11:36-45 - [Daniel 11:20-45 Commentary](#)). ([The Minor Prophets](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

## A TIME LIKE NO OTHER!

**There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations-** (ESV = "nor will be again after them through the years of all generations"; NLT = "Nothing like it has been seen before or will ever be seen again") Joel 1:2 has a similar but not identical phrase referring to the "Day of the Locusts" asking **"Has anything like this happened in your days Or in your fathers' days?."** But in Joel 2:2 the description is not of a present or past event but speaks of a future event (NB: future = "nor **WILL** there be"). Joel is not speaking here of the "day of the Locusts" (Joel 1:4-note), but is speaking of the **"Day of the Lord,"** of the events that **WILL** come upon Israel and Jerusalem and Mount Zion in **the last days**.

Compare Jeremiah's description of the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) this in the **day of the LORD**

"Alas! for that **DAY** is great, **There is none like it.**" (Jer 30:7-note)

We see **similar phrases** describing this **unprecedented time period** in both Old and New Testament passages which speak in some way of the coming **Day of the LORD**..

Daniel 12:1-note "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. **And there will be a TIME OF DISTRESS such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time;** and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Matthew 24:21-note (Jesus plainly explained) "For then there will be a **GREAT TRIBULATION**, (A [PERIOD OF 3.6 YEARS](#)) **such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.**

**Comment:** I realize you may be reading this and saying "No, that is not correct. This unprecedented event occurred in 70 AD when the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, killing many Jews in the process." If you are of that mindset, I encourage you to read my [commentary notes](#) on Matthew 24:15-21 (in which I compare a similar but not identical passage in Luke 21:20-24 [see commentary](#)). If you still disagree, then we will remain friends and will eagerly look forward to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to make all things right (aka, "pan-millennialism" - it will all "pan out" in the end!)

Mark 13:19 "For those days will be a time of tribulation **such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will.**

**Henry Morris** has a reasonable approach to Joel 2- The description of the invading host in this chapter goes well beyond even a legitimate metaphorical description of an invading swarm of locusts, as terrible as that can be. Such locust plagues have occurred many times in the Middle East and elsewhere. They might well compare to the great armies that will invade the Holy Land in the last days, but the comparison does not emphasize the reality described here. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Joel 2:3 A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them.**

- **fire:** Joe 1:19,20 Ps 50:3 Am 7:4
- **the land:** Ge 2:8 13:10 Isa 51:3 Eze 31:8,9
- **and behind:** Joe 1:4-7 Ex 10:5,15 Jer 5:17 Zec 7:14

## GOD REDUCES A LAND LIKE EDEN TO A DESERT WASTELAND

**A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them but a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them** - This description is more enigmatic or problematic, as it is typical of the devastating destruction wrought by a massive invasion of locusts (Joel 1:19-20-note). As noted in fact in Joel 2:2-9



most of the phrases he uses could be understood as descriptions of a massive locust invasion. These passages however in the overall context of Joel's emphasis of the **Day of the Lord** (Joel 1:15 Joel 2:1 Joel 2:11 Joel 2:31 Joel 3:14), **aday** like none other (even unlike devastating locusts plagues of the past), go far beyond an infernal insect infestation. As we have proposed above, these vivid depictions by Joel give us some sense (a foreshadowing) of the horrors to come when Israel is invaded by the armies of the world (Zech 14:2-note) in the [Last Days](#). And so while it is reasonable on one level to see all of the striking phrases in Joel 2:2-9 as descriptive of invading armies of locusts, the context (especially, the repeated emphasis on the Day of the LORD) also makes it just as reasonable to see these descriptions on a deeper level as but faint shadows of an even more fierce final future invasion of the land of Israel by the God-hating, Anti-Semitic nations of the world.

**Consumes** is the Hebrew verb [akal](#) (used in Joel 1:4, 19, 20, 2:3, 5, 25, 26) meaning to eat (Lxx = [analisko](#))

**Garrett** adds this note on **fire** - it is also noteworthy that armies of the ancient world regularly burned the fields of lands they invaded. ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#))

**Zephaniah** associates **fire** with the **Day of the LORD**

Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the LORD'S wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth. (Zeph 1:18)

**Like the Garden of Eden** (cf Ge 2:5-10) - This comparison to Eden is confirmation that Joel and the people of his time believed in the historicity of the garden of Eden.

**A desolate wilderness** (cf Hos. 2:12; Amos 7:9)

**Desolate** ([08077](#)) ([shemamah](#) noun from [shammah](#)) means desolation or waste and can refer to the condition of land, cities and houses as a result of neglect or devastating war (e.g., Ex. 23:29; Lev. 26:33; Isa. 1:7) and of Israel's idols as a result of God's judgment (Mic. 1:7). It is used figuratively of princes being clothed with devastation under the same conditions (Ezek. 7:27). God's judgment is figuratively referred to as His cup of desolation (Ezek 23:33).

Joel uses **shemamah** 3x - Joel 2:3, Joel 2:20, Joel 3:19.

## **NO ESCAPE UNLESS GOD PROVIDES A WAY!**

**And nothing at all escapes them** - No escape! This clarifies the totality of the destruction. (cf use in 2Chr 20:24). However God gives an "escape clause" so to speak using this same Hebrew verb **peletah escape** one other time in this chapter

And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who **escape**, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2:32-note)

**Comment:** Notice translates **peletah** in both Joel 2:3 and Joel 2:32 with the great verb **anasozo** (root verb [sozo](#) = to deliver, save, rescue, etc) which means save, deliver, rescue. Only NT use is in Heb 10:14. So it is true that **nothing at all escapes** (the devastation in the Day of the LORD), God provides a way of escape to any and all who call out to Him! In the midst of wrath, God remembers mercy! (cf Habakkuk 3:2-note)

**Escape** ([06413](#)) (**peletah** from **palat** = deliver, rescue) is a feminine noun meaning deliverance, something delivered, a remnant (2 Ki 19:30-31). Jacob split his group into two camps so that if Esau attacked one, the other could escape (Gen. 32:8). **TWOT** adds that "those who have escaped do not owe their survival to simply fortuitous circumstances or luck. Their survival is only of God's mercy. As a matter of fact, **pelêtâh** means not only "escape" but also "deliverance," as in 2 Chr 12:7. "In a little while I will grant them deliverance." Cf. also the statement of Joseph (Ge 45:7): "God sent me before you to make sure that your race would have 'survivors' in the land." The goodness of God in preserving a **remnant**, rather than liquidating the race, is especially emphasized in Ezra 9:8, 13-15." See also a [redeemed remnant](#).

**Isaiah** describes those who escape the wrath of God in the **Day of the LORD**..

Isaiah 4:2-commentary In that day (THIS IS THE "GOOD SIDE" OF THE DAY OF THE LORD - "THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT" SO TO SPEAK - [IN THE MILLENNIUM](#)) the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the **survivors** (**peletah**) of Israel.

## Gilbrant on peletah -

The noun pelêtāh is derived from the verb pālat (HED #6647), which means "to escape," "to deliver." It is variously translated "fugitive," "remnant," and by extension, "deliverance." For example, Gen. 45:7 describes how Joseph understood all that happened to him since his brothers had sold him into slavery: "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." The preservation of a holy remnant is seen throughout the OT (see especially Ezra 9:8, 13ff).

The idea of a remnant can first be found in Deut. 4:27-31 (also 28:62-68; 30:1-10). In these verses, Moses warns Israel that they will one day be scattered among the nations, but that God will preserve a remnant who will return from captivity. Later prophets specified Assyria and Babylon as the two nations from which God would save a remnant. This concept was extended to a righteous remnant who would be gathered to the Messiah when He established his kingdom.

Clearly, God—not strength, fate or fortune—allowed a remnant to exist. Isaiah 37:31f is one passage that is quite explicit on this matter. The promise of Sennacherib's destruction is accompanied by the assurance that out of Jerusalem would come a remnant and that "The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this" (Isa 37:32). In spite of captivity, there would be future deliverance.

This same promise to the people of God was proclaimed by the prophet Joel. In judgment, the Lord's army of locusts would create a desert wasteland out of a land as fertile and rich as Eden: "Nothing shall **escape** them" (Joel 2:3). Nevertheless, the promise remained, "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" (Joel 2:32).

The enemies of God have an opposite promise. Babylon, for example, will be surrounded by her enemies. God said to them, "Encamp all around her; let no one escape" (Jer. 50:29NIV). At the end of the age, the Antichrist, the "king who exalts himself" and says unheard-of things against the Lord (see Da. 11:36), "shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape" (Da 11:42).

In a prophecy against Moab, Obadiah extends the following admonition: "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as you have done, it will be done to you; your reward will return upon your own head.... But on Mount Zion will be deliverance" (Obad. 15, 17). Only those who have called upon the name of the Lord will escape his judgment. ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

**Peletah** - 26x in 26v - deliverance(2), escape(7), escaped(2), escaped remnant(3), escapes(1), fugitives(1), survivors(5), what has escaped(1), who have escaped(1), who escape(1), who escaped(2).

Gen. 32:8; Gen. 45:7; Ex 10:5; Jdg. 21:17; 2 Sam. 15:14; 2 Ki. 19:31; 1 Chr. 4:43; 2 Chr. 12:7; 2 Chr. 20:24; 2 Chr. 30:6; Ezr. 9:8; Ezr. 9:13; Ezr. 9:14; Ezr. 9:15; Neh. 1:2; Isa. 4:2; Isa. 10:20; Isa. 15:9; Isa. 37:32; Jer. 25:35; Jer. 50:29; Ezek. 14:22; Dan. 11:42; Joel 2:3; Joel 2:32; Obad. 1:17

**Joel 2:4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run.**

## LOCUSTS LIKENED TO MARCHING WAR HORSES

**Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run**- Locust heads look a bit like the head of a horse. One could see this comparison to horses running as a description of locusts as they run along the ground.

**David Levy** - There is an old Arab saying that declares, "In the locust, slight as it is, there is the nature of ten 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." Some might call this an oriental exaggeration, but ask those who have suffered from the devastating power of the locust, and you will see the truth of this picture. (Friends For Israel)

**Robert B. Chisholm** - The Italian word for **locust** is *cavalette* (little horse), and the Germans use the word *heapforde* (hay horse) in referring to them. This was not new, for Theodoret said centuries ago, "If any one should examine accurately the head of a locust, he will find it exceedingly like that of a horse." (Robert B. Chisholm, "Joel," in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

John has a parallel description of the demonic forces in the last days...

Revelation 9:7 **The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle** and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ([See Garland's analysis](#)).

**And like war horses so they run** - The locusts of Joel's day foreshadowing the enemy invasion of Israel in the last days.

**Henry Morris** - Horses were not used for agricultural purposes in ancient times, but were the most feared military equipment (Ex. 15:1ff.,19; Deut. 20:1; Josh. 11:4). The simile continues with "like chariots" (v. 5); "like a strong people" (v. 5); "like mighty men" (v. 7); and "like men of war" (v. 7).

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**David Levy** on the locust plague of Revelation 9 - To those who faced and fought the locust plague in Judah, it seemed like a living hell on earth. But this was a vivid type of a more vicious locust plague which will descend on the whole earth during the Great Tribulation. In that day, the fifth trumpet of judgment will be blown (Rev. 9:1) and with it will be opened the bottomless pit, out of which will emerge smoke so dense that it will darken the atmosphere, blotting out the light of day (Rev. 9:2). Coming out of this black pit of Hell will be a swarm of locusts (Rev. 9:3) which almost defies description. Their look will be horrifying! They will come forth "like horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like scorpions ..." (Rev. 9:7-10).

Are these real locusts? No, since they will not feed on grass or any green thing, but will sting men like scorpions for five months—those who are without the seal of God in their foreheads (Rev. 9:4).

Then who are they? They are demonic spirits which will take on this strange body, so vile and wretched that they will have been chained in the bottomless pit for centuries (Jude 6), so vile and wicked that they could not be allowed freedom to roam the earth. Their king will be none other than Satan himself, who is called Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek (Rev. 9:11), meaning the destroyer.

The locusts will use their tails to sting all unsaved people on earth for five months (Rev. 9:3, 5, 10). The sting will be so painful in its agony and duration that people will try to commit suicide in order to be relieved of their torment. For people to seek death shows the severity of their torment, but death will flee from them (Rev. 9:6). Here is a picture of the final Hell that awaits them in eternity! Men will be tormented without relief, desiring to die, only to find their suffering to be eternal. Notice, this horrible locust plague, as well as the sixth trumpet judgment (Rev. 9:13-20), will not bring repentance! In fact, mankind will become more vile, manifesting his wickedness without restraint. He will be given over to a reprobate mind which will express itself in the worship of demons, idolatry, murders, sorceries, fornication and theft (Rev. 9:20-21). Earth will be a living hell! (Friends of Israel)

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### **Tony Garland's discussion of THE LOCUSTS of Revelation 9:7**

Up to this point, the creatures which come up out of the bottomless pit have been identified as **locusts**" (Rev. 9:3). Now, John begins a series of descriptions which are similitudes—representations which approximate what he sees concerning the locusts. Comparative terms such as homioōma (likeness, image, form, appearance), homoios (like, similar), and hōs (as, like) will occur frequently in the descriptions which follow. As elsewhere in this book (Revelation), **much of what John is shown exceeds anything he has seen before and so he struggles to relate the vision using similes which provide an approximation of what he is being shown**. These comparative terms do not provide license for fanciful symbolism or allegorical interpretation—they represent the closest similarity which John knew for describing what he saw. If anything, they provide support for understanding John's description as closely accurate of the reality before him.

Before continuing with our study of this passage, we feel it is important to discuss how we are to understand the seemingly fantastic description of the **locusts** (and the horses and horsemen of the sixth trumpet) which follow in this chapter. Many find their description so unbelievable that they are driven to spiritualize the passage:

Many commentators interpret the plague as a condition of sinful life rather than an eschatological event. Hendricksen sees the description as "the operation of the powers of darkness in the soul of the wicked during this present age" (p. 147). For Hengstenberg it is the hellish spirit that penetrates the earth (I, pp. 429 ff), and for Dana, the forces of decay and corruption which God will use to undermine the Roman Empire (pp. 126 ff). (Mounce - Book of Revelation)

As we have observed in our discussion of [Interpreting Symbols](#), the decision to depart from a literal interpretation, which recognizes figures of speech, is a serious one for it places the interpreter upon a sea of subjectivity. Moreover, if all this chapter is meant to teach is general moral principles or even the depravity of men (Jer. 17:9), then how does one explain the excessive details of the vision? What possible purpose could they serve? Why not say the same thing with far fewer words? No, what is being

described here is real, literal, and important to understand in detail else God would not have “wasted” words on it.

We would ask the reader to keep in mind several considerations:

**Demonic Capabilities** - We know next to nothing concerning the demonic realm and especially the transformative capabilities of angels—be they elect or fallen. Scripture records that angels are “ministering spirits” (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7, 14), yet they appear in numerous passages as anatomically accurate human men. When Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John are shown the seraphim and cherubim, there is considerable difficulty describing their appearance in a manner that we could possibly grasp (Isa. 6:2; Eze. 1:10; 10:14; Rev. 4:7). The description of Satan, the “anointed cherub,” is equally fantastic (Eze. 28:12-14). Thus, we should not be surprised to find malevolent beings of immense spiritual and transformative powers with such fantastic descriptions. “They seem, from their description, to be a kind of Infernal Cherubim. The horse, the man, the lion, and the scorpion are combined in them [Rev. 4:7].”

**Size of the Locusts** - We know nothing concerning the size of the demonic locusts. Depending upon their similarity to earthly locusts, they are likely between 0.5 to 7 inches (13 to 175 mm.). In other words, these demon locusts may be on the scale of insects. The fact that they have a painful, and possibly poisonous sting, which does not kill their victims also points in this direction. For if the locusts were much larger than their largest earthly counterparts, then the sting alone could easily be a mortal wound.

**Fantastic Appearance of Natural Insects** - When asked to describe a simple spider or dragonfly when viewed under a magnifying glass or a flea under a microscope, how many of us would resort to similes like those of John (Rev. 9:7-10, 17-19)? Most, if not all of us! The simple fact is that known insects of the natural world are almost equally bizarre—but lacking in demonic power—to those described here. Consider the following description. The creature had four wings, each of which was covered with something like 250 thousand scales, and a tripartite body with a head as it were with six thousand eyes. Two long hair-like whips extended from its head with which it guided itself over immense distances. Its tongue was like a fire hose and one fourth the length of its body and it pranced upon six legs, the forelegs of which terminated in six needle-like spears. A bizarre fantasy? Not at all! A female monarch butterfly. A rather benign insect at that!

Once we trade in the Golden Rule of Interpretation for the fools gold of symbolism and allegory, we embark upon a sea of conjecture concerning the identification of this judgment. Bullinger and Seiss, in defense of a literal understanding, identify **the mischief which results from jettisoning a literal interpretation**:

The most common interpretation sees the fulfilment of this judgment in the Invasion of Europe by the Turks. In that case the “star” is seen to be Mahomet. His “fall from heaven” means that his family was once high and wealthy; he being an orphan and poor. “To him was given the key of the bottomless pit;” i.e., “he professed to receive a key from God.” So that in his case profession was evidently possession! How he opened the pit the interpreters do not tell us, but the “smoke” was his false teaching. Out of the pit came the locusts. Arbah in Hebrew means a locust. That is quite near enough with them for Arabians, though there could hardly be Mahomedans before Mahomet. . . . The “crowns like gold” were the turbans of linen. “Faces as men” means courage. “They had hair as women:” this refers to the horse tail decorations worn by the Pashas on their heads. (Bullinger, Commentary On Revelation, Rev. 9:12.)

Many indeed, consider it mere fancy-work, fiction, and symbol, referring to events in the past history of the race and intended to describe quite other things than are thus literally depicted. But the account is given as an account of realities. There is no difficulty involved in the language employed. The grammatical sense is plain and obvious. Neither is there any intimation whatever of any other sense. And if any other sense was intended, there lives not a man who can tell, with any degree of certainty, what that other sense is. Many and great minds have laboured to make out an allegorical and historical interpretation of these locusts from the pit, but thus far, as Alford has justly remarked, only “an endless Babel” has been the result. Alford gives it up. Stuart gives it up. Hengstenberg gives it up. Vaughan gives it up. Others have given it up. And every candid man just give it up, on any scheme that will consistently interpret the Apocalypse as a whole, or preserve to the sacred records the credit and value which this book claims for its contents. (Seiss, The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation, 207.)

The text compares these creatures to locusts. Since most of us have probably never studied the appearance and capabilities of even the household spider in detail, let us be wary to take John’s description seriously knowing that God’s severe judgment at the time of the end will certainly call forth such a devilish reality. “What God says is plain enough. He does not ask us to understand it. He asks us to believe it; and this, by God’s help, we mean to do.”

**horses - Joel used similar terminology to describe the locust plague of his day—and the demonic plague of this day.**

**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. (Joel 2:4-5) [emphasis added]

We are not alone in understanding Joel's vision of God's locust army as depicting something far beyond his immediate event—this ultimate eschatological invading army released from the pit.

At the sight of this terrible army of God the nations tremble, so that their faces grow pale. 'Ammim means neither people (see at 1 Kings 22:28) nor the tribes of Israel, but nations generally. Joel is no doubt depicting something more here than the devastation caused by the locusts in his own day. (Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch)

As will be seen by examining the many similarities between this passage and that of Joel, Joel saw both the local locust plague of his own day, but also understood it as a type (or model) of this demonic locust plague in the final Day of the Lord. Both the natural locusts of Joel's day and the demonic locusts here represent sovereign judgments of God. ("So among Mohammedans, 'Lord of the locusts' is a title of God."—Fausset, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, Joel 2:11) Like John, he resorted to similitude in comparing the locusts with horses:

Such an association is facilitated by three facts: (1) The heads of locusts and horses are similar in appearance. The German and Italian words for "locust" literally mean "hay-horse" [Heupferd] and "little horse" [cavalletta], respectively (Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, p. 45, n. 46; cf. also Driver, *The Books of Joel and Amos*, p. 52). (2) Both locusts and human armies advance swiftly. (3) The locusts' buzzing wings resemble the sound of chariot wheels (for accounts of the sounds made by locusts, see Driver, *The Books of Joel and Amos*, p. 52). (Robert B. Chisholm, "Joel," in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*)

**on their heads were crowns of something like gold**- John does not use simile to describe the crowns, but only the material out of which they were made. The crowns they wear also differentiates them from natural locusts. These are from among the hierarchy and rank of fallen angels (Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10). "Alford understands it of the head of the locusts actually ending in a crown-shaped fillet which resembled gold in its material."<sup>58</sup> "Not actual crowns, but AS crowns. Milligan remarks that any yellow brilliancy about the head of the insect is a sufficient foundation for the figure."<sup>59</sup> More likely, the crowns are an indicator of the victory the locusts will enjoy over their prey. See Crowns.

**their faces were like the faces of men** - This indicates they are intelligent rational beings and not normal locusts. ([Revelation 9 Commentary](#))

**Joel 2:5 With a noise as of chariots They leap on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people arranged for battle.**

- **With a noise:** Na 2:3,4 3:2,3 Rev 9:9
- **as of chariots:** Isa 5:24 30:30 Mt 3:12
- **Like a mighty people arranged for battle:** Joel 2:2

## **NOISE ACCOMPANIES THEIR COMING**

**With a noise as of chariots** - The sound of their springing and leaping was like that of a two-wheeled war chariot rumbling over the rocky Judean mountains.

Swarms of locusts flying can be heard from a distance. And in the future armies approaching Zion will also be awful audible sounds to the ears of the residents of the city. (cf their fate in Zech 14:2-note)

In his famous **National Geographic article** in 1915 **Whiting** writes "It was one of the last days of February, 1915, that Air. Lewis Larson, to whose skill and energy we are indebted for the superb collection of locust pictures appearing on these pages, returned from the picturesque Ain Fara gorge, which borders on the Wilderness of Judea and is only a few miles east of Jerusalem, with word that swarms of locusts had flown overhead in such thick clouds as to obscure the sun for the time being. However, before they were seen, a loud noise, produced by the napping of myriads of locust wings, was heard, described as resembling the distant rumble of waves, or, as St. John has it, "the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running into battle"

(Rev 9:9), the picture on page 512 vividly portraying Joel's word picture "A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people' (Joel 2:2) Immediately rumors poured in from the Christian towns of Es Salt, on the uplands east of the Jordan, and Bethlehem, that similar swarms had also visited them, causing much destruction." ("Jerusalem's Locust Plague" J. D. Whiting - National Geographic 28 - December 1915: 511-50)

**They leap on the tops of the mountains** - Locusts are leapers.

**Duane Garrett** proposes that "The locusts were both the symbol for that (future human) army and its precursor, and Joel used language that projected both pictures into the readers' minds. To use an example from the modern world of computer-aided multimedia, it is as if we see the locusts of chap. 1 "[morphing](#)" into soldiers and cavalry before our eyes." ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#))

**Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble** - The consumption of vegetation by locusts is proverbial. The devastation of the armies of the world will be similar in the last days. Their feeding pierced the air like the crackling of a burning bush or dried stubble

**NET Note on like...like** (Joel 2:3, Joel 2:4 twice, Joel 2:5 twice, Joel 2:7 twice, Joel 2:9) - The repetition of [the word of comparison](#) ("like") in Joel 4-7 should not go unnoticed. The author is comparing the locust invasion to familiar aspects of human invasion. If the preposition has its normal force here, it is *similarity* and not *identity* that is intended. In other words, locusts are being likened to human armies, but human armies are not actually present. On the other hand, this Hebrew preposition is also on occasion used to indicate exactitude, a function described by grammarians as kaph veritatis. ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**Like a mighty people arranged for battle** - they leave impression of a military horde outfitted for battle with helmet and flexible mail covering.

All of the descriptions in this passage could be readily applied to the invasion of the locusts, but they also foreshadow a literal future invasion. While Joel 2:5 uses a term of comparison ("**like a mighty people...**"), in Joel 2:2 he writes that in "a day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness...**there is a great and mighty people**; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations." In other words, Joel uses parallel descriptions, Joel 2:2 being a **literal** description of a **mighty people** who will come on the nation of Israel in a unique, "one of a kind" time period. In Joel 2:5 the description is figurative, and speaks first of the locust invasion of Joel's day but when compared to Joel 2:2 clearly speaks of something far beyond the locust plague, in fact reaching to the eschatological [Day of the LORD](#) at the end of this present evil age.

## Joel 2:6 Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale.

- **all faces:** Ps 119:83 Isa 13:8 Jer 8:21 30:6 La 4:8 Na 2:10

CSB **Nations** writhe in horror before them; all faces turn pale.

NIV At the sight of them, **nations** are in anguish; every face turns pale.

**Keil and Delitzsch** - At the sight of this terrible army of God the **nations** tremble, so that their faces grow pale. 'Ammim ([05971](#)) means neither people (see at 1 Kings 22:28-[note](#)) nor the tribes of Israel, but nations generally. **Joel is no doubt depicting something more here than the devastation caused by the locusts in his own day.**

The [Septuagint](#) does not always closely follow the Hebrew text and in this passage there is an interesting variation. The newer translation of the Septuagint, the **Septuagint-NETS** reads "Before him **peoples will be crushed** (Lxx = suntribo which means crushed completely, smashed, shattered, broken in pieces, destroyed by making something come apart and in Ro 16:20 means to crush the power of Satan); every face will be like the soot of an earthen pot." The verb suntribo is a strong and vivid verb describing the woman's breaking the alabaster vial of very costly perfume and pouring it on the head of her Lord (Mk 14:3). In Lk 9:39 it describes a demon possessed boy who is mauled or tortured severely by the demon. The point is that swarming locusts do not crush people. In fact people crush swarming locusts! So this is another "clue" that Joel is not speaking only of a locust invasion, but gives a description that could reasonably be seen as foreshadowing another invasion in the future, an invasion of Israel by a people who seek to crush and destroy them. **Suntribo** translates the Hebrew verb for anguish (chul). This point is discussed not to refute that the description of Joel 2:2-10 is primarily of a locust invasion, but to support the thought that Joel has a greater invasion in mind and is using the locust invasion to illustrate or foreshadow that greater invasion in the Day of the LORD that is near in Joel 2:1, which serves as the introduction to verses 2-10. This hardly seems to be mere coincidence.

Another support of this passage foreshadowing an end times event, we see a similar description in the Isaiah 13 passage mentioned

above describing the future [Day of the LORD](#)...

Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt. 8 They will be terrified, Pains and anguish will take hold of them; **They will writhe (chul; Lxx - tikto = to give birth) like a woman in labor, They will look at one another in astonishment, Their faces aflame.** 9 Behold, **the day of the LORD is coming**. Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate (Hebrew = [shamad](#) = this depicts destruction that usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or mass killing) its sinners from it. (Isaiah 13:6-9)

**Comment** The use of the same Hebrew verb **chul** in Isaiah's description of the coming Day of the LORD would support Joel's use of the word in a similar context.

Garrett adds that "Wolff comments that convulsing in anguish (like a woman in labor) is a stock expression for the day of the Lord in Isa 13:8 and Ezek 30:16 and that it in particular alludes to the northern enemy in Jer 4:31 (see also Jer 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 1 Th 5:3). Wolff aptly concludes that this shows that "locusts as such are by no means meant." (ED: I WOULD TEMPER THAT STATEMENT A BIT AND SAY THAT LOCUST AS SUCH ARE NOT THE ONLY MEANING OF JOEL'S METAPHORICAL DESCRIPTION)." ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#))

**Before them the people (NATIONS) are in anguish; All faces turn pale** - Yes, the coming swarm of locust incites this reaction in the "day of the locusts" who are sent by the LORD. But in the context of a future day of dread sent by the LORD, the Day of the LORD, this is an apt description of the anguish and faces of the **peoples of the NATIONS** turning pale (the older commentary **Keil and Delitzsch** agrees - see their note above).

**Anguish (Q2342)(chul)** means to writhe, whirl, shake, dance, fear, grieve. **Chul** has many different meanings, most of which derive from either the idea to whirl in circular movements and to writhe in labor pains. Several OT uses are in a description of giving birth and the pangs associated with that act (cf Job 39:1, Ps 29:9 = "calving", Isa 13:8, 51:2, 54:1, 66:7, 8). And so **chul** conveys the idea of "to writhe in (labor) pain," or at least "to experience anguish (normally associated with childbirth)." The first use in Ge 8:10 has a less common us - "he **waited** yet another seven days."

As discussed above, it is interesting that **chul** is used in Isaiah 13:8 describing the reaction of people in the Day of the LORD.

**Gilbrant on chul** -

The association with giving is sometimes with little or no reference to the pain usually associated with the process (Job 15:7). So the word is used of the birth of David in Ps. 51:5; the people of Israel, born to Sarah in Isa. 51:2; and young deer in Job 39:1. The birth of young deer might also be mentioned in Ps. 29:9, but RSV and NIV, going only by the consonants, offer the very different translation, "twisting the oaks."

Figuratively, the term also refers to the birth of the earth and the world in Ps. 90:2, (cf. Isa. 66:8); personified wisdom in Prov. 8:24f; the rain brought (forth) by the north wind in Prov. 25:23; the people of Israel born to God in Deut. 32:18 and to Zion in Isa. 66:7f.

Other verses emphasize the pain associated with the birth process (Isa. 26:17f), although this is almost always in a figurative sense. The term is therefore frequently used to describe various forms of suffering, which are generally emotional rather than physical. The Canaanites were in anguish when they heard of the Israelites (Deut. 2:25); Esther was in great distress when she heard of Mordecai wearing sackcloth and ashes, being initially unaware of the king's decree permitting Haman to exterminate the Jews (Est. 4:4); the wicked man was in torment (Job 15:20); the dead (RSV "shades") were in deep anguish (Job 26:5); the psalmist's heart was "sore pained" (Ps. 55:4); the Babylonians and their land were to writhe like a woman in labor when the day of the Lord Almighty came upon them (Isa. 13:8); Egypt was in anguish at a report from Tyre, who had not experienced the pains (or joys) of childbirth (Isa. 23:4f; cf. Isa. 54:1); Jeremiah writhed in pain with the burden of his message (Jer. 4:19); the nations were to be in anguish at the sight of the approaching army of locusts (Joel 2:6); the mountains writhed at the appearance of God (Hab. 3:10); and Gaza agonized as Yahweh wreaked vengeance on the enemies of his people (Zech. 9:5).

The ideas of movement and emotional anguish are perhaps also evident on occasions when this verb bears the meaning "to tremble." This translation refers exclusively to the created order's reaction to the presence of Yahweh. So the earth trembles before God (1 Chr. 16:30; Pss. 96:9; 97:4; 114:7); as do the deep waters (Ps. 77:16, RSV; NIV translates "writhed"); and the mountains (Hab. 3:10 KJV, here RSV translates "writhed"). A similar response is expected from sinful Judah in Jer. 5:22.

However, since 1 Chr. 16:30 and Ps. 96:9 occur in contexts of positive praise, "Dance before him," as suggested by Andrew Boling (TWOT), might be a more appropriate way of rendering this verb in these cases.

Chîl may also have the meaning "to wait" (see Mic. 1:12). Noah waited seven days after the dove's return to the ark before sending it out again (Gen. 8:10). Eglon's servants waited outside his quarters, supposing he was relieving himself, when he actually lay dead, slain by the left-handed judge, Ehud (Judg. 3:25).

In Ps. 37:7, the reader is encouraged to wait patiently for the Lord. Elsewhere, when this verb has God or his salvation as its object, it can be translated by the term "trust" (Job 35:14). Job 20:21 uses this verb with the meaning of waiting, with the sense of endurance. The prosperity of the wicked and proud man will not endure.

Another possible meaning of chîl is "to prosper," although this is not absolutely certain. While in the RSV and NIV of Ps. 10:5 the psalmist complains that the ways of the wicked are apparently "always prosperous," the KJV suggests they are always "grievous" based on the association of chîl with the pain of the birth process.

Finally, it should be noted that some occurrences of this verb have been translated "to wound," or perhaps more specifically, "to pierce." Thus, 1 Sam. 31:3 and 1 Chr. 10:3 describe how Saul was injured by the Philistine archers on Mount Gilboa. However, the Hebrew as it stands might simply suggest that Saul "trembled greatly" or "was in great anguish" because of the Philistine archers (cf. the meanings above), a rendering which makes excellent sense in the context of the following verse. The translation "to pierce" is based on repointing the verb to the verb châlal (HED #2591), which certainly means "to wound" or "to pierce."

A similar situation occurs in Job 26:13. The RSV and NIV read the verse as saying that God's hand "pierces" the gliding serpent named Rahab. However, the KJV here says that God "formed" the crooked serpent. ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

**Chul** - 54v - anguish(6), becomes weak waiting(1), birth to you in pain(1), born(1), brings forth(1), brought forth(4), burst(1), calve(1), calving(1), danced(1), fall(1), gave you birth(1), gave birth(2), giving birth(1), labor(1), quaked(1), shakes(2), swirl down(1), take part(1), travailed(4), tremble(5), trembled(1), turned(1), wait(1), wait patiently(1), waited(2), whirl(1), whirling(1), wounded(2), wounds(1), writhe(2), writhe in anguish(1), writhe in pain(1), writhed(2), writhes(2), writhes in pain(1).

Ge 8:10; Dt. 2:25; 32:18; Jdg 3:25; 21:21,23; 1 Sa 31:3; 2 Sa 3:29; 1 Chr 10:3; 16:30; Est 4:4; Job 15:7,20; 26:5; 35:14; 39:1; Ps. 29:8-9; 37:7; 51:5; 55:4; 77:16; 90:2; 96:9; 97:4; 114:7; Prov. 8:24-25; 25:23; 26:10; Isa. 13:8; 23:4-5; 26:17-18; 45:10; 51:2; 54:1; 66:7-8; Jer. 4:19,31; 5:22; 23:19; 30:23; 51:29; Lam. 4:6; Ezek. 30:16; Hos. 11:6; Joel 2:6; Mic. 1:12; 4:10; Hab. 3:10; Zech. 9:5

**Joel 2:7 They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths.**

- **They run like mighty men:** 2Sa 1:23 2:18,19 Ps 19:5 Isa 5:26-29
- **They climb the wall like soldiers:** Joel 2:9 2Sa 5:8 Jer 5:10
- **they each march in line:** Pr 30:27

**They run like mighty men** - they came like a corps of commandos, in high morale, charging their enemy with vigor and valor. (Levy)

**They climb the wall like soldiers** - No wall was too impregnable, no obstacle could deter their advance, only victory was anticipated as they pressed on to the prize before them. They came relentlessly in irresistible order

**And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths** - "They were not deterred from their objective, neither did they straggle along, but moved with impelling instinct as one massive body which had the appearance of being directed by an organized leader, but they had none (Prov. 30:27)." (Levy)

Each of these phrases is a fitting description of the insect invasion in the "day of the locust," which by no means precludes the premise that they all foreshadow and merge with a description of the invasion of Israel by enemy forces in the Day of the LORD..

**Joel 2:8 They do not crowd each other, They march everyone in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks.**

- **When they burst through the defenses:** 2Ch 23:10 32:5 \*marg: Ne 4:17,23 Job 33:18 36:12 Song 4:13



**They do not crowd each other, They march everyone in his path** - An apt description of the past locusts armies and the future Gentile armies.

**When they burst through the defenses** - This description certainly suggests a foreshadowing of an army of men, for there was really no defense for an army of locusts.

**Levy** - One writer expressed it this way, "Their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a living deluge. We dug trenches, and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death heaps upon heaps, but the effort was utterly useless. Wave after wave rolled up the mountainside, and poured over rocks, walls, ditches, and hedges, those behind covering up and bridging over the masses already killed. After a long and fatiguing contest, I descended the mountain to examine the depth of the column, but I could not see to the end of it."

**They do not break ranks** - This was true of locusts, but certainly could speak of an army marching side by side.

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### **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.

**Joel 2:9 They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief.**

- **They enter through the windows like a thief:** Ex 10:6 Jer 9:21 John 10:1

**Charles Feinberg** - The noise of the wings of the locusts in motion and of their hind legs strikes terror in every heart (Joel 2:5). In the life of every member of the nation this visitation will long linger in memory. The locusts are as tireless in their running as mighty men of war; they appear to have their regulated phalanxes like an army on the march (see Pr 30:27); they are adept at scaling walls; as though directed by a master mind, they do not break their ranks; no one thrusts another out of his place. All is in turmoil and in confusion at their onslaught. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief.**

**Holman Christian Study Bible** - Joel continued the interplay of soldiers with the imagery and actions of a locust plague. The swarming locusts ate everything in the fields and then came into the city and finally into the houses. So also invading armies breached the city walls and then plundered the houses. Joel used end-time language and moved beyond what happens in normal locust or military invasions. The very heavens were now engaged; Yahweh and His heavenly armies were ready to wreak havoc. Judgment day had come.

**Joel 2:10 Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.**

- **Before them the earth quakes,:** Ps 18:7 114:7 Na 1:5 Mt 27:51 Rev 6:12 20:11
- **The sun and the moon grow dark:** Joe 2:2,31 3:15 Isa 13:10 34:4 Jer 4:23 Eze 32:7 Am 5:8 Mt 24:29 Mk 13:24,25 Lu 21:25,26 Ac 2:20 Rev 8:12

## JOEL'S FORECAST: COSMIC CHAOS!

**Charles Feinberg** - The heavenly bodies themselves are darkened by the thick masses of locusts flying under the whole expanse of the heavens. Destruction is literally on the march, for as thieves the locusts seek out what they may devour. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Hubbard** writes on Joel 2:10-11 - Here the picture of the locust-plague merges with the description of the **Day of the Lord** (cf. Joel 1:5; 2:1-2). The quaking earth (cf. Amos 1:1; 2:13; 8:8; 9:1) and trembling heavens, the darkened sun and moon and lightless stars (cf. 3:15), are evidence that the Lord himself is coming with his locust army to execute judgment. The language used is reminiscent of other Old Testament descriptions of vengeful theophanies (cf. Isa. 13:10, 13; Jer. 10:10; Nah. 1:5-6). The darkened heavens speak of mourning as in Isaiah 1:3. These signs are not merely poetic pictures of the effects of the plague but are the awful, momentous signs which accompany the Day of the Lord (cf. 2:30-31 for an even more terrifying picture). ([Tyndale OT Commentary](#))

**Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness-** This description move beyond an invasion of locusts, for it would be difficult to ascribe all these cosmic alterations to a locust plague.

**The ESV Study** note says "Only the day of the Lord could produce this "cosmic shakedown." In many cases in the Prophets, the Hebrew verb ra'ash (here translated "tremble") was associated with the end of the age, the return of chaos, and God's final judgment (Isa. 13:13; 24:18; Jer. 4:23-24; Amos 8:8-9; Nah. 1:5; Hag. 2:6, 21).

Cosmic signs are frequently associated with the anger or indignation of the LORD..

Isaiah 13:13 (CONTEXT = DAY OF THE LORD) Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place At the fury of the LORD of hosts **In the day of His burning anger.**

Nahum 1:5; 6 (CONTEXT = GOD'S JUDGMENT ON NINEVEH) Mountains quake because of Him And the hills dissolve; Indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, The world and all the inhabitants in it. **6 Who can stand before His indignation?** (SEE BELOW - "WHO CAN ENDURE IT?" ) Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him. 7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him.

Jeremiah 10:10 (CONTEXT = GOD'S ANGER AT ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY - Jer 10:1-9) But (IN CONTRAST TO FALSE, DEAD, TRANSIENT IDOLS) the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

Psalm 18:7 Then the earth shook and quaked; And the foundations of the mountains were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry.

Matthew 24:29-[note](#) "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**MacArthur** - Earthquakes and cosmic disruptions are well attested elsewhere as signs accompanying divine appearances (Jdg 5:4; Ps 18:7; Jer 4:23-26; Na 1:5, 6; Mt 24:7). Joel later refers to these signs (cf. Joel 2:31; 3:15).

**David Levy** - Even though Joel is using figurative hyperboles to express the horrible terror of this locust plague, there is a prophetic parallel that will take place in the Tribulation. During the Tribulation there will be three great earthquakes (Rev. 6:12; 11:13; 16:18-19) which will affect the heavens (Mt. 24:29; Rev. 12-14).

**Quakes** ([07264](#))(see earlier discussion of [ragaz](#)) to be agitated, quiver, quake, be excited, perturbed

**Tremble** ([07493](#))(**raash**) means to quake, shake, tremble, move and most often refers a physical tremor back-and-forth movement of a physical body by an outside force. Frequently, the trembling or shaking takes place as nature's response to God's presence or to His activity of rendering divine judgment. Things shaken included the walls of a city (Ezek. 26:10), all living creatures (Ezek 38:20), ground shaken by horses (Job 39:20), thresholds of doors (Amos 9:1); the heavens (Joel 2:10, 3:16; Hag. 2:6), the mountains (Jer. 4:24; Nah. 1:5); Gentile nations (Ezek 31:16, Hag 2:7), coastlands or islands (Ezek. 26:15); kingdoms (Isa. 14:16); the earth or lands (Jdg. 5:4; 2 Sam. 22:8; Ps. 60:2; 68:8; 77:18; Isa. 13:13; Jer. 8:16; 10:10; 49:21); Raash once describes the leaping of a warhorse (Job 39:20). In another unique use raash expresses the psalmist's desire that there be an abundance of

grain (Ps. 72:16).

Joel 3:16 says "the heavens and the earth **tremble (raash)**."

**Gilbrant** notes that **raash** "is generally connected with God's judgment. In the Qal stem, it refers to the "shaking," "quaking" or "trembling" of the earth (Jdg. 5:4; Ps. 68:8; Isa. 24:18), of the land of Judah (Jer. 8:16), of the heavens (Joel 2:10), of the heavens and the earth (Joel 3:16), of the mountains (Jer. 4:24; Nah. 1:5), of the walls of Tyre (Ezek. 26:10) and of the pasturelands of Tyre (Ezek. 27:28). It refers to the "rustling" or "waving" of the abundant grain crop (Ps. 72:16). But when God judges, the thresholds of the Temple "may shake" (Amos 9:1). In fact, every living creature "shall shake" at the presence of the Lord (Ezek. 38:20). Rā'ash occurs once in the Niphal stem, where it refers to the earth "is moved" at the fall of Babylon (Jer. 50:46). In the Hiphil stem, rā'ash means "to cause to tremble," referring to the earth (Ps. 60:2), the heavens and the earth (Hag. 2:6, 21) and the nations (Ezek. 31:16; Hag. 2:7) when God judges. God inspired the Israelites to take up a taunt song against the king of Babylon asking, "Is this the man who made the [kingdoms of] earth to tremble?" (Isa. 14:16). ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

**Raash** - 30x in 30v - leap(1), quake(4), quaked(5), quakes(3), quaking(1), shake(9), shaken(2), shook(2), tremble(2), wave(1).

Jdg. 5:4; 2 Sam. 22:8; Job 39:20; Ps. 18:7; Ps. 46:3; Ps. 60:2; Ps. 68:8; Ps. 72:16; Ps. 77:18; Isa. 13:13; Isa. 14:16; Isa. 24:18; Jer. 4:24; Jer. 8:16; Jer. 10:10; Jer. 49:21; Jer. 50:46; Jer. 51:29; Ezek. 26:10; Ezek. 26:15; Ezek. 27:28; Ezek. 31:16; Ezek. 38:20; Joel 2:10; Joel 3:16; Amos 9:1; Nah. 1:5; Hag. 2:6; Hag. 2:7; Hag. 2:21

Isaiah 13:13 (CONTEXT: DAY OF THE LORD) Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth **will be shaken** from its place At the fury of the LORD of hosts In **the day** of His burning anger.

Nahum 1:5 Mountains **quake** because of Him And the hills dissolve; Indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, The world and all the inhabitants in it.

Hag 2:6-7 (CONTEXT: DAY OF THE LORD) "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to **shake** the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. 7 'I will **shake** all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.

**MacArthur** - The shaking of the cosmic bodies and the nations goes beyond the historical removal of kingdoms and the establishment of others, such as the defeat of Persia by Greece (Da 7). Rather, the text looks to the cataclysm in the universe described in Revelation 6-19, the subjugation of the nations by the Messiah, and the setting up of His Kingdom which will never be destroyed (cf. Da 2:44; 7:27; Zec 14:16-21; Mt 25:32; Lk 21:26; Heb 12:26; Rev 19:19-21). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Haggai 2:21 "Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, 'I am going to **shake** the heavens and the earth.

**Grow dark (06937)(qadar)** means to be dark (blackness - Jer 4:28), as in judgment and is seen with the stars (Ezek. 32:7-8), the sun and moon (Joel 2:10; 3:15), the sky (1 Ki. 18:45; Jer. 4:28) and "the day" (Mic. 3:6). In the context of judgment we see darkness and mourning - ""For this the earth shall mourn And the heavens above be dark." (Jer 4:28). Sometimes the sky grew dark due to an actual storm (1 Ki. 18:45). Other times, it was not a literal darkness, as when the prophet Ezekiel prophesied against Pharaoh, saying that the heavens would be darkened when God acted against him (Ezek. 32:7, 8). Another example of symbolism was when Micah warned the false prophets that dark days were coming for them due to a lack of revelation (Mic. 3:6)

In the ancient Near East brightness and darkness were regarded as very important for life, thought, and religion. Darkness denotes the whole range of what is harmful or evil.

Darkening is associated with prophetic passages - Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:30-31; Joel 3:15 (cf Acts 2:20); Zeph. 1:15; Rev. 6:12, 17; Rev. 8:12.

**Qadar** - 18x in 17v - become dark(1), dark(1), darken(2), grew black(1), grow dark(2), mourn(3), mourning(6), sit(1), turbid(1).

1 Ki. 18:45; Job 5:11; Job 6:16; Job 30:28; Ps. 35:14; Ps. 38:6; Ps. 42:9; Ps. 43:2; Jer. 4:28; Jer. 8:21; Jer. 14:2; Ezek. 31:15; Ezek. 32:7; Ezek. 32:8; Joel 2:10; Joel 3:15; Mic. 3:6

**Joel 2:11 The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?**

- **The LORD utters His voice:** Joe 3:16 2Sa 22:14,15 Ps 46:6 Isa 7:18 13:4 42:13 Jer 25:30 Am 1:2

- **before His army:** Joe 2:25
- **For strong is he who carries out His word** Jer 50:34 Rev 18:8
- **The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome:** Jer 30:7 Am 5:18,20 Zep 1:15
- **And who can endure it?:** Nu 24:23 Na 1:6 Mal 3:2 Rev 6:17

## **JEHOVAH LEADS HIS ARMY IN THE DAY OF THE LORD**

**The LORD utters His voice before His army** - Literally "the LORD gives His voice." Jehovah in many contexts is clearly Yeshua and this seems to be one of those passages where Joel envisions Jesus leads His army. This begs the question "Who composes His army - locusts or others?" In one sense the swarm of locusts is His army for God is using them to punish the sin of Judah. But what is the immediate context? In this passage this is His army in the [Day of the LORD](#). Therefore, the locust army is only a shadow of the armies that will attack Israel and Judah. If we remember that this prophecy was probably written about 835 BC, before both the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, then one could interpret the "near" fulfillment in terms of these two invasions (Assyrians into Northern Kingdom in 721 BC and Babylonians into the Southern Kingdom in 586 BC). But in the context of Joel's other descriptions of the [Day of the LORD](#) in Joel 3, there is little question that he is alluding to the the last days invasion of Gentile armies who have one objective - the annihilation of Israel. And remember that all of the enemies that came against Israel over the millennia were under the control of the LORD (e.g., Jer 25:9, Pr 21:1, etc) and in that sense were "His army." To say it another way, these armies were but a "tool" in His sovereign hand to bring judgment on Judah unless they repented. Garrett adds "Joel affirmed that all the powers of nature and of men were in Yahweh's hands and that nothing happened apart from his will." ([Ibid](#))

**David Levy** adds that "A still greater fulfillment of this horrible **day of the Lord** is yet to be seen during the Great Tribulation. At that time the nations of the world will again converge on Israel (Zech. 14:2-note) with a horrible campaign of battles ensuing called "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev 16:14-note). But the verdict of this war will not be the total destruction of Israel, for the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations who have come up to do battle (Zech. 14:3-note), destroying them with the word of His mouth (Rev. 19:15-note). Seeing the destruction left by the Babylonians, Jeremiah cried, "It is because of the Lord's mercies [loving-kindness] that we are not consumed..." (Lam 3:22). Who can "abide the day of the Lord?" asked Joel. Only those who have experienced the LOVING-KINDNESS of the Lord. HAVE YOU? (Friends of Israel)

**Charles Feinberg** observes that "the Lord Himself is in all this as well. He **utters His voice**—the thunderstorm—before His great army of locusts (**ED; BUT SEE FEINBERG'S LAST TWO SENTENCES BELOW IN BOLD FONT**). They are His army in a real sense because they are both powerful and numerous. One of the laws of Mohammed reads: "Ye shall not kill the locusts, for they are the army of God Almighty." The command of God is being executed by His instruments. If this be so terrible that man can scarce abide it, how much less will he be able to do so in the hour when God's fullest judgments will be upon a Christ-rejecting and God-dishonoring world, in **the Day of Jehovah**? Here we find one of the great principles of God's dealing with man throughout his history: God only inflicts punishment after great provocation, and when He does so, it is meant to draw man back from further and more severe visitations of the wrath of God. **The plague of locusts was severe, but it could not approximate the devastation to be wrought in that time known as the Day of Jehovah. Says God: "From the lesser learn the greater and be warned."** ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Patterson** has an interesting comment on the previous descriptions in Joel 2:2-10 - Building on the metaphor of locusts as armies, Joel painted a scene that would be all too vivid for a people who had just witnessed several waves of locust invasions (Joel 1). **He wanted to convey to his hearers and readers that these events were but a precursor to a still greater catastrophe.** (Cornerstone Bible Commentary) (Bolding added for emphasis) In his discussion in the Expositor's Bible Commentary, Patterson adds this note - " Assyria's (**ED: PATTERSON FAVORS 2:1-11 AS DESCRIBING THE COMING ASSYRIAN INVASION**) prominence at the time of the Jews' spiritual decay also stands prophetically as a type of the powers that will oppose the Lord and his army in the last days and which Christ will destroy at His coming (see Isa 10:27-34; 14:24-27; 30:31-33; 31:8-9[?]; Mic 5:5-6; Zeph 2:13-15; cf. Zech 12:2-3; 14:1-4; Rev 19:17-21)."

**The LORD utters His voice before His army** - What is His voice? Most commentators consider this to be thunder (see Ps 18:13 below)

This description of the LORD'S voice recalls the passage by David

The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and **the Most High uttered His voice**, hailstones and coals of fire. (Ps 18:13)

In Joel 3 we read

The LORD roars from Zion And **utters His voice from Jerusalem**, and the heavens and the earth tremble.

But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel. (Joel 3:16-note)

**The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome** - As we discussed above, Joel begins the awesome description in Joel 2:2-10 with an alarm that the Day of the LORD is near. And now in verse 11 Joel wraps up his description with the same phrase, the [Day of the LORD](#). It seems clear that Joel's description in verses 2-10 recalls the past invasion of the locusts described in Joel 1, but looks into the future when there will be a similar (in description) invasion of armies more devastating.

**And who can endure it?** - "IT" is the Day of the LORD. This rhetorical question assumes a negative response. This question speaks of DIVINE JUDGMENT in the Day of the LORD. Clearly Joel is not speaking of a locust invasion. Men can endure a locust invasion as devastating as that event is, but men will not be able to endure the return of the King of kings to defeat all His enemies (Rev 19:11-21), to deliver the embattled nation of Israel (saving 1/3 of the Israelites - Zech 13:8-9-note), and then establish His throne in Zion, His holy city, from which He will rule the earth for 1000 years (Zech 14:9-note). So back to the original question of who can endure the Day of the LORD? The answer is that most of humanity will not be able to endure it, but all those who are safe in Christ Jesus by grace through faith will be able to endure this devastating Day of the LORD and will enter into His Millennial Kingdom.

**Malachi** has a similar query asked in the context of **the Day of the LORD** and also expecting a negative response...

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger (JOHN THE BAPTIST), and he will clear the way before Me (MESSIAH). And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple ; and the messenger of the covenant (MESSIAH FULFILLED THIS PROPHECY IN HIS FIRST COMING WHEN HE ENTERED THE TEMPLE GROUNDS AND CLEARED THE MONEY CHANGERS), in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. 2"**But who can endure the day of His coming?** (SECOND COMING AS KING OF KINGS) **And who can stand when He appears?** For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. (Malachi 3:1-2-note)

Joel's question reminds us of Revelation 6 where we encounter God's incredible judgments unleashed in the **Day of the LORD** as a result of Jesus breaking of the first 6 seals of the Scroll (Rev 6:1-14-[see commentary](#)).

Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (NOTICE THAT EVEN THE UNBELIEVING WORLD WILL RECOGNIZE THAT THE EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DAY OF THE LORD ARE NOT DUE TO "MOTHER NATURE" BUT ARE SENT FROM THE GOD OF CREATION WHO IS EXERCISING HIS RIGHTEOUS WRATH!); 17 for the great day of their wrath ([SEE COMMENTS ON THE DAY OF THE LORD](#)) has come, and **who is able to stand?**" (Rev 6:15-17-[see commentary](#))

**Tony Garland comments on the Day of the LORD in Revelation 6** - The great day is [The Day of the Lord](#), a unique time yet future when God will radically intervene in history to demonstrate in an irrefutable way Who He is.

The primary Old Testament passages from which the images in the sixth seal are drawn prove that the great day must be the Day of the Lord (Isa. 2:10-11, 19-21; 13:9-13; 34:4, 8; Eze. 32:7-8; Hos. 10:8; Joel 2:11, 30; Zep. 1:14; Mal. 4:5).<sup>104</sup>

First, the expression the Day of the Lord refers to God's special intervention into world events to judge His enemies, accomplish His purpose for history, and thereby demonstrate who He is—the sovereign God of the universe (Isa. 2:10-22; Eze. 13:5, 9, 14, 21, 23; Eze. 30:3, 8, 19, 25-26). Second, several Days of the Lord already have occurred in which God demonstrated His sovereign rule by raising up nations to execute His judgement on other nations. For example, He raised up Babylon to judge Egypt and its allies during the 500s B.C. (Jer. 46:2, 10; Eze. 30:3-6). However, the Bible also foretells a future Day of the Lord.<sup>105</sup>

At the outset of the day of the Lord, human trials will be prolonged and comparable to a woman's labor before giving birth to a child (Isa. 13:8; 26:17-19; 66:7-9; Jer. 30:6-8; Mic. 4:9, 10; cf. Mat. 24:8; 1Th. 5:3). This phase of growing human agony will be climaxed by the Messiah's personal return to earth to terminate the period of turmoil through direct judgment.<sup>106</sup>

The great day which has been on the horizon for thousands of years has finally arrived. Men will experience unparalleled fear and conditions that have never before prevailed upon the earth:

Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all

hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames. Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. (Isa. 13:6-9)

The proud technologies of man, and infrastructure upon which it depends, will quickly collapse in the midst of this time of divine retribution. Death will be so common that burial will be uncommon as the flesh of men is treated as so much garbage:

The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. "I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse." (Zep. 1:14-17) [emphasis added]

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch." (Mal. 4:1-2)

Not only will God pour forth his wrath upon the Gentile nations, but the Jewish nation will also undergo a time of unparalleled trouble designed to purge out the unbelieving rebels and turn the remainder back to God. In the midst of this intense judgment, God has promised that a believing remnant will survive (see [Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation](#)):

Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. "For thus says the LORD: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.'" (Jer. 30:4-7) [emphasis added]

Jesus also spoke of this fearful time:

And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. (Luke 21:25-26)

This is that great day for which the angels who did not keep their proper domain are reserved for judgment—they will be used in judgment against men (Rev. 9+). See [The Day of the Lord, Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation](#).

The wrath is said to be of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16). This is extremely significant because those who are covered by the blood of the Lamb prior to this day (1Pe. 1:17-19) are exempted from experiencing His wrath—they are His bride (Luke 21:36; Rom. 5:9; 1Th. 5:9; Rev. 3:10). See commentary on [Revelation 3:10](#). See [Rapture](#).

**And so when the Day of the LORD begins to unfold on planet earth, the godless men ask the same question as here in Joel 2:12 "who is able to stand" or "who is able to endure it?"** And while this question assumes a negative response, it sets the stage for a ray of hope to shine into the darkness, much like the last half of Joel 3:16-note. Joel discusses this "ray of hope" in the great and awesome Day of the LORD in the next verse.

**Duane Garrett** - To this point we have focused on the scholarly question of whether Joel 2:1–11 concerns only locusts or looks beyond the locusts to an enemy army. This question is unavoidable, and we have argued that Joel's language and the parallels to other prophetic texts require us to see a human army here. On the other hand, this debate is somewhat skewed in that it misses the real point of Joel. His real concern was not with locusts, or enemy soldiers, or even with the last judgment: the real subject matter of the Book of Joel is the day of the LORD. Every event in the book is subordinated to that concept. It is here described as "great" and "dreadful" (lit. "fearful, awesome"; cf. 2:31; Mal 4:5), two words often found in the Old Testament describing the Lord. When Yahweh moves, Joel asserted, the old order is inverted, the familiar disappears, and false security collapses. No one can withstand that day because there is nothing left to stand on. On the other hand, as we shall see, Yahweh brings new life and a new world into being. ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#))

**John Phillips** sums up this section from an eschatological perspective - We know from many Old and New Testament prophets that

the Antichrist will take over the world in the day of the Lord. A number of wars will be fought during the antichrist's rise to power, and Israel will have a significant role in his strategy. Once the Jewish nation and people have served his purpose, however, the antichrist will turn against them and the blood bath of the great tribulation will threaten to exterminate the Hebrew people completely. This terrible persecution will purge Israel of radical unbelievers and the stage will be set for the battle of Armageddon. By that time the land of Israel will have been ravaged by foreign troops and thousands of her people will be dying daily. When Israel is in her last extremity, the Lord Jesus will return to rescue the beleaguered Hebrew people from the final conflict at Megiddo. **Joel was the first prophet to catch a glimpse of this great climax, which he described in Joel 2:11:** "The Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" We know from the Apocalypse that the One who will execute the divine decree is the Lord Jesus. Followed by the armies of Heaven, He will descend from the sky arrayed in great glory. A sharp sword (the Word of God) will come out of His mouth, and with it He will smite the nations (Revelation 19:11-21). One word from Him and the battle will be over. Moved by the sight, Joel appealed to latter-day Israel to prepare for the Lord's return by fasting, weeping, mourning, and returning to the Lord, who will be "gracious and merciful" (2:13). "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly," pleaded the prophet (2:15). He urged the priests to take the lead in intercession and pray, "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?" (2:17) (Exploring the Minor Prophets)

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### 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**.

**Joel 2:12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning;**

- **Return to Me with all your heart:** De 4:29,30 1Sa 7:3 1Ki 8:47-49 2Ch 6:38,39 7:13,14 Isa 55:6,7 Jer 4:1 29:12,13 La 3:40,41 Ho 6:1 12:6 14:1 Zec 1:3,4 Acts 26:20
- **And with fasting, weeping and mourning:** Jdg 20:26 1Sa 7:6 2Ch 20:3,4 Ne 9:1,2 Isa 22:12 Jon 3:5-8 Zec 7:3,5 12:10-14 Jas 4:8,9

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

**NJB** 'But now -- declares Yahweh- come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning.' (Joe 2:12 NJB)

**YET EVEN NOW!  
A CALL TO REPENT!**

At Joel 2:12 there is a break too clear to miss. It is marked, in our Authorized Version, by the word **therefore**"; and from Joel 2:12 to Joel 2:17 there is an imploring appeal to the nation of Israel to repent before the dread stroke of the [Day of the LORD](#) falls. And while there is a break, there is clearly a link to the previous section, especially the [previous verse](#) which says "**The day of the LORD**

**is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?"** Joel 2:12-17 is the answer to who can endure it! It is only the one who humbles himself and repents and returns to Jehovah. There is no other way to endure the wrath of God what will fall on the entire world in these [last days](#) which are capped off by **THE DAY** of the LORD.

**Yet even now** - What a mercy filled word from the LORD! The time is late for the Day of the LORD is coming and is near but even now there is hope if Israel turns to Yahweh. This offer of grace is similar to the great "**BUT GOD**" of Ephesians 2 where we read

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 **BUT GOD**, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (Ephesians 2:1-3-[note](#), Eph 2:4-5-[note](#), cf some other great "but God" occurrences - Ge 8:1, Ge 50:20, Romans 5:8, Gal 3:18 and "but now" - Jn 15:22, Ro 3:21, Ro 6:22, Ro 7:6, Ro 11:30, 1 Cor 13:13, 1 Cor 15:20, Gal 3:25, Eph 2:13, Eph 5:8, Col 3:8, 2 Ti 1:10, Heb 9:26, 1 Pe 2:10, 25)

Paul gives a somewhat similar warning to all mankind in Acts 17 writing

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance ([agnoia](#)), God is **NOW** declaring to men that **all people everywhere should repent**, ([metanoeo](#)) (Acts 17:30-note)

**S Lewis Johnson** applies the sense of urgency in the phrase "**yet now**" - Incidentally, my good Christian friend, the time for repentance is always now. It should never be put off. The more we put off repentance for sin that we have committed the less likely we are to repent. For the more we put off repentance the harder becomes our heart. And so repentance is something that is always to be carried out now. Dr. Chafer at the seminary use to tell us in the theological classroom that, "Men, it is necessary to keep short accounts with God." You don't get in the habit of sinning half a dozen times and then when the number gets to six repenting or waiting till the end of the day in order to confess failure before God. Repentance is always an immediate duty as soon as the knowledge of sin comes, and short accounts are to be kept. ([Judah's Repentance and God's Repentance](#))

**Declares the LORD** - It is easy to read these words too fast. Pause a moment and ponder this incredible statement. What do you see? These are the very words from the mouth of the loving God Who "is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9-note) Sometimes we read words like these and we forget that we have just heard a clear word from Heaven, from the "lips" of the Almighty God Himself. We dare not read such words too quickly or glibly. These are words filled with His great mercy and grace to His Chosen People (and all mankind) who "like sheep have gone astray, each turning to his own way, but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him," the Messiah, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. (Isaiah 53:5-6, John 1:29) Notice also that this is the same LORD who "utters His voice before His army," so the same LORD Who thunders also offers a way of escape. In the midst of wrath, He remembers mercy.

**Feinberg** - What grace God offers them! Even at that late hour it was possible (**EVEN NOW**) to repent and turn to the Lord, thus averting further disaster. God calls for a time of deep exercise of heart and spirit, a time of fasting, a time of brokenness of heart before Him. Because it is ever so easy to substitute the external for the real, to be lost in the round of outward show, God exhorts them to rend their hearts and not their garments. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**POSB** - It is clear from the ominous threat of the previous verses that the situation is serious. It is not, however, hopeless. There is nevertheless no time to lose and so Joel, and the Lord through Joel, calls the nation to the only course of action appropriate to the crisis. They must repent and do it now. **These six verses of Joel's prophecy constitute one of the clearest calls to repentance in Holy Scripture.** ([Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible Commentary](#))

The LORD stands ready to forgive and bless because His heart is always that sinners should repent so that none might perish:

Ezekiel 18:23 "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that **he should turn from his ways and live?**

1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

Joel 2:12-17 has a total of **ten commands** which signifies the Spirit of God is seeking to arrest the attention of every reader! These are not suggestions! The situation is dire. The "day" is dangerous (Joel 2:11). No one can endure the coming Day of the LORD (Joel



2:11)! In Joel 2:1 he blew the horn warning. In Joel 2:2-11 he presented a description foreshadowing the day and why he was warning. And now in Joel 2:12-17 he is clearly declaring the way of escape.

1. Joel 2:12 - **Return**
2. Joel 2:13 - **Rend**
3. Joel 2:13 - **Return**
4. Joel 2:15 - **Blow**
5. Joel 2:15 - **Consecrate**
6. Joel 2:15 - **Proclaim**
7. Joel 2:16 - **Gather**
8. Joel 2:16 - **Sanctify**
9. Joel 2:16 - **Assemble**
10. Joel 2:16 - **Gather**

**Gilliland** makes some excellent observations in this great section on repentance:

- In Joel 2:12 the emphasis is upon **when** to turn: "Therefore also now".
- In Joel 2:13 the emphasis is on **where** to turn: "unto the Lord your God".
- In Joel 2:14 the emphasis is on **why** to turn: "who knoweth it."
- Joel 2:15 advises **how** they are to gather: in "solemn assembly".
- Joel 2:16 states **who** are to gather: "people ... congregation ... elders ... children ... infants ... bridegroom ... bride ... priests" (Joel 2:17);
- Joel 2:17 defines **where** they are to gather: "between the porch and the altar".
- Joel 2:17 declares **why** they are to gather: to intercede. ([What the Bible Teaches – Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah](#))

**McComiskey** on Joel 2:11 - This verse begins a transition. The prophet's description of the recent disaster (chap. 1) and the threat of an even greater disaster (Joel 2:1-11) end, and in their place is an offer of grace and repentance. The same Lord, master of the apocalyptic hosts, takes the initiative in offering and inviting the nation to repentance (Craigie, Twelve Prophets, p. 101). The language of Joel 2:12 is in many ways reminiscent of 2 Chronicles 7:14. When Solomon prayed that God would hear the prayer of his people in times of locust outbreaks or other disasters (2 Chr 6:28), God had responded by promising that "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place" (2 Chr 7:14-15RSV). God is keeping his promise to Solomon—the repentant prayer offered in his temple will bring healing for the land. (The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary)

"**Yet even now,**" declares the LORD, "**Return to Me with all your heart - Return to Me** in essence means "Repent!" It is an urgent call to repent in light of the fact that they had experienced a literal attack of locusts which was only a shadow of the more devastating future Day of the LORD. Joel had described the Day of the LORD as "**coming**" and "**near**" ([imminent](#)) (Joel 2:1-[note](#)) and as "**great and awesome**" (Joel 2:11-[note](#)), and then followed up in Joel 2:11 with the rhetorical question of who could possibly **endure** this Day? And as noted above, here beginning in Joel 2:12 God gives His people the (not "a way" of many ways but "the only way") way of escape from that horrible Day of the LORD. **The way of escape is the way of repentance from one's heart**, turning to God and away from the sins that had brought the "day of the locusts" and would just as surely bring the future dread "Day of the LORD."

**With all your heart** - This requirement speaks of genuine personal faith, not false humility.

**Notice the repeated use of the verb [shub/sub](#)** in the call to repentance section of Joel - Joel 2:12-17 and three more times in Joel 3:

Joel 2:12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "**Return** to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning;

Joel 2:13 And rend your heart and not your garments." Now **return** to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.

Joel 2:14 Who knows whether He will **notturn** and relent And leave a blessing behind Him, Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?

Joel 3:1 "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I **restore** the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,

Joel 3:4 "Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will **return** your recompense on your head.

Joel 3:7 behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and **return** your recompense on your head.

**Return** (a command to turn back to Jehovah) ([07725](#)) ([shub/sub](#)) is is a common verb (1050x most often in Jeremiah - 111x) meaning to turn, to return (implying physical movement some 270x sometimes of God Ge 18:14 but usually of men - Ge 22:5), to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back (87x with this sense), to reestablish, to be returned, etc. In the present context it is a command from God to **repent**. The Lxx uses [epistrepho](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) which speaks of urgency! God is saying "Do this now! Do not delay!" Why? For the Day of Jehovah is **COMING** and it is **NEAR!** (Joel 2:1-[note](#)) and it is **great and very awesome** (Joel 2:11-[note](#)). **Epistrepho** means to to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea is a definite turn to God in conduct as well as in one's mind, which is an excellent description of genuine repentance. In fact the 39 uses of epistrepho in the NT (see Strong's [1994](#)) are frequently associated with repentance and conversion.

**TWOT on shub** - The Bible is rich in idioms describing man's responsibility in the process of repentance. Such phrases would include the following: "incline your heart unto the Lord your God" ( Josh 24:23) ; "circumcise yourselves to the Lord" (Jer 4:4); "wash your heart from wickedness" (Jer 4:14); "break up your fallow ground" (Hos 10:12) and so forth. All these expressions of man's penitential activity, however, are subsumed and summarized by this one verb shûb. For better than any other verb it combines in itself the two requisites of repentance: to turn from evil and to turn to the good...Shûb in the Qal...is in passages dealing with the covenant community's return to God (in the sense of repentance), or turning away from evil (in the sense of renouncing and disowning sin), or turning away from God (in the sense of becoming apostate). In such contexts shûb in the Qal is used 129 times....Taking all stems (Qal, Hiphil, et al) into consideration, Holladay (p. 117) concludes that there are a total of 164 uses of shûb in a covenantal context. The majority of them, as one might expect, are to be found in the classical literary prophets 113 times, with Jeremiah leading the way (forty-eight times)....There is no systematic spelling out of the doctrine of repentance in the OT. It is illustrated (Ps 51:1-19) more than anything else. Yet the fact that people are called "to turn" either "to" or "away from" implies that sin is not an ineradicable stain, but by turning, a God-given power, a sinner can redirect his destiny. There are two sides in understanding conversion, the free sovereign act of God's mercy and man's going beyond contrition and sorrow to a conscious decision of turning to God. The latter includes repudiation of all sin and affirmation of God's total will for one's life.

One of the best summary illustrations of turning from sin and turning to God (repentance) is found in 1 Thessalonians

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how **you turned to (epistrepho) God from idols** to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.(1 Thes 1:9-10-[note](#))

**Comment:** Note that in these two verses we see that genuine repentance brings about (1) a radical, 180 degree change of one's allegiance which reflects genuine internal or heart change (cf circumcision of the heart) and (2) there is the bringing forth of "fruit" in keeping with (and therefore serving to authenticate one's) repentance (cf Mt 3:8) - serving ([douleuo](#)) and waiting ( ) both verbs in the [present tense](#) signifying that this is now the general "direction" of their lives (**NB:** "direction" not "perfection," the former reflecting progressive sanctification or gradual growth in Christ-likeness and the latter reflecting our final glorification when we will be like Him for we will see Him as He is - 1 John 3:2. And notice the hope or absolute assurance of the latter change serves to motivate the former progressive transformation as indicated by John writing "everyone who has this hope [glorification] fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." 1 John 3:3)

**S Lewis Johnson on Return to Me with all your heart** - When Joel says, "Return unto me saith Yahweh," he is saying the identical thing with the exception of the time reference that John the Baptist said when he said, "Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand." (Mt 3:2) Or when the Lord Jesus uttered that same message, "Repent for the kingdom of the heaven is at hand." (Mt 4:17 cf "repent and believe the Gospel" - Mk 1:15) For the Old Testament word (the Greek used to translate the Hebrew word) "to return" or "turn to me" is the word which is used in the New Testament in the Greek text of the New Testament under the form "repent". So that repent in the New Testament is the equivalent of return to me in the Old Testament. So Joel is a prophet of repentance. ([Judah's Repentance and God's "Repentance"](#))

The is one other point to note about the use of the word "return" which in English means going back to a previous place or in the present context returning to a prior relationship that Israel once had with God. To what is God referring? It is a call to return to their prior covenant relationship. For more discussion of this see Johnson's sermon [Judah's Repentance and God's "Repentance"](#).

**Finley** - The spiritual challenge that Joel gives after his description of the invasion simply heightens that which he had given earlier. The crisis of the locusts must not be taken lightly; it could mean utter destruction if the people do not turn to the Lord.

Repentance comes from a Hebrew word which means to draw a deep breath, as one does in expressing relief or sorrow. With reference to man's sin, repentance is that inner contrition and conviction which leads the individual to confess and forsake his sin. True repentance involves contrition of heart, confession with the mouth and a change in the person's conduct. (see ex of false confession -- Saul's failure to accept responsibility for his sin, even though he said "I have sinned" 1Sa 15:24,26)

**Weeping and mourning** - People usually wept and mourned in the OT when someone died and turning from God is tantamount to death!

**And with fasting, weeping and mourning** - These actions and emotions are to reflect an internal change ("rend your heart"). Each of these can easily be faked externally (cf Mt 6:1-note, Mt 6:16,17-note). But unless there is a genuine heart change, these acts are worthless before God. This call from God to Israel to return and weep and mourn will one day in the future be fulfilled. When? At the return of Israel's Messiah, the prophet Zechariah recording

(MESSIAH IS SPEAKING) "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and **they will mourn for Him**, as one mourns for an only son, and **they will weep bitterly over Him** like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. 11 "In that day there will be **great mourning** in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 "**The land will mourn**, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. (Zechariah 12:10-14-note)

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

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.

**Joel 2:13 And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.**

- **rend your heart** : 2Ki 22:19 Ps 34:18 51:17 Isa 57:15 66:2 Eze 9:4 Mt 5:3,4
- **not your garments**: Ge 37:29,34 2Sa 1:11 1Ki 21:27 2Ki 5:7 6:30 22:11 Job 1:20 Isa 58:5 Mt 6:16-18 1Ti 4:8
- **For He is gracious and compassionate**: Ex 34:6,7 Nu 14:18 Ps 86:5,15 145:7-9 Jon 4:2 Mic 7:18 Ro 2:4 Ro 5:20,21 Eph 2:4
- **Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness**: Ne 9:17 Ps 103:8 Na 1:3 Jas 1:19,20
- **And relenting of evil**.: Ps 106:45 Jer 18:7,8 Am 7:2-6 Jon 4:2

## GOD'S GRACIOUS CALL: REND AND RETURN!

Notice how mourning (Joel 2:12) for one's sin precedes and is accompanied by repentance from one's sin. If I do not genuinely mourn over my willful rebellion against my Father in Heaven, I am very unlikely to seek to genuinely repent. Mourning for "hurting" (cf Ezekiel 6:9-note) our Father is a crucial spiritual component in the overall spiritual dynamic of return and restoration of fellowship and communion with our Holy Father.

The command to **return** in Joel 2:12-note is now "reinforced" by two more commands - **rend** and **return**. The Creator is calling to men and women created in His image to return to restoration of a personal relationship. God is calling for genuine mourning for sin and not merely external actions of grief. This begs a question "Do I mourn when I sin?"

Psalm 34:18; The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

**Hubbard** on **rend your heart** - The command rend your hearts and not your garments is the Hebrew way of saying that inward contrition is more important than an outward show of grief, which by itself could be an act devoid of sincerity or integrity...As the seat of moral and spiritual decision, it is the heart that must be dealt with. There evil ideas were hatched and brought to birth. Rend your hearts means 'change your whole attitude', with a result akin to the broken, contrite heart of Psalm 51:17 or the circumcised heart of Deuteronomy 10:16 and Jeremiah 4:4. (TOTC)

**And rend your heart and not your garments** - The NET Bible puts this phrase with Joel 2:12NET and it does seem to fit better in that passage. Clearly God is speaking figuratively, for there is no way to tear our hearts and still live. On the other hand, in one sense, God is in fact calling us to "die" to ourselves, that we might live to God ("For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it" cf Mark 8:34-38). God is not interested in a sham **religion**, but in authentic **relationship**. He is calling for an internal change, a change of heart. It is easy (and very impressive to others) to rend one's garments as a sham show, but God Alone sees the heart (1 Sa 16:7, Pr 15:3) and He knows whether our external acts of piety reflect a changed heart or a deceitful heart! In a sense, God's call to rend the heart is very similar to His call to "**circumcise your hearts**," in Deuteronomy

(Dt 10:16) "So **circumcise your heart**, and stiffen your neck no longer.

But notice that what God calls them to do, He enables them to do..

(Dt 30:6-note) "Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

**Comment:** Note that it is only a circumcised heart that can love God **holistically!** (Holistic = characterized by comprehension of the parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.)

We see an excellent illustration of what God was calling for in the life of King Josiah when he heard the Word of God read from the Book of God which had been lost in the House of God ("go figure!")!

When the king heard the words of the book of the law, **he tore his clothes...**19 because **your heart was tender and you humbled yourself** before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you (2 Chr 34:27 adds "you humbled yourself" and) have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the LORD.(2 Ki 22:11, 19, cf 2 Chr 34:19, 27)

So from King Josiah's reaction we learn that **rending one's heart** is the reflection or "fruit" of a heart that is spiritually tender (in contrast to hardened - cf Mk 3:5) toward God and thus reflects a humble heart, a heart that is willing to submit to God's commands, understanding they are just that -- commands and not suggestions! So in King Josiah's example we see that the **internal heart** change was reflected in a **sincere external action**, the rending of his garments and weeping before Jehovah, exactly the response God had called for in Joel 2:12-note.

**See topic** Circumcision of the Heart

God is always primarily interested in the internal, for then the external will be the Spirit enabled "overflow" of the internal!

For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6, cf Mic 6:6-8-note)

Samuel said (TO SAUL), "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? **Behold, to obey** (obedience from a changed heart motivated by love and not obedience motivated by a legalistic spirit!) **is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.** (1 Sa 15:22)

**Rend your heart and not your garments** - God desires broken and contrite hearts (Ps 51:17), not torn and ragged robes. How do you rend your heart? First, you hear "thus saith the LORD," and because it is a holy Word, our hearts are broken as we come to understand without excuse or equivocation, the gravity of our sin against God (cf Ge 39:9).

**Feinberg on rend your heart and not your garments** - The rending of garments on occasions of great mourning is recorded early in the Scriptures (see Ge 37:29, 34; also 1 Sa 4:12; 1 Ki 21:27; and Is 37:2). It was meant to convey that broken and rent condition of the heart of the mourner. Because the sign often replaces the reality, God through the prophet enjoins a true and genuine contrition of heart. All such action before God is based upon the fact of God's wonderful character, for He is gracious beyond words and ready to forgive. God is always more willing to bless than to blast, to pardon than to punish, to win by love than to wound by lashing. So there is always the possibility of God's displeasure being turned into His favor, when His people come low before Him. God has no delight in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from the evil of his ways and live. (Note the case of the Ninevites in Jonah 3:9.) Upon true repentance God will restore to them plentiful harvests. The meal offering and the drink offering, both dependent upon the harvest of the field and vineyard, had ceased because of the drought and the plague, but will now be available to repentant Israel. (See Joel 1:9, 13, 16.) ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Barnes on rending garments** - The rending of the clothes was an expression of extraordinary uncontrollable emotion, chiefly of grief, of terror, or of horror. At least, in Holy Scripture it is not mentioned as a part of ordinary mourning, but only upon some sudden overpowering grief, whether public or private. It was not used on occasion of death, unless there were something very grievous about its circumstances. At times it was used as an outward expression, one of deep grief, as when the leper was commanded to keep his clothes rent (Leviticus 13:45), or when David, to express his abhorrence at the murder of Abner, commanded "all the people with him, rend your clothes;" (Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament)

**Rend** ([07167](#))(**qara**) means to tear or rip apart, as when Reuben and Jacob tore their clothes when they realized Joseph was gone from the pit (Ge 37:29, 34; cf Ex. 28:32; Jer. 36:23, 24, Nu 14:6 = Joshua and Caleb's reaction to Israel's grumbling about the promised land; Josh 7:6 = Joshua's reaction to their defeat at Ai; Jdg 11:35 = Jephthah's reaction when he saw his daughter who he had to offer to the Lord to keep a vow; of David when he heard of Saul's death 2 Sa 1:11; of Tamar in mourning for being violated - 2 Sa 13:19; David's reaction 2 Sa 13:31; of Elisha when Elijah departed - 2 Ki 2:12, cf 2 Ki 5:7, 8, 6:30, 11:14, 2 Ki 18:37, 19:1, 22:11,22:19 = Josiah when he heard the words from the book of God which had been lost in the house of God! O my, does this describe much of the American church?; Ezra 9:3, 5; Mordecai's reaction when he heard the ruling to kill all the Jews in Persia - Esther 4:1; Job 2:12 = when Job's friends saw his sad state!; Isa 36:22, 37:1). Of the priest tearing a faded mark from a garment (Lev 13:56). Of the king cutting Jeremiah's scroll (Jer 36:23) but refusing to "rend their garments." (Jer 36:24)

A literal and figurative use in Saul's tearing Samuel's robe after Samuel told him the Lord would tear the kingdom from him (1 Sa 15:27, 28, cf 1 Sa 28:17, 1 Ki 14:8, 2 Ki 17:21). Rending of one's clothes could be a sign of mourning or fear (Ge 44:13; 1 Sa 4:12). Qara is used figuratively here in Joel 2:13 of rending one's heart. Other figurative uses includes of tearing away a king's authority (1 Ki 11:11-13 "So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, **I will surely tear the kingdom from you**, and will give it to your servant."), of God's tearing the heavens (Isa. 64:1), of tearing apart one's eyes with cosmetics - "you **enlarge** your eyes with paint" (Jer 4:30). Qara can describe building a house - "**cut** out its windows"(Jer. 22:14). Qara in the passive means to be torn apart, torn up (Ex 39:23; 1 Ki 13:3, 5). Qara describes the LORD giving a sign by splitting the altar (1 Ki 13:3, 5). Qara describes the tearing, ripping of wild beasts In Ps. 35:15 "they slandered me" is more literally "they tore at me." In Hos. 13:8 qara compares the Lord's action against Israel - "There I will also devour them like a lioness,as a wild beast would **tear** them."

One of my favorite (convicting) literal uses of qara is in the description of Job. This is the type of reaction God is calling for from Israel.

Then Job arose and **tore** his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:20-21)

One of my favorite figurative uses of qara is a great prayer (you might pause and pray it now) in Isaiah

Oh, that You would **rend** the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence— 2

As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil– To make Your name known to Your adversaries,  
That the nations may tremble at Your presence! (Isaiah 64:1-2)

The last use of qara in the OT is here in Joel 2:13 and it is the only use that specifically speaks of rending one's heart.

**Qara** - 62x in 60v - cut(2), enlarge(1), rend(3), slandered(1), split apart(2), surely tear(1), tear(7), tear apart(1), tear away(1), tore(26), tore the away(1), torn(16).

Gen. 37:29; Gen. 37:34; Gen. 44:13; Exod. 28:32; Exod. 39:23; Lev. 13:56; Num. 14:6; Jos. 7:6; Jdg. 11:35; 1 Sam. 4:12; 1 Sam. 15:27; 1 Sam. 15:28; 1 Sam. 28:17; 2 Sam. 1:2; 2 Sam. 1:11; 2 Sam. 3:31; 2 Sam. 13:19; 2 Sam. 13:31; 2 Sam. 15:32; 1 Ki. 11:11; 1 Ki. 11:12; 1 Ki. 11:13; 1 Ki. 11:30; 1 Ki. 11:31; 1 Ki. 13:3; 1 Ki. 13:5; 1 Ki. 14:8; 1 Ki. 21:27; 2 Ki. 2:12; 2 Ki. 5:7; 2 Ki. 5:8; 2 Ki. 6:30; 2 Ki. 11:14; 2 Ki. 17:21; 2 Ki. 18:37; 2 Ki. 19:1; 2 Ki. 22:11; 2 Ki. 22:19; 2 Chr. 23:13; 2 Chr. 34:19; 2 Chr. 34:27; Ezr. 9:3; Ezr. 9:5; Est. 4:1; Job 1:20; Job 2:12; Ps. 35:15; Eccl. 3:7; Isa. 36:22; Isa. 37:1; Isa. 64:1; Jer. 4:30; Jer. 22:14; Jer. 36:23; Jer. 36:24; Jer. 41:5; Ezek. 13:20; Ezek. 13:21; Hos. 13:8; Joel 2:13

**Now return to the LORD your God** - Notice the phrase "the LORD YOUR God," which speaks of personal possession and right relationship. God had not moved. Israel had and they needed to make an "about face" and come back to their God. As discussed above, the idea of **return** is the Old Testament way of describing repentance and is found in many passages such as...

Deuteronomy 30:2-note and you **return** to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,

1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you **return** to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him **return** to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

Hosea 6:1 "Come, let us **return** to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.

**For** - What is this [term of explanation](#) explaining? Always consider the "**5P's**" - **P**ause to **P**onder the **P**assage then **P**ractise it in the **P**ower of the Spirit. Clearly Joel is explaining how the door of repentance and return can even still be open to rebellious sons and daughters (not just Israel, but ALL of us!). Joel then proceeds to give us a "list" of the glorious attributes of God which make repentance possible. This description of God's character should encourage us as sinners to run to the Father without any reservation or hesitation, with full assurance that we will be "welcomed" by Him! The bedrock of the doctrine of repentance is based not on what we do as much as on Who God is! Yes, we have the responsibility to repent, but we could not even do so were it not for this great list of divine attributes! Praise You Father for Your magnanimous character. Amen

One could easily write a book (many books) on each of these divine attributes (but we will forgo that in the interest of finishing the comments on Joel 2!)

**Gilliland** writes "It is not the sinner's repentance which makes God merciful. He already is that, but the sinner's turning affords God the opportunity to display His compassion richly and righteously. The characteristics of God are drawn from Exodus 34:6 where, after the apostasy of the golden calf when the very existence of the nation was threatened, Moses was given a declaration of the divine name† Following the self-sacrificing intercession of Moses, the Lord made it clear that it is because of who the Lord is that His wayward people are not consumed. Hence the appeal to "turn" is grounded in what He is. Note the emphatic "he" in the original. Five features of the pardoning God are highlighted. ([What the Bible Teaches – Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah](#))

## WHAT MAKES RETURN TO THE LORD POSSIBLE?

It is notable that all the words, **gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness** are in the same order as in the words given to Moses, on the occasion of renewal of the tables of the law after Israel had committed flagrant idolatry (Exodus 34:5,6, of Ex 32:1-8).

**Wiersbe** - The one thing that encourages us to repent and return to the Lord is the character of God.

**He is gracious** - This is His nature and opens the door for the contrite sinner to walk into His presence (clothed in the righteousness of the Holy One of Israel) without being destroyed.

**Gracious** (02587)(**channun** from **chanan** = to show favor) is a masculine adjective which means "gracious," "merciful" and rightfully is used only of God indicating His bestowal of an unmerited favor, this divine act emanating from His infinite love. In short, **channun** denotes the favour bestowed by a superior on a needy inferior who has no real claim on such favorable treatment. Notice also that God's forgiveness is linked with His **gracious** character ( Neh 9:17, 31). And similarly, it is not surprising that **channun** is integrally linked with **rachum**, compassion (mercy) as in Joel 2:13 and in 12 of the 13 occurrences of this word in the OT.

**Girdlestone** adds that "**Grace** is the free bestowal of kindness on one who has neither claim up on our bounty, nor adequate compensation to make for it." (See Girdlestone's full discussion of **grace** in [Synonyms of the Old Testament](#))

The Septuagint translates **channun** in Joel 2:13 with the adjective **eleemon** which means merciful, compassionate, sympathetic, and is descriptive of the infinite concern of the Creator for His creatures. Amazing graciousness indeed!

Read through the list of verses below to be reminded of God's great grace toward us.

**Channun** - 13x in 13v all rendered "gracious."

Exodus 22:27 for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am **gracious**. (ARE YOU IN NEED? THEN CRY OUT FOR HE IS GRACIOUS!)

Exodus 34:6-7 Then (After Moses had shattered the 2 Tablets of the Law when he saw Israel worshipping a golden calf and God then tells him He will write the Law on two new tablets. So in the setting of rebellious idolatrous sin and the renewing of the covenant of Law) the LORD passed by in front of him (MOSES) and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate(**rachum**) and **gracious**, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth

**Comment:** This is an important verse that highlights God's merciful treatment of Israel even after the golden calf incident! God's willingness to change His mind concerning judgment is not mentioned in these verses, but the inclusion of this theme in later verses is certainly justifiable in light of Exodus 32:14 (So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people), for God's decision to relent stands in the background of the statement recorded in Exodus 34.

**John Piper** comments - He also promised future grace in the very center of the law-giving revelation on Mount Sinai. When he came down to speak with Moses, he identified himself this way: "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished" (Exodus 34:6-7). In other words, at the head of the law stands a future provision for failing to keep the law. The law says that God "forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." This is God's promise of future grace: I will be this kind of God to you: "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness." This future grace in the law of God is a forgiving grace. He says in effect, "I make ample provision for pardon and restoration if you stumble. I do not delight as much in punishment as in reconciliation. My wrath does not have a hair trigger—I am slow to anger. My judgment falls upon those who sin with a high hand and do not turn from their sinning to receive my abundant compassion and grace." David knew this was the heart of the law, and sang of it with all his heart. (Future Grace)

2 Chronicles 30:9 "For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons will find compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is **gracious** and compassionate (**rachum**), and will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him."

Nehemiah 9:17 "They refused to listen, And did not remember (SPIRITUAL "AMNESIA" IS A COMMON "AFFLICTION" OF ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN AND IS A DANGEROUS STEP ON A "SLIPPERY SLOPE!") Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, **Gracious** and compassionate (**rachum**), Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake them.

Nehemiah 9:31 "Nevertheless, in Your great compassion (**rachum**) You did not make an end of them or forsake them, For You are a gracious and compassionate God.

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful (**rachum**) and **gracious**, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

Psalms 103:8 The LORD is compassionate (**rachum**) and **gracious**, Slow to anger and abounding in

lovingkindness.

Psalm 111:4 He has made His wonders to be remembered; The LORD is **gracious** and compassionate (rachum).

Psalm 112:4 Light arises in the darkness for the upright; He is **gracious** and compassionate (rachum) and righteous.

Psalm 116:5 **Gracious** is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate (rachum).

Psalm 145:8 The LORD is **gracious** and merciful (rachum); Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.

Joel 2:13 And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, For He is **gracious** and compassionate (rachum), Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.

Jonah 4:2 He prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a **gracious** and compassionate (rachum) God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.

**And compassionate** - As noted below God's compassion is frequently linked with His willingness to forgive sin against Himself. The Septuagint translates rachum here with the adjective [oiktirmon](#) which describes God's concern for mankind's unfortunate, miserable state of sin.

- See God's Attribute - [Mercy, Compassion](#)

**Compassionate** (07349)(rachum from [racham](#) - see below) is a masculine adjective which a merciful and forgiving character (e.g., see Dt 4:31 and Psalm 78:38 for this association). All uses refer to God and serve to give us a wonderful definition of Who God is in relation to sinful mankind. The English word compassionate means literally to share in the suffering with another. This is a good description of what God did by sending His only begotten Son to suffer the penalty of sins, a penalty we should have rightly suffered.

**Rachum** is derived from the root word [racham](#) which in turn is from **rechem** = womb ~ suggesting a connection between the place of the developing child and the strong feelings of love a mother has toward her child. **Racham** speaks a deep love of one for another rooted in some "natural" bond (cp rechem = womb). Racham manifests itself as an "emotional" response to one's needs. **Racham** means to feel another's pain so deeply that you are moved to do something about it. For example, **racham** is used in Proverbs 28:13-[note](#) - He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes [them] will find **compassion**." "The word pictures a deep, kindly sympathy and sorrow felt for another who has been struck with affliction or misfortune, accompanied with a desire to relieve the suffering." (Baker)

**Gilliland** adds that **rachum** "linked, as it is, with the Hebrew term for "womb" this adjective indicates the solicitous concern and compassion of a parent for a child. It marks those feelings of kindness springing from the very depths of one's emotional being and when used of the Lord describes the tenderest feelings of the divine heart. ([What the Bible Teaches – Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah](#))

[Racham](#) evokes the emotion of tender pity for someone helpless and suffering. In short, the Holy God reveals to us His willingness to show great favor (channun) because He feels tender mercy ([racham](#)) toward us.

**Mercy** means the granting of forgiveness to a guilty person—kind acts proceeding from inward compassion to relieve sufferers of misery, even those who suffer from their own sins: "But you, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86:15).

**Rachum** - 13x in 13v - compassionate(11), merciful(2).

Exod. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; 2 Chr. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Neh. 9:31; Ps. 78:38; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 103:8; Ps. 111:4; Ps. 112:4; Ps. 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2.

All of the uses of rachum which are combined with [channun](#) are listed above in that word study. The verses below do not combine rachum and channun, but do link God's compassionate attitude with His forgiving heart! Amazing grace indeed!

Deuteronomy 4:31 "For the LORD your God is a **compassionate** God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

Psalm 78:38 But He, being **compassionate**, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger And did not arouse all His wrath.

**David H. Engelhart** on **compassion** in general as revealed in the Old Testament -- God's compassion is freely (Exodus



33:19; Romans 9:15) and tenderly given, like a mother's (Isaiah 49:15) or father's (Hosea 11:8) compassion for a child. Yahweh boldly declares, "I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Exodus 33:19). While his compassion can be thwarted by disobedience (Deuteronomy 13:17 ; 30:3 ;2 Chronicles 30:9), there are times when his disobedient people's only hope is that his compassion overcomes his anger (Hosea 11:8). Yahweh's compassion is rooted in his covenant relationship with his people (2 Kings 13:23 ). Hope for the future (Isaiah 49:13; Jeremiah 12:15) is also rooted in God's compassion. It is said that compassion follows wrath (Jeremiah 12:15 ; Lamentations 3:32), is new each morning (Lam 3:22-23), and overcomes sin (Ps 51:1 ; Micah 7:19 ) rather than ignoring it. Since compassionate acts flow from compassionate persons, we are not surprised to learn that compassion is constitutive of God's very being (Ex 34:6). Echoes of this declaration are found throughout Scripture. God's compassion was essential for the maintenance of the covenant and His people praised him for it continually (Psalm 78:38 ; 86:15 ; 103:13 ; 145:8). "Compassion" is not frequently used with a human subject. It is found, however, in a mother's attitude toward her son (1 Ki 3:26), a princess's reaction to an abandoned child (Ex 2:6 ), and the Ziphites' treatment of Saul (1 Sa 23:21). ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#))

**Slow to anger** - This is an idiom in Hebrew composed of "slow" (or "long" = arek - [0750](#)) and "anger" (which is literally nose - [aph](#)) which could be paraphrased "God is long of nostrils." This picture fits well with the Septuagint translation which uses the adjective makrothumos (see related word [makrothumia](#)) which is literally means **long** (makro-) **burn** (thumos). The idea is that God has a "long fuse" before He reaches the point of anger. Or one could say it depicts a God Who takes, as it were, a deep breath and holds it for a long time before breathing out His anger in judgments. This is great news for Israel in the future **Day of the LORD** when God's "fuse" so to speak finally burns out and "ignites" His righteous wrath which burns with holy fury on a rebellious, God hating world in the [last days](#) as vividly portrayed in the book of the Revelation in chapters 6 through 19 (which uses the NT word for wrath - [orge](#) - 6 times in Rev 6-19).

**Anger** (nose, nostril, wrath) ([0693](#))[aph](#) from **anaph** = to breathe hard, to be angry) is a masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, snout (pigs - Pr 11:22), face (2 Sa 25:23) and anger. **Aph** is used in Scripture to describe anger as a figurative extension of the nose as an area that can change color when blood rushes to it while one is angry. Picture the [nares](#) flaring as they breathe in and out deeply, about to "blow their top" so to speak.

- See God's Attribute - [Wrath](#)

**Abounding in lovingkindness** - Abounding is the Hebrew adjective rab ([07227](#)) which means much or many and speaks of that which is in abundance. Joel is saying we can return to God (repent) because He has a large amount of lovingkindness (or mercy). The English word **abounding** speaks of that which is abundant or plentiful, existing in large quantities. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **abounding in lovingkindness** with the adjective **polyeleos** which means "very merciful" (and is used 11x and only in the Septuagint all uses speaking of God's abounding lovingkindness - Ex. 34:6; Nu 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps. 86:5; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 103:8; Ps. 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2). The truth is that God's lovingkindness is not just abounding and abundant but is in fact infinite and inexhaustible. This is great news for sinners who find themselves (yours truly for sure) repeatedly in need of His mercies. Praise God that...

The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. (Lam 3:22-23).

**Lovingkindness** (steadfast love)([02617](#))([hesed/chesed/heced](#)) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20- see [note](#), Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). Thus **hesed** speaks of faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God. God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises. It is that consistency of attitude which rises above changing whims and moods and when employed of God it denotes His never-failing kindness to His covenant people.

We see the marriage covenant aspect of God's hesed in the book of Hosea...

Hosea 2:19 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In **lovingkindness** (hesed) and in compassion,

**And relenting of evil** - NET Bible translates it "often relenting from calamitous punishment." The NLT paraphrases it "He is eager to relent and not punish." The ESV has "He relents over disaster." The CSB has "He relents from sending disaster." The NAS and KJV translations are not the best because someone might infer from those translations that God is the author of evil when such could not be further from the truth. God is not the author of evil!

## Related Resources:

- [Did God create evil?](#)
- [Why does God allow evil?](#)
- [Is God evil? Is the Bible evil?](#)
- [Why did God send an evil spirit to torment King Saul?](#)
- [Does God sometimes use evil to accomplish His plans \(Habakkuk 1:5-11\)?](#)
- [How can I believe in the goodness of God when there is so much evil in the world?](#)
- [What is the biblical solution to the problem of evil?](#)

**Hubbard on relenting of evil** - Where God repents it is usually in response to human repentance (Jer. 18:5–12; Jon. 3:10), but in Exodus 32:12–14 God's repentance is sparked by the reminder of the covenant and in Amos 7:3, 6 (see comments on pp. 207ff.) by an appeal to God's pity for his people. God's openness to change his course of action and particularly to withhold disastrous judgment (here called 'evil'; cf. Amos 3:6) has in this passage and in Jonah 4:2 virtually become one of his attributes. Nowhere does Joel specify the people's sins. In the heat of the emergency, care not diagnosis is his concern.

**Relenting (05162)(naham/nacham)** is a verb which means to be sorry, to pity, to repent. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **nachum** here with the verb [metaneo](#) which in the NT means to change one's mind. So this raises the thorny question of "Does the [unchangeable God](#) change His mind?" The text here and in Joel 2:14 clearly states He does relent or "change His mind." But He does so without a change in His [divine attribute of immutability](#). This subject deserves a longer answer than would be appropriate for this commentary, so you are referred to Robert Chisholm's 13 page paper "[Does God 'Change His Mind?'](#)" (and several other resources listed below). Here is a summary answer from Chisholm in a shorter discussion

When we say that God changes His mind, are we denying His immutability, which affirms that God's essential being and nature do not change? No. God is sovereign, but our sovereign God is also personal and often enters into give-and-take relationships with people. While the human mind cannot fully understand the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom, the Bible teaches that God sometimes announces His intentions and then subordinates His actions to the human response. When God announces His intentions conditionally, He allows people to help determine the outcome by how they respond to His word. ([Robert Chisholm - Does God Change His Mind?](#))

**Gilliland** explains that "because of the four attributes just mentioned God is now presented as One who is willing to reconsider His judgments. They are not fixed in stone. His threatenings of wrath are given so that the wicked may change and, where repentance is true, God in consistency with His own character withdraws the sentence of condemnation." ([What the Bible Teaches – Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah](#))

Now the question naturally arises that the Bible clearly states God is immutable or unchangeable. So some reason, if that is so, then how can He relent (or repent) as Joel describes? **S Lewis Johnson** tackles this question with the following analysis:

Can God repent? We can't deal with this in detail, but he does say that God does repent. But we know that God does not change. What does it mean when the Bible says that God repents? Well, of course, it does not mean that he changes because he's an unchangeable God. It rather refers anthropomorphically or he speaks to a man and his manner of treating men. It appears that God repents because his manner of treating men seems different. Taking the case of Jonah's ministry to Nineveh; he went into that city and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But the people of Nineveh repented it is said and God repented of that which he had promised. He did not really change his mind. There was a condition in Jonah's message. He said, "Yet forty days." In other words, there was forty days time given to them to change their minds. He acts according to certain well defined principles. He punishes the impenitent. He blesses the penitent. And if he had treated Nineveh after they had repented the same way as he treated them before they repented, he wouldn't be the same kind of God he is said to be in the Bible. It's like a thermometer. If you look at a thermometer you might say a thermometer is a very changeable thing for the mercury goes up and down on the thermometer in accordance with the heat. But strictly speaking the thermometer is unchangeable. It operates according to an unchangeable principle. So it is unchangeable in its essence. It's changeable as we look at it. That's what the Bible means when it says God repents. It's only as we look at it. He acts according to his well defined and scripturally presented principles. I suggest that you compare Jeremiah 18:7-18. ([Judah's Repentance and God's Repentance](#))

## See Related Resources:

- [Does God change His mind?](#)
  - [The Divine attribute of immutability](#)
  - [What is the immutability of God?](#)
  - [Does prayer change God's mind?](#)
  - [Beware of the heretical teaching of process theology](#) that says God is changing!
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## Joel 2:12-17 Rend Your Heart

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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### 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

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.

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

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 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.**

**Joel 2:14 Who knows whether He will not turn and relent and leave a blessing behind Him, even a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?**

- **Who knows whether He will not turn and relent:** Ex 32:30 Jos 14:12 1Sa 6:5 2Sa 12:22 2Ki 19:4 Am 5:15 Jon 1:6 Jon 3:9 Zep 2:3 2Ti 2:25
- **And leave a blessing behind Him:** Isa 65:8 Hag 2:19 2Co 9:5-11 \*marg:
- **Even a grain offering and a drink offering:** Joe 1:9,13,16

NET Who knows? Perhaps He will be compassionate and grant a reprieve, and leave blessing in His wake— a meal offering and a drink offering for you to offer to the LORD your God!

**WHO KNOWS?  
GOD KNOWS!**

Joel is continuing his amplification of God's invitation in Joel 2:12 **Return** to Me."

**Who knows whether He will not turn and relent** ("Perhaps He will be compassionate and grant a reprieve" = NET) - The answer of course is God knows! "The sovereign God acts according to His own purposes." (ESV Study note) His turn ("return") to Israel is predicated on their turning ("return" ~ repenting) to Him.

**Hubbard - Who knows** is a humble way of holding out hope. This is no time for presumption, but it is a time for anticipation, held in check by awe of God's sovereignty (cf. 2 Sam. 12:22; Jon. 3:9; a similar idea, though expressed by another Hebrew construction [ʾûlay, 'perhaps'] is found in 2 Kgs 19:4; Amos 5:15). In Jonah the hope is negative: averting judgment. Here it is positive: receiving blessing in the form of a fresh fertility which allows the temple offerings to be resumed. (TOTC)

**Moody Bible Commentary** adds that **who knows** "reflects the Lord's sovereign will. It leaves the possibility that after repentance the Lord could turn and relent concerning His plan for judgment, and He would leave a blessing behind Him. The offer is genuine, but is based on the requirement of repentance."

Similar passages speaking of God's sovereignty in this matter include

2 Samuel 12:22 He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, **Who knows**, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'

Jonah 3:9 "**Who knows**, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish." (Compare Jonah's prayer in Jonah 4:2!)

Esther 4:14-[note](#) (In a clear picture of God's sovereignty Mordecai asks Queen Esther) "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And **who knows** whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

**Robert Chisholm** adds this thought on "**who knows**" - "Even if sinful Israel repented, she could not presume on God's mercy as if it were something under their control which He had to grant automatically. They could only hope that He would turn and have pity (cf. Mal. 3:7) by averting the disaster (cf. Joel 2:20) and restoring their crops (cf. v. 25)." (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Gilliland** ([What the Bible Teaches](#)) - When repentance is true there is not only an absence of pride but also an absence of presumption. The question here does not betray any doubt or lack of confidence. It is rather a recognition that no matter what may be done, God cannot be coerced or manipulated. His forgiveness is part of the exercise of His freedom and is in no way dependent on our performance. As Samuel Davies rightly said in his noble hymn "[Great God of wonders](#)":

This is Thy grand prerogative,  
And in this honour none shall share.  
Who is a pardoning God like Thee,  
Or who has grace so rich and free?

**Relent** ([05162](#)) See the preceding discussion about God "changing His mind" in notes on [naham/nacham](#).

In Joel 2:3 the locusts left "behind" a desolate wilderness, but here the Lord will leave "behind Him" a bountiful blessing. This is the effect of God's grace in our lives!

**And leave a blessing behind Him** ("and leave blessing in His wake" = NET), **even a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God?** - This is tangible evidence of a restored relationship allowing daily sacrifices ("communion") to be renewed. This picture presents a dramatic contrast with the devastation left by the locust plague in Joel 1 when there was not enough wine or grain for offerings to the LORD! (Joel 1:9-10-note). And ponder the truth that their offering is furnished by God for His Own Temple! The principle is that we as His people can really only give back to Him what He gives first to us! That is a humbling, grace-filled through for sure! God is able to turn a curse into a blessing. But in context, this offer is only for those who return with authentic repentance from their heart. And is not this His goal for us in calling us to repent? He desires to bring back the backslidden into fellowship with Himself, the very One they turned away from!

**Hubbard** - The lesson in this verse must not be missed: the material provisions God gives his people are as much for his service as for their comfort. (TOTC)

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## Joel 2:14 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 2:2-11). 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

**Joel 2:15 Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,**

- **Blow a trumpet in Zion:** Joe 2:1 Nu 10:3
- **Consecrate a fast:** Joe 1:14 1Ki 21:9,12 2Ki 10:20 Jer 36:9

## A CALL TO A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

**Blow...consecrate...proclaim** - These are commands, not suggestions. They are a clear call for an urgent response! The nearness of the Day of the LORD demands drastic measures for the nation of Israel. They are to flee from His great and awesome wrath into His great and awesome mercy via the narrow path of repentance!

**Blow a trumpet in Zion** - A call of alarm in Joel 2:1 is now a call to assemble. Here the sounding of the [shofar](#) is not a military alert but a "spiritual alert," calling individual Israelites as well as the nation to repentance.

Upon the walls of Jerusalem stood the alert sentry, always watchful, with trumpet (shofar) in hand, ready to sound the alarm of impending danger. But here the warning was to be sounded from a different platform. The message will be heralded from "**Zion**," the "holy mountain" (Joel 2:1), which has reference to Mount Moriah, where Solomon's Temple stood. The priest (Joel 2:15), not the soldier, was to blow the [shofar](#) and not as a military alert, but as a "spiritual alert," a call to gather Judah for individual and national repentance (Joel 2:12-17) for the Temple was the abode of God's presence, the place to beseech Him in prayer and fasting, in the hope that He would divert the judgment.

Blowing of the trumpets to signal religious gatherings was well known in Israel...

Leviticus 23:24 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by **blowing of trumpets**, a holy convocation.

Leviticus 25:9 'You shall then **sound a ram's horn** abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land.

Numbers 10:10 "Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall **blow the trumpets** over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

Ps 81:3 **Blow the trumpet** at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day.

**Consecrate a fast** - In Joel 1:14-note after the locust invasion, Israel was to consecrate a fast to mourn, but now the call is to return. This is a fast that is calculated not to impress God with our willingness to forgo some pleasures of life, but a fast from the heart, seeking to get our heart prepared to focus on meeting before Jehovah.

**Consecrate** (Sanctify, make holy) ([06942](#))([qadash](#)) means to set apart for a specific use. Removed from common use. The specific use is that one prepares their heart to meet God.

**Feinberg on proclaim a solemn assembly** - Again the priests are called upon to blow the trumpet in Zion. The first trumpet (cp. Joel 2:1 and Nu 10:5 = "when you blow an alarm") was to sound an alarm; the second trumpet (Joel 2:15 and Nu 10:10) was to call a convocation in Israel to gather the people to the sanctuary of the Lord. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

In Amos 5:21 God says "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your **solemn assemblies**." Why? Because of their rebellious, unfaithful, unrepentant hearts! Here God commands a solemn assembly as a means to bring their hearts back in line with His will vis-a-vis rending of hearts and repentance.

**Solemn assembly** - This phrase occurs only 8 times in the OT - Nu. 29:35; Dt. 16:8; 2 Ki. 10:20; 2 Chr. 7:9; Neh. 8:18; Isa. 1:13;

Joel 1:14; Joel 2:15

**Hastings** on solemn assembly - The expression solemn assembly , in which 'solemn' has its etymological, but now obsolete, sense of 'stated,' 'appointed' (lit. 'yearly,' sollennis ), represents a third Heb. word applicable originally to any religious gathering ( Amos 5:21 , Isaiah 1:13 , 2 Kings 10:20 ), but afterwards limited to those appointed for the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Cakes ( Mazzoth , Deuteronomy 16:8 ), and the eighth of the Feast of Booths ( Leviticus 23:36 , Numbers 29:35 ). ([Dictionary](#))

Solemn national assemblies for prayer, fasting, and repentance are described in the Old Testament Scriptures. In America, local and national leaders have called for days of prayer and fasting at times of crisis and when they perceive a need for repentance by the entire society. In 1989 Southern Baptist leaders issued a call to prayer and solemn assembly.

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### **Robert Webber - Biblical Basis for the Solemn Assembly**

Holy convocations and/or solemn assemblies may be described as a day or days in which God's followers come together under concerned leadership to confess sins and to be brought into a renewed relationship with God. Worshipers confess both personal and corporate sins which have separated them from God. The spirit of the solemn assembly may be found in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "if my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." This is the biblical intention of the solemn assembly: confession, forgiveness of sin, personal restoration, national blessing, and the healing process. The concept of solemn assembly emanates mainly from Old Testament literature. The terminology does not appear in the New Testament largely for two reasons. The first reason is that New Testament Christian leaders and writers were Jews (some exceptions being noted) who practiced Jewish custom while being Christians. They knew about holy days and solemn assemblies. Therefore, there was no real need to deal with solemn assemblies. The second reason has to do with the constant and ongoing confession of sin believed to be necessary for an appropriate relationship with God the Father as taught in New Testament literature. Practicing this teaching made even mentioning solemn assemblies unnecessary, since they were called only in the case of gross personal and corporate sin. In addition to these two reasons, the national and religious life of Israel had been interrupted by the defeat and pagan rule of the country. Israel was not a free nation. In the face of Roman rule, calling a solemn assembly would have been extremely difficult.

**David Levy** - One day God's long suffering will run out, and the day of the Lord will come in devastating judgment. A holocaust like this world has never experienced is fast approaching. Is there any hope for sinful men? Yes, a genuine repentance and turning to Christ. Is there any hope for America? Yes, the same hope which God put before Judah and every other nation that went off in sin. The choice is clearly one of repentance or ruin. The country is on a collision course and has a date with destruction unless repentance is forthcoming. In Judah, repentance began at the house of the Lord. God will not accept anything less from His people today. (Friends for Israel)

Here are several appropriate Scriptures...

Jeremiah 18:8 if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it.

Amos 5:4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, "Seek Me that you may live.

Jonah 3:10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

2 Chronicles 7:14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

God will forgive the sins and stay His hand of judgment toward a people who turn in repentance.

**Editorial Comment:** America is in dire, desperate need for solemn assemblies from the East Coast to the West Coast and everywhere in between. Dear pastor, would you pray and ask God if He would have you proclaim a solemn assembly in your church (or even your city)?

- Instructions on [Calling and Leading a Solemn Assembly](#)
- [Solemn Assembly - 5 Day Guide for Repentance](#)

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### [A CALL TO SOLEMN ASSEMBLY](#)

We live in desperate times. Our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our nation reflect the ruinous effects of our sinful ways. To some degree we all have pursued the things of the world and stand guilty of worshipping the created, not the Creator (Matthew 6:24; 1 John 2:15).



Where do we place our trust? Have we abandoned our faith in the Lord? In many of our lives, our passion for Him has grown cold. We are guilty of bearing false witness before the God of the universe.

However far we may have wandered from the calling God has placed on our lives, God has not moved. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Apart from the cover provided by Christ's work of atonement, there is no hope for a stiff-necked people (Isaiah 13:11; Revelation 2:4). God's judgment is swift and sure; His wrath is without compare-only the blood of His Son holds back His sword of justice (Galatians 2:20). For those who call upon the name of His Son, His mercies are without end (Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21).

We must repent and come before the Father with a contrite heart. We need a heal-the-land kind of blessing (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).

We must, as people of God, enter into sacred assembly, prostrate ourselves before Him, confess our sins, repent of our transgressions, and thank God for His merciful blessings upon us (Joel 1:13-14, 2:12; Romans 12:1).

It is critical that the people called Southern Baptist individually and corporately renew their covenant commitment to the King of kings and Lord of lords (Mark 12:30).

Pastors, as shepherds of His flock, we urge you to call the Christ-followers in your care to consecrate themselves, to throw off that which distracts, tempts, or otherwise disables them from obediently following God (Genesis 35:2-5; Exodus 19:10-11; Joel 2:16). We need to make way for the Lord (Hebrews 8:10).

We join Dr. Bryant Wright, President of the Southern Baptist Convention, in calling Southern Baptists to a Solemn Assembly in January, that in the sight of God and His witnesses we might renew our commitment to Christ and the Great Commission (Zechariah 1:3).

May God alone be glorified.

**Joel 2:16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber.**

- **sanctify the congregation:** Ex 19:10,15,22 Jos 7:13 1Sa 16:5 2Ch 29:5,23,24 30:17,19 35:6 Job 1:5
- **Assemble the elders:** Joe 1:14 De 29:10,11 2Ch 20:13 Jon 3:7,8
- **Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber** Zec 12:11-14 Mt 9:15 1Co 7:5

### **NOT A SINGLE SOUL IS TO MISS THIS ASSEMBLY!**

Note the urgency and the necessity are emphasized by 4 commands (**Gather...sanctify...Assemble...Gather**), and six groups of people so that no members of the covenant community are exempt, for all are guilty and all must humble themselves before God and repent.

**Feinberg** adds that "Personal, individual joys are to give way to the interests of the entire community." (Ibid)

**Gather the children and the nursing infants** - This is striking! Squalling infants in a solemn assembly? Absolutely! Israel sinned individually and corporately and is return individually and corporately. Now nursing infants probably alludes to the mothers who might otherwise not come because they were nursing their infants. But God says for them to come and bring their infants. This assembly is "required attendance" for everyone in Israel. There are no exemptions. Everyone is in need of repentance (now infants would be the exception - yes, they are born in sin, but they cannot yet even vocalize and cannot yet sin willfully against God).

**Hubbard** has an interesting comment - and the unweaned babies, who in corporate personality shared the people's guilt without directly contributing to it (cf. the judgment on Achan's family for his sin, Josh. 7:25; Exod. 34:6-7; Jer. 31:29-30). Furthermore, the presence of the children would add power to the petition for mercy, as God's attitude toward the youngsters of Nineveh attests (Jon. 4:11). (TOTC)

**Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber-** Under normal circumstances a bridegroom was exempt from the assemblies, but this was not a normal circumstance! Moses describes the exemptions...

Deuteronomy 20:7; 'And who is the man that is engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him depart and return to his house, otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would marry her.'

Deuteronomy 24:5 "When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

**Bridal chamber** (02646)(**chuppah**) describes an overhead cover that protects from hostile elements or a bridal tent for the wedding ceremony or the first nuptial night. The idea that this represents a **marriage canopy** is intriguing in view of the fact that in the OT Israel was pictured as the **wife of Jehovah** (Isa 54:5, Jer 31:31, cp Jer 2:2, 3:14, Ho 2:19), and the canopy could therefore speak of a **marriage canopy** for the Lord's beloved, **the believing Remnant of Israel**, those who are now washed and purified (i.e., spiritually speaking -- when all Israel is saved as described in Ro 11:26, 27-note] and as such would now be the "chaste" faithful wife to Jehovah. What a glorious day awaits us all when Messiah rules and reigns as King of kings (see use in Isaiah 4:5)!

**Chuppah** - 3x in 3v - canopy(1), chamber(2).

Psalms 19:5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

Isaiah 4:5-note then (**IN THE MILLENNIUM**) the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy.

Joel 2:16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber.

**Joel 2:17 Let the priests, the LORD'S ministers, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, And do not make Your inheritance a reproach, A byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"**

- **Let the priests, the LORD'S ministers:** Joe 1:9,13
- **Weep between the porch and the altar:** 1Ki 6:3 2Ch 8:12 Eze 8:16 Mt 23:35
- **And let them say:** Ho 14:2
- **Spare Your people:** Ex 32:11-13 34:9 De 9:16-29 Isa 37:20 64:9-12 Da 9:18,19 Am 7:2,5 Mal 1:9
- **And do not make Your inheritance a reproach:** Ps 44:10-14 74:10,18-23 79:4 89:41,51 Eze 36:4-7
- **A byword among the nations:** Ne 9:36 Isa 63:17-19
- **Why should they among the peoples say:** or, use a byword against them, De 28:37 1Ki 9:7 2Ch 7:20 Ps 44:14
- **Where is their God:** Nu 14:14-16 De 32:27 Ps 42:10 79:10 115:2 Eze 20:9 Mic 7:10 Mt 27:43

## **WEeping AND PRAYING FOR GOD'S HONOR**

**Let the priests, the LORD'S ministers, weep between the porch and the altar** - The religious leaders were to lead out in this time of national contrition and mourning. Is there a lesson for us in America? What would occur in American churches if pastors called and led their flocks to a time of humbling, of brokenness, of mourning over sins and repenting of sins? **Who knows** if God might send a revival to America!

**Weep** (01058)(**bakah**) means to weep, bemoan, lament or wail, because of grief, pain, humiliation or even joy (Ge. 42:24; 43:30; Dt 21:13, Joel 1:5). **Bakah** can describe weeping as a response of contrition before the Lord (Dt. 1:45 - but see context as to why they were weeping and why it was too little, too late! = Dt 1:43-44; 2Ki 22:19 = King Josiah after discovery of Book of the Law in the House of God [2Ki 22:8] the reading of which caused Josiah to tear his clothes-2Ki 22:11). Weeping is often mentioned with fasting indicative of mourning (2Sa 12:21, 22 = David at loss of Bathsheba's child).

The Septuagint translates weep (**bakah**) Joel 2:17 with the verb Lxx = **klaio** = weeping, wailing, lamenting).

**Bakah** was used in Joel 1:15-note calling on the drunkards to weep for their loss of access to wine.

**The porch and the altar** (of Solomon's Temple - 1 Ki 6:3) - "The vestibule (porch), an area 20 cubits by 10 cubits, was on the east end of the temple (1 Kgs 6:3). The altar is the great altar of burnt offering in front of the temple (1 Kgs 8:64; 2 Chr. 8:12). Ezekiel refers to this area (which is near the entrance to the holy place in the inner court) in his description of the twenty-five who turned their backs on the temple to worship the sun (Ezekiel 8:16-note). The priests undoubtedly were to face the temple with the congregation gathered behind them in the court. " (Hubbard)

The weeping here reminds one of the national weeping in Judges 2:1-5-note (at least 200 years before Joel's prophecy) which set the stage for the next 200 years of Israel in the Book of Judges! (cf Jdg 21:25-note).

Now the [Angel of Jehovah](#) came up from Gilgal (from galal = to roll) to Bochim (means "weepers"). And he said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land (Ex 14:19) which I have sworn to your fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - aka "Abrahamic Covenant"); and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you, 2 and as for you, you shall make (cut) no covenant with the inhabitants of this land (WHY? BECAUSE COVENANT WAS THE MOST BINDING AGREEMENT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD!); you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? 3 "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they (THE GODLESS, PERVERTED CANAANITES) will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.'" 4 When the [Angel of Jehovah](#) spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. So they named that place Bochim; and there they sacrificed to the LORD.

#### Angel of the LORD

Gustave Dore Woodcut

(Click to Enlarge)

**Comment:** The [Angel of Jehovah](#) (PRE-INCARNATE APPEARANCE OF JESUS) reproved Israelites for entering into a league with the pagan people of the land which caused Israel to weep bitterly hence the name of the place as "weepers" or Bochim.

**Let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD** - The priests are to intercede on behalf of the nation asking God to show mercy and to spare them from the destruction of the Day of the LORD. God tells them exactly what to pray. As an aside, the best prayers to pray are those that pray God's Word back to Him!

**Wiersbe** - The prophet even gave them a prayer to use (Joel 2:17) that presents two reasons why God should deliver them: (1) Israel's covenant privileges as God's heritage and (2) the glory of God's name before the other nations. Moses used these same arguments when he pled for the people (Ex. 32:11-13; 33:12-23). The Jews are indeed God's special treasure and heritage (Ex. 15:17; 19:5-6; Ps. 94:5; Jer. 2:7; 12:7-9). 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 (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 9:1-5). From Israel came the written Word of God and the gift of the Savior (John 4:22). Israel was called to bear witness to the other nations that their God was the only true God. How could God be glorified if His people were destroyed and the pagans could gleefully ask, "Where is their God?" (See Pss. 79:10 and 115:2; also Micah 7:10.) The nation had to choose between revival (getting right with God) or reproach (robbing God of glory). (Be Amazed)

**Spare** (show pity)([02347](#))(**chus**) to pity, look upon with compassion, have compassion, spare. The idea is to show mercy, have compassion, with a focus on sparing or delivering one from a great punishment. Moses tells Israel she is not to spare or look with pity on her enemies in the Promised Land (because they are intractably evil and debauched!) (Dt 7:16, 13:8, 19:13, 19:21, 25:12). David spared King Saul's life (1 Sa 24:10). Nehemiah's prayer after he had returned to Jerusalem (Neh 13:22) asking Jehovah "have **compassion** on me according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness." Here we see the integral relation between God's "compassion" (showing pity, sparing) and His great lovingkindness, His steadfast covenant love. Jehovah tells rebellious Judah He would not "be sorry" when He allowed them to be defeated and killed by the Babylonians (Jer 13:14, cf Jer 21:7). In Ezekiel 5:11 (cf Ezek 7:4, 9, 8:18, 9:5, 9:10) God declares 'So as I live,' declares the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My (HOLY) sanctuary with all your detestable (PROFANE) idols and with all your (HORRID) abominations, therefore I will also withdraw, and My eye **will have no pity** and I will not spare (chamal - to spare, root of chus)." And yet despite all the previous verses in Ezekiel stating God would not have pity on Judah, He gives a ray of hope in Ezekiel 20:17 declaring "Yet My eye **spared** them rather than destroying them, and I did not cause their annihilation in the wilderness." **Chus** describes Jonah's "compassion on a plant," which God uses to "justify" (He needs no justification of course) His demonstration of "compassion on Nineveh." (Jonah 4:11).

The **Septuagint** of Joel 2:17 translates the Hebrew **chus** with the verb [pheidomai](#) which means to treat leniently, to spare, to refrain from doing something. Here is the amazing truth. The priests are to intercede with chus/pheidomai for God to spare His people Israel, and Paul uses this same word of God not sparing His only begotten Son (Ro 8:32-[note](#)), which is the very reason Israel could even be spared!!! Talk about amazing grace who saved a wretch like me!

**Gilbrant** - On several occasions, the Book of Deuteronomy employs a Hebrew phrase which literally means "your eye shall not have pity," which the NIV translates as "show no pity." This construction is used when prescribing severe punishments, especially for

idolatry. The Israelites were to show no pity to the sinful inhabitants of Canaan, whom God was delivering into Israel's power, because sparing them would leave God's people in danger of enslavement by their idolatrous practices (Deut. 7:16). Indeed, so great was the danger of idolatry, that even friends and relatives, be they brothers, sons, daughters or even wives, were to be put to death without pity if they incited any worship of gods other than Yahweh (Deut. 13:8). The death penalty was also imposed for the willful and hateful murderer who, likewise, was to be shown no compassion (Deut. 19:13). Nor were malicious false witnesses to receive pity; they were to be treated exactly as they intended the unjustly accused person to be, according to the OT law of *lex talionis*, i.e., "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Deut. 19:21). The prohibition against showing pity also occurs in Deut. 25:12 in an exceptionally rare instance of amputation as the prescribed OT punishment for an offense, for a woman who would seize the genitals of a man fighting against her husband. Sadly, in its later history, Judah did abandon Yahweh to worship other gods. Such idolatry provoked the judgment of God, Who refused to allow his pity and mercy to keep Him from destroying the Southern Kingdom (Jer. 13:14; and see the references in Ezekiel cited below). He accomplished this through the instrument of the Babylonians, and specifically King Nebuchadnezzar, who showed no pity on king Zedekiah or his officials or people (Jer. 21:7). Nevertheless, such actions ultimately would themselves be punished, and God in turn raised up the Medes, who similarly offered no pity to the Babylonians or their children (Isa. 13:8). Ezekiel recounts the period of Judah's last days and the beginning of the Exile, where the context is that of God's refusal to have any more pity toward his rebellious people, unlike the compassion He had shown earlier, even during their idolatrous insurrections during the wilderness years (Ezek. 20:17). The Hebrew verb *chûs* often occurs alongside the verb *châmal* (HED #2654) in Ezekiel, which also means "to show pity" or "to show compassion." In these instances, *chûs* is almost always translated by the KJV as meaning "to spare" and *châmal* as "to have pity on," e.g., Ezek. 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:5, 10; 24:14. There is, however, no final or definite reason to insist on these translations, since both verbs have nearly the same nuances of meaning, and in fact, bear the opposite meanings in the KJV in Deut. 13:8. In the allegory of unfaithful Jerusalem in Ezek. 16:5, no one pities (*chûs*) or has compassion (*châmal*) on the baby girl who is left naked and bloody in the field. The meaning "to spare" is also found in the historical and poetic literature of the OT. David, out of compassion and respect for the Lord's anointed, spared Saul's life when he had the opportunity to kill him in a cave in the desert of En Gedi, despite the protests of some of his men (1 Sam. 24:10). Nehemiah, after his reforming actions against marriages with idolatrous wives, various cultic irregularities and especially the desecration of the Sabbath day, prayed that God would spare him, "according to the greatness of... [his] mercy" (Neh. 13:22). This compassionate aspect of God's character is proclaimed in Ps. 72:13, a Psalm ascribed to Solomon. In Joel 2:17, during the time of a sacred assembly and holy fast, the priests are urged to cry out to God, pleading, "Spare your people." ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

**Chus** - 24x in 24v - concern\*(1), had compassion(1), have compassion(3), have pity(1), have...pity(4), looked with pity(1), pity(6), show pity(2), show...pity(1), sorry(1), spare(2), spared(1). (KJV has "spare" 16x, pity 7, regard 1)

Gen. 45:20 ("Do not **concern** yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours."); Deut. 7:16; Deut. 13:8; Deut. 19:13; Deut. 19:21; Deut. 25:12; 1 Sam. 24:10; Neh. 13:22; Ps. 72:13; Isa. 13:18; Jer. 13:14; Jer. 21:7; Ezek. 5:11; Ezek. 7:4; Ezek. 7:9; Ezek. 8:18; Ezek. 9:5; Ezek. 9:10; Ezek. 16:5; Ezek. 20:17; Ezek. 24:14; Joel 2:17; Jon. 4:10; Jon. 4:11

**And do not make Your inheritance a reproach** - God has a vested interest in Israel, for they are His inheritance among all the other nations of the world, for God said they were to "be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex 19:5) God had a great redemptive purpose for the nation of Israel. And so the priests are to ask God not to let Israel be so devastated that the Gentiles look with reproach on them. And notice that Israel is to be viewed as God's inheritance. They were His property and the "chosen people" who He would use to bring about His grand plan of redemption of the world. As God's "chosen people" their actions would reflect directly on the glory and majesty of their God! Is this not convicting? For today, the lost are watching the redeemed to see if their actions give a proper opinion of the God in Whom they claim to believe! (cf Mt 5:14-16-[note](#)).

For example Solomon ended his prayer of dedication of the Temple (1 Ki 8:1-66)...

"For You have separated them (ISRAEL) from all the peoples of the earth as **Your inheritance**, as You spoke through Moses Your servant, when You brought our fathers forth from Egypt, O Lord GOD." (1 Ki 8:53)

**Hubbard** elaborates - In a religious context where each nation honoured its own god and looked to it for welfare, any reversal of the nation's fortunes had to be interpreted as evidence of the national god's impotence. Yahweh's refusal to intervene on behalf of his people would be seriously misinterpreted by Israel's neighbours (Exod. 32:12; Num. 14:13-16; Deut. 9:28) and probably branded as failure. The very taunt these people would use to deride Israel is cited: 'Where is their God?' (cf. Pss 42:10; 79:10; Mic. 7:10). Their shame becomes Yahweh's shame. The parallel passages from Psalms (Ps 44:13; 79:4; 89:41) illustrate both the continuity and variety of expression in the prayers of communal complaint (cf. also Ezek. 22:4; 36:30)... God's failure to rescue Israel would be thrown in their faces by their foes with the same regularity and intensity with which Saul's ill-fated attempts at prophesying were thrown at would-be prophets (1 Sa. 10:12). (TCOT)

**Gilliland** - These men plead that the heritage of the Lord be spared and the heathen be silenced. How quick the Gentiles have been

to make the Lord's people a byword. The condition of a disobedient people reflects upon the honour of their God. The perception of His character by the onlooking heathen is tethered to their condition. When things are not prospering among the people of God, it gives an unbelieving world the pretext it is looking for to trivialize and criticize His glory. Not only does contempt fill the lips of the Gentiles, but also bitter cynicism as they ask, "Where is their God?". With biting sarcasm they ask what kind of God allows His people to be like this. If He exists at all, "Where is He?". The answer to this question is in the very passage. God's people can find Him waiting at the end of the road of repentance. There He waits to be gracious. He will forgive His returning people and when His blessing is restored even the heathen will have an answer to their sceptical question. Then God will be seen to be "in the midst of Israel" (Joel 27), in the midst of His repentant and restored people. Their prosperity will be a testimonial to His greatness, mercy and majesty. ([What the Bible Teaches – Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah](#))

**Reproach** (02781)(**cherpah**) means scorn, disgrace, contempt (referring to a state of dishonor and low status), shame, taunt, slur. It refers to the casting of blame or scorn on someone. **Reproach** in English describes censure mingled with contempt or derision. It expresses rebuke or disapproval. As an aside on the cross Christ bore the shame of our sin.

Other passages describe Israel as God's inheritance

Joel 3:2 I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there **On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel**, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.

Exodus 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then **you shall be My own possession among all the peoples**, for all the earth is Mine;

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your **God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.**

Deuteronomy 9:29 'Yet they are **Your people, even Your inheritance**, whom You have brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm.'

Deuteronomy 32:9 "For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of **His inheritance.**

Psalms 94:14 For the LORD will not abandon His people, Nor will He forsake **His inheritance.**

Psalms 106:4-5 Remember me, O LORD, in Your favor toward Your people; Visit me with Your salvation, 5 That I may see the prosperity of Your chosen ones, That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, **That I may glory with Your inheritance.**

**A byword among the nations** - It is interesting that after Israel made a golden calf and God was ready to destroy them, Moses interceded for them

Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? (IF ISRAEL IS A BYWORD TO THE NATIONS ULTIMATELY IT IS NOT ABOUT THEM AS MUCH AS IT IS ABOUT THE RENOWN OF THEIR GOD! THE SAME IS TRUE TODAY DEAR CHRIST FOLLOWER! THE WORLD IS WATCHING AND READY TO ASK "WHERE IS THEIR GOD?") Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. 13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people. (Ex 32:11-14)

**A byword** (a taunt song)(04912)(**mashal**) is the common Hebrew word for proverbs, short, pithy sayings, prophetic utterances, or compositions of comparison. Here in Joel 2:17 **mashal** conveys the sense of a **byword** spoken of in contempt or derision (Dt. 28:37; 1 Ki. 9:7; Ps. 44:14; 69:11). A byword is a condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true. In short it is a proverb-like saying or question that is hurled at any enemy as a taunt (cf. Isa. 14:4).

**Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"** - This is of course would be the natural reaction of the Gentiles if Israel were given over by God to a "locust like" destruction.

**Joel 2:18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people.**

- **Then the LORD will be zealous for His land:** Isa 42:13 Zec 1:14 8:2
- **will have pity on His people:** De 32:16,36,43 Jdg 10:16 Ps 103:13,17 Isa 60:10 63:9,15 Jer 31:20 La 3:22 Ho 11:8,9 Lu 15:20 Jas 5:11

NLT Then the LORD will pity his people and jealously guard the honor of his land.

NIV Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.

## THE TURNING POINT IN JOEL FROM JUDGMENT TO RESTORATION

**Then** - expression of time - e.g. then - **Then** marks a progression in a sequence of events and thus is an especially valuable "marker" (or "clue") when one is studying prophetic passages where the Spirit is clearly laying out a pattern or a sequence of events. If you miss the "then," well "then" (pun intended) you could just end up missing the gist of the prophecy! So always pause when you encounter a "then" especially at the beginning of a sentence. Consider the "**5P's**" - **P**ause to **P**onder the **P**assage then **P**ractice it in the **P**ower of the Spirit.

So from Joel 2:18-3:21 describes restoration of the nation, moving from the previous descriptions of judgment to the following descriptions of blessing. God had predicted this reversal through Moses in Deut 30:1-9-note.

In Joel 2:18 the NAS (NIV, KJV, NLT) uses the **future tense** to translate the text. And from Joel 2:18 to Joel 3:21 the NAS uses future tense 33 times in 16 verses. Technically, the Hebrew (and I am not a Hebrew expert) in Joel 2:18 is said to favor the "past tense" so instead of the LORD "**will be zealous and will have pity on His people**" (NAS), the ESV (and NET) translates it "the LORD **became** jealous and **had** pity on His people." Most Hebrew experts favor the latter translation as the most accurate literal translation. However, as noted below there is no record of Israel responding as a nation to God's call in Joel 2:12-17 suggesting it is yet future. Also, the context of many of the events in Joel 2:18-3:21 are unquestionably descriptive of a future time yet to be fulfilled. For example (keeping context in mind), even the very next verse Joel 2:19 has the phrase "I will never again make you a reproach among the nations." which even the ESV and NET agree should be translated with future tense. Why? There clearly has NEVER been a time when there was NO Anti-Semitism, a time when the nation of Israel was not hated by most of the nations of the world, a time when Israel was not **a reproach among the nations** (Gentiles)! Even as I write in January, 2018, the [United Nations](#) has tried to block President Donald Trump's 2017 decision to move the U S embassy from Tel Aviv to the capital city of Jerusalem (In a collective act of defiance toward Washington, the United Nations General Assembly voted 128 to 9, with 35 abstentions, for a resolution demanding that the United States rescind its Dec. 6, 2017 declaration on Jerusalem, the contested holy city). The **reproach among the nations** has been "off the charts" so to speak! In summary, while the Hebrew text does not favor a future tense in Joel 2:18, the context of this entire section clearly has a "**future focus**," which is undeniable and irrefutable! So I (not a Hebrew scholar) chose to favor translating Joel 2:18 as future. Now I realize that God has always been jealous for His people and has always had pity on them, but His jealousy and His pity on Israel and Jerusalem will come to a "**crushing crescendo consummation**" at the end of this age.

**Then** highlights a promise of salvation and restoration to those in Israel who heed the "11th hour appeal!" As alluded to above, Joel does not describe a specific assembly in which the nation repenting (and returned to Jehovah) and to my knowledge we have **no other Biblical or historical record of the entire nation repenting and returning!** Yes there was a solemn assembly described in Nehemiah 8:18 after the return from the Babylonian exile, but this was "according to the ordinance" (Lev 23:36) and was not the unique, specially called assembly described in Joel 2:12-17. In short, the nation of Israel (in my estimation) has yet to fulfill the conditions of Joel 2:12-17, and this is why we find no Biblical or historical description of an assembly which surely would have been front page news on the "Jerusalem Post!" No, this time of national repentance seems to await a future fulfillment (and probably accounts for the NAS, NIV, NLT translating the verbs as future) and would be very compatible with the events in Israel in the [last days](#) as described by the prophet Zechariah...

"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. 11 "In that day **there will be great mourning in Jerusalem** (cf Joel 2:12-17), like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 "The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi (PRIESTS) by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. 1 "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. (Zech 12:10-14-note; Zechariah 13:1-note).

And so Joel now moves from emphasis on **judgment** of Israel to **restoration** of Israel in the remainder of his prophecy. And with supernatural "warp speed" he takes us from the ancient date of his prophecy to the very end of this present age, to the time when the Day of the LORD will be fully consummated by the return of the Messiah Who will destroy all godless usurpers and will rule and reign over planet earth.

**Duane Garrett** observes that "The Hebrew verb forms mark a sharp transition here. The text at this point abruptly moves from crisis and lamentation for God's people to salvation and vindication. The NIV translation (using future tense forms) is defensible, but the text would be better rendered, "Now the LORD is jealous for his land, and he has been moved to compassion over his people.(The Hebrew suddenly introduces waw-consecutive forms here with וַיִּזְעַק and וַיִּחַן. While the waw-consecutive (or better, wayyiqtol) form is virtually a past tense in prose narrative, its use in poetic and prophetic texts is not well understood. Clearly we should not reposit the text. Probably the wayyiqtol forms imply that Yahweh's sudden decision to save the nation is a consequence of their repentance. They also signal that the whole direction and tone of the book is now taking a dramatic turn. They seem to imply that Yahweh had already decided to save Israel.)" ([New American Commentary - Volume 19A - Hosea-Joel](#))

**NET Note** - The time-frame entertained by the verbs of Joel 2:18 constitutes a [crux interpretum](#) in this chapter. The Hebrew verb forms used here are preterites with vav consecutive and are most naturally understood as describing a past situation. **However, some modern English versions render these verbs as futures** (e.g., NIV, NAS, NLT), apparently concluding that the context requires a future reference. According to Joüon 2:363 §112.h, n.1 Ibn Ezra explained the verbs of Joel 2:18 as an extension of the so-called prophetic perfect; as such, a future fulfillment was described with a past tense as a rhetorical device lending certainty to the fulfillment. But this lacks adequate precedent and is very unlikely from a syntactical standpoint. It seems better to take the verbs in the normal past sense of the preterite. This would require a vantage point for the prophet at some time after the people had responded favorably to the Lord's call for repentance and after the Lord had shown compassion and forgiveness toward his people, but before the full realization of God's promises to restore productivity to the land. In other words, it appears from the verbs of vv. 18–19 that at the time of Joel's writing this book the events of successive waves of locust invasion and conditions of drought had almost run their course and the people had now begun to turn to the Lord. ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**MacArthur** sees this passage as a key turning point in God's dealings with Israel - With the advent of Joel 2:18, the text makes a decisive transition, **devoting the remainder of the book to restoration It assumes an interval of time between Joel 2:17 and Joel 2:18 during which Israel repented.** As a result of her repentance, the 3 major concerns of Joel 1:1–2:17 are answered by the Lord: physical restoration (Joel 2:21–27), spiritual restoration (Joel 2:28–32), and national restoration (Joel 3:1–21). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#)) (Bolding added)

## JEHOVAH JEALOUS FOR HIS LAND

**The LORD will be zealous** - This refers to God's zeal for the protection of His Name and His honor. Zechariah writes

So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. (Zechariah 1:14, cf Isa. 26:11; Ezek. 36:5-6; 38:19)

**MacArthur** gives a good summary - God first described Himself as jealous when making His covenant with Israel (Ex 20:5; 34:14). This same jealousy had been experienced by Israel in punishment (cf. Dt 29:18-28; Eze 5:13). That same jealous love is expressed emphatically in the city's defense. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, **I am exceedingly jealous for Zion**, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.' (Zech. 8:2)

**ESV Study Note** - Jealousy here is a deep devotion that leads the Lord to intervene, saving his people for the sake of his own glory (Ezek. 39:25; Zech. 1:14; 8:2 - **Ed Comment:** The Ezekiel 39:25-note passage is clearly in the context of the [last days](#) when Messiah returns and delivers Israel from annihilation and restores Israel to the land promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18ff-note!).

**David Levy** - God loves Israel so much that He is "jealous for his land". His eye is continually on it in protective care throughout the year (Deut. 11:12). One can imagine how it grieved the heart of God to bring judgment on Israel. (Friends of Israel)

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The Lord identified the people of Israel as His people and the land of Israel as His land, indicating His faithful covenant relationship with them (cf. Ge 12:1–3). The word zealous depicts the righteous, jealous ardor a husband would have for his wife, indicating God's zeal for Israel. The word pity describes an emotional feeling that causes sparing from difficulty, indicating that God would come to Israel's aid if they would turn to Him.

**Garrett on the LORD will be zealous for His land**- The idiom for being "jealous for" something occurs several times in the sense

of people being devoted to and defending the honor of Yahweh (e.g., Nu 25:13). Here, as in Ezek 39:25; Zech 1:14 and 8:2, Yahweh is zealous for the nation in the sense that he identifies himself with it, protects it, and upholds the covenant. This quality especially emerges in the context of the nations' abuse of Israel, as in Zech 1:14–15: "I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry [i.e., with Jerusalem], but they [i.e., the Gentiles] added to the calamity [i.e., by tormenting the Jews]." At the same time, Yahweh is motivated by pure compassion. Thus the two grounds for God's work of salvation are his covenant bond with the people and his merciful nature. ([Ibid](#))

What is **His land**? - This is the **land** of Palestine over which there has been conflict for centuries, but which will be resolved once and for all in the last days. Zechariah writes

"The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem. (Zech 2:12)

**Hubbard** observes that "With this impassioned plea the first half of the book (Joel 1:1-2:17), with its terrible scourge, comes to a close. Not with the threat of judgment but with an offer of hope. The whole section has moved to a climax in prayer, prayer based not only on the terror of the plague but on the glory of God's name. No higher appeal, no grander motivation, can there be....Between verses 17 and 18, we should presume that the invitation and commands of verses 12–17 have been accepted and obeyed. (TCOT).

**Zealous** (jealous)([07065](#))([qanah](#) from [qin'ah](#) = zeal, ardor - from color produced in face by deep emotion) means to be jealous, to be envious, to be zealous. The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Zeal is an eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something and implies energetic and unflagging pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. Jealousy can be righteous or unrighteous - e.g., Genesis 37:11 records that Joseph's "brothers were jealous of him" and here we see the mindset and emotion of their fleshly jealousy led to unrighteous deeds! Contrast Phinehas godly jealousy that motivated righteous deeds (Nu 25:7-8, 11, 13)!

**Jamieson, Fausset, Brown** - as a husband jealous of any dishonor done to the wife whom he loves, as if done to himself. The Hebrew comes from an Arabic root, "to be flushed in face" through indignation.

Israel repeatedly made God "**jealous** with strange gods...with what is not God." (Deut 32:16, 21, cf 1 Ki 14:22, Ps 78:58, Ezek 8:3). While His jealousy resulted in judgment of Israel on one hand, ultimately it would be associated with blessing God declaring "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be **jealous** for My holy name." (Ezek 39:25, cf Zech 8:2).

The **Septuagint** translates [qanah](#) in Joel 2:18 with the Greek verb is [zeloo](#) (from [zelos](#) = zeal in turn from **zeo** = boil; source of our English word "zeal") which means to be fervent, to "boil" with envy, to be jealous.

**Have pity** ([02550](#))([chamal](#)) describes the LORD's compassion on His people thus sparing them from total destruction. The word spare implies that the chosen people deserved judgment, so the priests plead for mercy. This same verb is used twice in Malachi 3:17-18 where God says He will spare His people **in that day**...

"**They will be Mine** (language of covenant, specifically the New Covenant promised to Israel and to Judah in Jer 31:31-34-note)," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare **My own** ([segullah](#) - **treasured, special**) **possession** (a fulfillment of Ex 19:5), and I will **spare** ([chamal](#)) them as a man **spares** ([chamal](#)) his own son who serves him." 18 So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

**Comment:** When is "**on that day**"? This is a future, and is one aspect of the more general term the Day of the LORD, for when Messiah returns (Mal 3:1-note, Mal 3:2 = "who can endure the day of His coming?") to redeem a righteous remnant in Israel (those who fear Him - Mal 3:16, Mal 4:2-note) as described by Zechariah 13:8-9-note. (cf Zech 12:10-14-note, Zech 13:1-note)

**John MacArthur** adds in commenting on Mal 3:18 - The distinction between the godly and ungodly will be evident for all when the righteous Lord is present, ruling from the throne of David in Jerusalem.

**Joel 2:19** The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied in full with them; And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations.

- **I am going to send you grain**,: Joe 2:24 1:10 Isa 62:8,9 65:21-24 Ho 2:15 Am 9:13,14 Hag 2:16-19 Mal 3:10-12 Mt 6:33
- **And you will be satisfied in full with them**: Joe 2:26
- **And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations** Ezek 34:29 Ezek 36:15 Ezek 39:29



NET The LORD responded to his people, "Look! I am about to restore your grain as well as fresh wine and olive oil. You will be fully satisfied. I will never again make you an object of mockery among the nations.

ESV The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations.

## A MILLENNIAL PROMISE

This passage clearly speaks of a future day in Israel for God says **I will never again make you a reproach among the nations**" a promise that not been fulfilled and will not be fulfilled until Messiah returns and establishes His rule from Mount Zion in Jerusalem in the [1000 year millennium](#).

**The LORD will answer and say to His people** - Jehovah's response is a continuation from the **"then"** of Joel 2:18.

**Jamieson, F, B** - "The Lord will answer," namely, the prayers of His people, priests, and prophets. Compare in the case of Sennacherib, 2 Ki 19:20, 21.

**Wiersbe** - Joel now looks beyond the invasion to **the time when God would heal His land and restore his blessings to His people**. Just as He blew the locusts into the depths of the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (eastern and western seas), so He could drive the invading army out of the land. In one night, God killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, and Sennacherib went home a defeated king (Isa. 37:36–38). The corpses must have created quite a stench before they were buried. (Be Amazed)

**Feinberg on the LORD will answer and say to His people** - When the faintest cry of the penitent is uttered, it does not escape the ear of the Lord. His zeal and His jealousy on behalf of His people are aroused and He goes forth to bless them unstintingly. He remembers the wounds of His land and He heals them. He is mindful of the sorrows of His people, and He graciously solaces them. The grain, the new wine, and the oil, long withheld because of their sin, will be restored; the land will give its produce and they will be abundantly satisfied. God will remove their reproach among the nations, and He will exalt them as head of the nations. In that conclusion of the day of Jehovah, the Lord will utterly rout the army of the invading Assyrian (ED:SEE Micah 5:5-6-note), the army of the northern power. (Literal locusts, mark you, would scarcely be called "the northern army.") The land barren and desolate is Arabia, the eastern sea is the Dead Sea, and the western sea is the Mediterranean. In short, the army will be divided and completely annihilated. All this will come upon the enemy because he has exalted himself in his pride. See the book of Nahum concerning the pride of the Assyrian, also Zechariah 10:11. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The restoration of Israel follows their judgment. After the **evening darkness** will come the  **blessing of morning light**, expressing both aspects of the Day of the Lord. He will restore the blessings. (Bolding added)

I agree with **Duane Garrett** that in this verse "Yahweh **proleptically** decreed that he would undo the two curses of agricultural disaster (Joel 1:9–17-note) and humiliation among the Gentile powers (Joel 2:17; cf. Jer 51:51; Ezek 5:15; 22:4). This verse is **proleptic** in the sense that it only announces in brief what is explored in much more detail in the following verses." (NAC) (Bolding added) (Webster's Dictionary defines **prolepsis** as "the representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished.")

**Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied in full with them** - Note this is a complete reversal of the destruction of the **grain...wine...oil** in the locust plague (Joel 1:10-note, cf the blessing in Joel 2:21-22-note). To some degree we can see this material blessing in the land of Israel today. However, note that this bestowal of material blessing is linked with the removal of global reproach for Israel, an event which awaits a future fulfillment. That said, this section refers to the abundant material blessing on Israel in the future, **in the day of the Millennium**, as described in many OT passages

Amos 9:13; 14 **"Behold, days are coming,"** declares the LORD, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine And all the hills will be dissolved. 14 "Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit.

**MacArthur** comments - Prosperity, in [hyperbolic](#) fashion, is here described (cf. Lev 26:5-note; Joel 3:18-note; contrast Isa 5-note). Fruitfulness is so enormous that planting and reaping seasons overlap. This prosperity will encourage massive repatriation (cf. Isa 11:15, 16) and reconstruction (cf. Zec 2:1-5). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Joel 3:18-note And **in that day** The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the

## BEHOLD COMING IS A DAY OF NO REPROACH!

**Behold** (02009)(**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)!

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Hinneh** is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection **idou** (strictly speaking a command in the second person **aoist imperative, middle voice**) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: "**Behold! See! Lo!**" (Thayer) The command is calling for urgent attention. Do this now! Don't delay! It could be loosely paraphrased "Pay attention!" or "Listen up!" to arouse attention and introduce a new and extraordinary fact of considerable importance.

**And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations-** In Joel 2:17, they had asked that the reproach of the Gentiles against the Jews might be removed, and so it will be. The mouth of the godless Anti-Semitic cynics will be shut once and for all time! (Amen!) Note the important time phrase "**never again**," which means **NEVER AGAIN!** This has **NEVER** happened in the history of Israel or the Jewish people, who have been a **reproach among the nations** of the world for centuries! This is a promise that will be filled in the future when the Lord restores Israel to the Land and Messiah rules as King. In support of this interpretation we see that Joel 2:27 is a similar prophetic promise "**My people will never be put to shame**" and this passage is without question a prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled ([see discussion of Joel 2:27](#)).

Here are 2 related prophecies in Ezekiel that speak of the cessation of reproach and both are clearly yet to be fulfilled on behalf of Israel in the future...

Ezekiel 34:29 "I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and **they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore**

Ezekiel 36:15-note "**I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore** nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer," declares the Lord GOD."

And so in our day (2018) Israel is still a **reproach among the nations**. The Jew has been hated and discriminated against by many nations even before Joel's time to the present day. For example, on November 10, 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution vilifying the Zionist Movement as "[a form of racism or racial discrimination \(see related resolutions\)](#)," on a 72 to 35 vote with 32 abstentions and 3 absences. The United States Ambassador, [Daniel Moynihan](#), called the resolution an "**obscene act**." He went on to say, "**It was not Zionism that was condemned at the United Nations on Friday, it was Israel!** Israel's reproach among the nations will be removed when Christ returns to set up His [Millennial Kingdom on earth!](#) You can be assured this will come to pass just as God has clearly decreed!

The idyllic conditions described in Joel 2:19-27 must refer to the millennial period that follows the period of great tribulation.

**Joel 2:20 "But I will remove the northern army far from you, And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, And its vanguard into the eastern sea, And its rear guard into the western sea. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, For it has done great things."**

- **But I will remove** Joe 2:2-11 1:4-6 Ex 10:19
- **the northern army far from you:** Jer 1:14
- **And its vanguard into the eastern sea;** Eze 47:7,8,18 Zec 14:8
- **And its rear guard into the western sea:** De 11:24
- **And its stench will arise:** Eze 39:12-16
- **For it has done great things:** 2Ki 8:13

## ISRAEL'S INVADERS TOTALLY DECIMATED

**But I will remove the northern army far from you** - While this northern army is not identified, it would appear to apply to all the armies that have invaded Israel from the **North** (Assyrians, Babylonians = Jer 1:14, Romans) but in the present [context](#) (specifically Joel 2:19 where no more **reproach** for Israel is definitely a future event) more likely refers to the armies of the nations who in the end times invade the land with their objective of obliterating Israel. (See Campaign of Armageddon and Arnold Fruchtenbaum's detailed proposed sequence of events).

Some commentators see **the northern army** (a word used only here in the OT) as locusts, but that seems unlikely in view of the [context](#), especially the immediate preceding [context](#) in which God makes a promise to Israel **"I will never again make you a reproach among the nations."** (Joel 2:19) Why would God then revert to the locust plague after He had just made mention of **the nations** in a context which clearly speaks of the last of the last days? That interpretation seems highly unlikely based on the rule of [context](#) which is king (see [Keep Context King](#)) in interpretation. In addition, the Hebrew for **northern army** is more literally "the northerner," which also would be a very unusual way to describe a swarm of locust (and Joel has not used any term like this where locusts were definitely implied). Finally, locust plagues have usually come from the South or Southeast, not from the North (there is a rare report of a swarm coming from the North = the plague of 1915 was from the northeast).

**Moody Bible Commentary** - Along with blessing Israel, God will judge the northern army. The enemies of Israel most frequently came from the north, i.e., Assyria and Babylon. These northern enemies were presented as the final end-times enemy of Israel (cf. Ezek 38–39; Dan 11:40; Zech 14:2).

**Garrett** adds that "The Bible, however, provides extensive evidence that the term "northerner" refers to an enemy (human) army. In Isaiah an army from the north terrifies Jews and Gentiles alike in the Levant (Isa 14:31; 41:25). Zephaniah saw Yahweh stretching out his hand against Assyria in the north on the day of the Lord (Zeph 2:13). The Book of Zechariah describes the captives in Babylon as dwelling "in the land of the north" (Zech 2:6–7)." (NAC)

**Jamieson, F, B** (written in 1800's, not dispensationalists!) on **the northern army** - The locust's native country is not the north, but the south, the deserts of Arabia, Egypt, and Libya. Assyria and Babylon are the type and forerunner of all Israel's foes (Rome, and the final Antichrist), from whom God will at last deliver His people, as He did from Sennacherib (2 Ki 19:35)....**vanguard...and its rear guard** - more applicable to a human army's van and rear, than to locusts.

**ESV Study Bible note** - The northerner may be the locusts, an invading army, or a final apocalyptic enemy of Israel. Arguments for the third option include: (1) reference to locusts as the "northerner" would be unusual, as they typically came from the south or the east; (2) Jeremiah and Ezekiel portray a great enemy coming from the north (see Jer. 1:14-15; 4:6; 6:1, 22-23; Ezek. 23:24; 26:7; 38:6, 15; 39:2); and (3) the words **vanguard... rear guard** (lit., "his face" and "his end") show that destruction is complete and final.

**HCSB** - Though some interpreters say it was an army of locusts, the language of the passage makes this view difficult. Almost every military invasion of Israel came from the north, so it would be hard to identify a specific army. The best approach is to interpret the enemy from the north as a reference to the end-time attack of the nations against God's people (Isa 34:1-7-note; Ezek 38; Da 11:36-45-note).

The future invasion of Israel is described in several prophecies

Joel 3:9; 12-note Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up! 12 Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.

Daniel 11:40-note "At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through.

Zechariah 14:2-note For I (GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY IN CONTROL) will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

**And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land** - Possibly the [Arabian desert \(picture\)](#) or probably more likely [the Negev](#) (see [parched and desolate picture](#) of Negev) but one cannot be dogmatic.

**And its vanguard into the eastern sea** - Dead Sea

**And its rear guard into the western sea** - Mediterranean Sea

**And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up** **Stench** is the Hebrew word **beosh** ([0922](#)) (also in Isa 34:3, Amos 4:10 = context is a plague by God on hard hearted Israel and number of bodies causes a stench) and means a odor (the Lxx of Joel 2:20 is **sapria** = rotteness, decayed matter, which translates Heb for maggot in Job 25:6!), all three uses referring to the odor of rotting corpses (both Israel's enemies in Joel 2:20, Israel's armies in Amos 4:10). The Hebrew word for foul smell is **tsachanah** ([06709](#)) which occurs only here in Scripture.

And so the Hebrew word for **stench** is used by Isaiah in a passage describin the final battle of the nations against Israel (and God) and which Messiah wins "hands down!"

So their slain will be thrown out, And their corpses will give off their **stench**, And the mountains will be drenched with their blood. (Isa 34:3-note)

**Layman's Bible Commentary** - The locust invasion previously described by Joel gives more impact to what he writes here about the smell arising from a retreating army

**Chisholm** - The carcasses' **stench** would permeate the air. As in Joel 2:1-11, the language, though alluding to a literal army (cf. Isa. 34:3; Amos 4:10), applies to locusts as well. Eyewitness accounts tell how dead locusts, having been driven into the sea and then washed ashore, gave out a foul odor (cf. Driver, The Books of Joel and Amos, pp. 62-3; Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets, 2:411). **As noted in the Introduction, the designation northern army (lit., "northerner") suggests that a literal army is ultimately in view.** (The Bible Knowledge Commentary) (Bolding added)

**For it has done great things** - Variously translated as "the LORD has accomplished great things" (NET), "he has done great things," (ESV). This phrase is ambiguous (see NET Note below). The NET and NIV interpret this line as referring to the Lord, but it could refer to the invading army, as the NASB, AV, and RSV translate it.

**Jamieson, F, B on it has done great things** - that is, because the invader hath haughtily magnified himself in his doings. Compare as to Sennacherib, 2 Ki 19:11-13, 22, 28. This is quite inapplicable to the locusts, who merely seek food, not self-glorification, in invading a country.

**NET Note** - The Hebrew text does not have "the LORD." ("the LORD has accomplished great things" = NET). Two interpretations are possible. This clause may refer to the enemy described in the immediately preceding verses, in which case it would have a negative sense: "he has acted in a high-handed manner." Or it may refer to the LORD, in which case it would have a positive sense: "the LORD has acted in a marvelous manner." This is clearly the sense of the same expression in Joel 2:21, where in fact "the LORD" appears as the subject of the verb. ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**Joel 2:21 Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, for the LORD has done great things.**

- **Do not fear, O land** Ge 15:1 Isa 41:10 54:4 Jer 30:9,10 Zep 3:16,17 Zec 8:15
- **rejoice and be glad:** Ps 65:12,13 96:11,12 98:8 Isa 35:1 44:23 55:12 Ho 2:21
- **For the LORD has done great things:** Joe 2:20 De 4:32 1Sa 12:16,24 Ps 71:19 126:1-3 Jer 33:3

## THE LAND IS TO REJOICE AND BE GLAD

**Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad** - These two commands to rejoice follow Israel's response to the commands to **Return** to Me with all your heart...with fasting, weeping and mourning and **rend** your heart (Joel 2:12-13-note). In other words the instructions assume that repentance has taken place. The commands are first give to the personified Land, the Land of Israel, which had earlier mourned (Joel 1:10-note). And if the Land is "rejoicing," then certainly the people who inhabit that land will rejoice and be glad. In essence then the Land is a [metonym](#) for the people. **Gladness and joy** were the very things that had been cut off **from the house of their God?** (Joel 1:16-note)

There are a number of OT prophecies with a similar call to not fear but rejoice...

Isaiah 54:1,4 (Speaking of the future [Millennial Kingdom](#)) **"Shout for joy**, O barren one, you who have borne no child; **Break forth into joyful shouting** and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous Than the sons of the married woman," says the LORD. ....**"Fear not**, for you will not be put to shame; And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; But you will forget the

shame of your youth, And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

Jeremiah 30:10-note (Jeremiah 30-33 has been called Israel's "The Book of Consolation" and is filled with God's promises for her future)'**Fear not**, O Jacob My servant,' declares the LORD, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar And your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, And no one will make him afraid.

Zephaniah 3:16-note In that day (The Day of the LORD, the "good" side of the Day when Messiah reigns in Jerusalem in the [Millennial Kingdom](#)) it will be said to Jerusalem: "**Do not be afraid**, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. 17 "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

Zechariah 8:15 ) so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.  
**Do not fear!**

**Do not fear** ([03372](#))([yare](#)) means to fear, to be afraid which ultimately is a reversal of the fear of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden after they sinned (Ge 3:10-[note](#)). This implies that the ones to whom these words are spoken have repented and returned to the LORD, which will in fact transpire in Israel in the last days.

**Duane Garrett** observes that "In the Old Testament injunctions not to **fear** often come in speeches just before going to battle (e.g., Num 14:9; Isa 7:4). In Isaiah, however, the refrain "**Do not fear**" (using a Hebrew phrase identical or similar to that of Joel 2:21) is a signal that redemption has come. In Isa 40:9–11 the herald is to cry out to Zion, "Do not fear!" because Yahweh himself is coming to redeem and care for his people. In Isaiah 41 God reassures Israel that he has chosen them, reminds them that their God is no powerless idol, and tells them three times (Isa 41:10, 13, 14) not to fear. In 43:1 he tells Israel not to fear because he has called them by his own name, and in 43:5 he again reassures them that they need not fear because he will bring the people back from exile. In 44:2–3, much as in Joel 2:21–32, he encourages them not to fear because he will pour out water on the land and his Spirit on the people. In Isa 54:4 God tells Israel not to fear because he is about to remove their reproach among the nations. In short, the Book of Isaiah addresses many of the themes that appear in Joel, including the healing of the land, the triumph over their enemies, the end of Israel's shame among the nations, the return from exile, and the gift of the Spirit. "Do not fear" is the refrain of reassurance that runs through them all. Joel's command to the land not to fear similarly signals the promise of redemption.

**Warren Wiersbe** notes that "Some Bible scholars believe that Psalm 126 (see below) grew out of this event, for it describes a sudden and surprising deliverance that startled the nation. (Judah's return from Babylonian Captivity was neither sudden or surprising.) "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Ps 126:3) is echoed in Joel 2:21, "Be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things." Both Joel 2:23–27 and Psalm 126:5–6 describe the restoration of the ravaged earth and the return of the harvests. This fulfilled what Isaiah promised to King Hezekiah (Isa. 37:30). (Be Amazed)

A Song of Ascents. When the LORD brought back the captive ones of Zion, We were like those who dream. 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter And our tongue with joyful shouting; Then they said among the nations, "**The LORD has done great things** for them" 3**The LORD has done great things** for us; We are **glad** (cf Joel 2:21). 4 Restore our captivity, O LORD, As the streams in the South. 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. 6 He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, **Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy**, bringing his sheaves with him.

**Comment:** Notice that verse 4 is a prayer so while the psalmist was joyful because the Lord had restored them to their land, he prayed for a full restoration. This restoration will be realized in Messiah's coming kingdom.

**For the LORD has done great things** - "For" ([term of explanation](#)) gives the reason for rejoicing and gladness. Is this not universally true? How our hearts soar to heaven and to God when we see the LORD do **great things** like convert a resistant relative or faithless friend who has held out their heart from the "Hound of Heaven" for years but finally surrenders to the Savior and is saved! O glorious day of our great God! (cf Do we really believe Jer 33:3-note - written to the Jews but applicable to all believers)

**Guzik** - 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.

It is interesting that in Joel 2:20-[note](#) had ended with "**for it has done great things**," but now clearly it is Yahweh Who is the Doer of the great things.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - Here Joel describes the blessing associated with the Jewish people's eschatological return to their land. As elsewhere in the prophets, the blessing on the land is synonymous with the great things the Lord has done for His people, indicating that more than agricultural blessing is in view (cf. Isa 54:4; Jer 30:10; Zeph 3:16, 17).

**HCSB** - The destruction caused by the locust invasion (or the invading army) is now reversed. Both land and animals will participate in the salvation of God's people (Ro 8:19-23). Covenant blessings will be restored to the land (Dt 11:13-15).

**Joel 2:22 Do not fear, beasts of the field, For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, For the tree has borne its fruit, The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.**

- **Do not fear**,: Joe 1:18-20 Ps 36:6 104:11-14,27-29 145:15,16 147:8,9 Isa 30:23,24 Jon 4:11
- **For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green** Joe 1:19 Ps 65:12 Isa 51:3
- **For the tree has borne its fruit** Lev 26:4,5 Ps 67:6 107:35-38 Eze 34:26,27 36:8,30,35 Ho 14:5-7 Am 9:14,15 Hag 2:16 Zec 8:12 Mal 3:10-12
- **The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full**.: Ge 4:12 1Co 3:7

## THE RESTORATION OF FERTILITY IN ISRAEL

In the future kingdom of the Messiah, the fertility of the land will be restored, echoing the promise of blessing of the land in Joel 2:19-[note](#).

**Do not fear, beasts of the field** - The land is personified in Joel 2:11 and the beasts are personified here, both being told not to fear. They had been groaning in agony (Joel 1:18-note) receive the promise of relief, and even the trees and vines that had been stripped bare and could bear no fruit or grapes (cf Joel 1:7-note) would now be verdant and fruitful.

**MacArthur** comments that Joel 2:21-24 is "Reminiscent of Joel 1:18–20, the former situation had been reversed. The animals were admonished to be afraid no longer." ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, For the tree has borne its fruit, The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full** - He explains the reason the beasts of the field will have no reason to fear, for the land will once again be fertile and filled with food.

**Garrett** has an interesting comment - The personifications of land and wildlife here have none of the mythical qualities of the fertility religions, but they do emphasize the bond between the creature and the Creator and imply the dependence of the former and the sovereignty of the latter (see Luke 12:24 and Ps 147:9). This text also implies that the redemption of humanity leads to the redemption of all creation. (ED: Compare Romans 8:19-21-[note](#))

**Joel 2:23 So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.**

- **O sons of Zion**: Ps 149:2 La 4:2 Zec 9:13 Ga 4:26,27
- **And be glad in the LORD your God** Ps 28:7 32:11 33:1 95:1-3 104:34 Isa 12:2-6 41:16 61:10 Hab 3:17,18 Zep 3:14-17 Zec 9:9 10:7 Lu 1:46,47 Php 3:1,3 4:4
- **For He has given you the early rain**, Joel 2:28,29 De 32:2 Job 33:23 Ps 72:6,7 Isa 30:21,23 Eph 4:8-11
- **And He has poured down for you the rain**: Lev 26:4 De 11:14 28:12 Pr 16:15 Jer 3:3 Ho 6:3 Zec 10:1 Jas 5:7,8
- **The early and latter rain as before**: Am 4:7

NLT Rejoice, you people of Jerusalem! Rejoice in the LORD your God! For the rain he sends demonstrates his faithfulness. Once more the autumn rains will come, as well as the rains of spring.

YLT And ye sons of Zion, joy and rejoice, In Jehovah your God, For He hath given to you the Teacher for righteousness, And causeth to come down to you a shower, Sprinkling and gathered -- in the beginning.

**So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God**- The same commands given to the Land (Joel 2:21) are now given directly to the people of the Land.

**O sons of Zion** - For Jehovah to call them by this epithet signifies His grace toward them.

**For** - [term of explanation](#) explaining the reason they are commanded to rejoice.

**He has given you the early rain for your vindication**- Ancient Israel had no irrigation system and no Nile River like Egypt (which

provided for their irrigation), and thus they were totally dependent on the LORD to send rain to water their crops. Obviously, in a time of drought, nothing grew. The early rain came in October through December and would soften the soil and prepare the seed bed so aid in subsequent germination.

The early rain in Oct-Nov until as late as Jan-Feb as noted was for the germination of the grain. The **EARLY** rain does not come suddenly, but by degrees, so that the farmer can sow his wheat or barley. The rains are mostly from the west or southwest Lu 12:54, continuing 2-3 days at a time, mostly at night. Then the wind shifts to the north or east, and fine weather ensues. The latter rain in Mar-Apr for maturing the grain are much lighter. Rain in harvest was regarded as a miracle (1 Sa 12:16-18).

**Vindication** in the NAS is the Hebrew word for **Righteousness** (06666) [tsedaqah](#) - This leads to an ambiguous phrase which could be translated as "autumn rains in righteousness" or "teacher of righteousness." See NET Note below, but realize that other sources have a more detailed and technical explanation which is beyond the scope of these notes. Even the translations differ. E.g., Young's Literal has ' For He hath given to you the Teacher for righteousness." Below are some comments that favor "teacher of righteousness" and others that favor "rain of vindication." I am uncertain as to which is the correct interpretation/translation. Either translation does not change the basic meaning of the verse which speaks of God sending His provision of rain in the right amount and at the right time in the coming kingdom of the Messiah and explain the green pastures, the tree bearing fruit, the fig tree and the vine yielding a full harvest in the age to come (Joel 2:22).

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** notes that "Too many translations render the Hebrew word here former rain in just measure because that seems to make more sense in the context. But this is not a valid translation because the Hebrew literally reads, "the teacher of righteousness." This Teacher of Righteousness is the Jewish Messiah Himself. So they are rejoicing because the Teacher of Righteousness, the Messiah, is in their midst." (Messianic Bible Study Collection)

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** - The twice-occurring Hebrew word *môreh* can be translated "**rains**" (as in NIV). It may also be translated "**teacher**" (NIV mg.); and with the *lišḏāqāh* (lit., "for righteousness") that follows, the first *môreh* has been understood by some to refer to God's righteous prophets or to the Messiah himself.

**Moody Bible Commentary** on **early rain for your vindication** - The more likely translation should be "the teacher of/for righteousness," for several reasons. First, the word *moreh* in the singular form is used eight times in the OT and is translated "teacher" in all cases (cf. 2:23; 2Ki 17:28; 2Chr 15:3; Job 36:22; Isa 30:20 [2 times]; Hab 2:18, 2:19). Further, it is translated as "teacher" in several ancient texts (the Vulgate, the Targum, the Greek Symmachus and the DSS). Second, Joel's use of the definite article with "the teacher" (*hamoreh*) indicates that it is speaking of a particular person. Third, the pairing of "the teacher" with the word "righteousness" and with the preposition "to" or "for" indicates that this teacher personifies righteousness.

**NET Note on vindication** - Normally the Hebrew word *הַמּוֹרֶה* (*hammoreh*) means "the teacher," but here and in Ps 84:6 it refers to "early rains." Elsewhere the word for "early rains" is *יּוֹרֶה* (*yoreh*). The phrase here *הַמּוֹרֶה לְצִדְקָה* (*hammoreh litsdaqah*) is similar to the expression "teacher of righteousness" (Heb., *מוֹרֶה הַצְדִּיק*, *moreh hatsedeq*) found in the Dead Sea Scrolls referring to a particular charismatic leader, although the Qumran community seems not to have invoked this text in support of that notion. ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before** - This is a reversal of Joel 1:17-note. The return of the seasonal rains signals return of the nation into divine favor which in turn signifies that they have returned to Jehovah, rending their hearts and not their garments (Joel 2:12-13). **As before** signifies that God had blessed them in the past. All blessings in any of our lives are ALWAYS from our magnanimous God. Have you given Him thanks and praise today for the blessings He has "rained" down in your life and the life of your family?

**The latter rain** - These are the rains that come to Israel in March through May and provide moisture for the grain and fruit crops to be rich and full.

**Feinberg** - It is of great interest to the student of the Word of God to know that the rains have increased in Palestine within recent years, but the grand fulfillment is yet future when Israel turns to the Lord. Once the rains are no longer withheld there will be plentiful harvests of wheat, wine, and oil. The very losses sustained through the locust plague will be restored and more. The years that the locusts have eaten will be forgotten in the new bounties. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**NET Note** - For half the year Palestine is generally dry. The rainy season begins with the early rains usually in late October to early December, followed by the latter rains in March and April. Without these rains productive farming would not be possible, as Joel's original readers knew only too well. ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

Fall and spring rains, were for their vindication (righteousness) and were clear signs that the people were now in a place of repentance to experience divine blessing as Moses had promised if they were obedient

It shall come about, **if you listen obediently to my commandments** which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God (IF WE LOVE HIM WE WILL KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS - DON'T SAY YOU LOVE GOD AND GO OUT AND CHOSE TO SIN! John 14:15, 15:10) and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul (cf Mk 12:29-31), that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. (Deut. 11:13-14)

God had replaced drought, so the Lord's people could again rejoice rather than grieving (cf. Joel 1:5, 8, 11, 13, 20). The threshing floors would be full of grain and the vats would overflow with new wine and oil (cf. Joel 1:17).

**HCSB** - Israel was dependent on autumn and spring rains for the prosperity of the land. Egypt could irrigate their crops from the Nile River, but Israel needed the Lord's special provision. They must depend on Him. The phrase autumn rain for your vindication can also be translated as "teacher of or for righteousness." Some scholars link this phrase to the "teacher of righteousness" at the Qumran community. This could be a veiled allusion to a coming Davidic leader-teacher who would bring righteousness to the believing remnant (Dt 18:15; Jer 33:14-17).

**David Guzik** on what is known as the Latter Rain movement - This passage along with others (Deuteronomy 11:14, Hosea 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 Hebrews 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"

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."

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the Latter Rain Movement?](#)
- [What is Branhamism?](#)
- [What is Branhamism? Who was William Branham?](#)

**Joel 2:24 The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.**

- Joe 3:13,18 Lev 26:10 Pr 3:9,10 Am 9:13 Mal 3:10

### **DIVINE BLESSINGS: SCARCITY REPLACED BY SATIETY**

Joel says there will be fullness instead of famine! Excess instead of emptiness! The process of divine reversal in the face of genuine repentance continues, here with a direct reversal of the divine curse in Joel 1:10-note (**grain...new wine and oil**). Joel 2:24 gives almost the same promise as Joel 2:19 this repetition underscoring that the LORD will be faithful to fulfill His promises to Israel in the last days and the New Age that follows (Millennium).

The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you **grain, new wine and oil**, And you will be satisfied in full with them; And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations. (Joel 2:19-note)



Moses had promised that God would bless Israel's obedience writing

'You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. (Lev 26:10-note)

Malachi writes

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. 11 "Then (JUST PRIOR TO THE MILLENNIUM) I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts. 12 "All the nations will call you blessed (HAS NOT HAPPENED BUT WILL IN THE MILLENNIUM), for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:10-12-note)

**Gililand on threshing floors... full of grain...vats will overflow** - Not only will there be bountiful harvests but the harvests will be successfully gathered in, for it is the threshing "floors" which are said to be "full of wheat" and it is the wine "fats" which overflow with wine and oil.<sup>†</sup> In the days of the locusts these crops never reached either the floors or the winepresses for they were scavenged by the insects before this could happen. Now it would all be so different.

**Be full** (04390)(**male**) means to fill or to be full, to complete, to fulfill, to finish, to satisfy. Male is used of something full in both the spatial and temporal sense.

The **Septuagint** translates **male** in Joel 2:24 with the verb pimplemi which means to be filled (Lk 5:7-note).

**Overflow** (07783)(**shuq**) means to be abundant and is used only 3 times in Scripture with one use in Joel's description related to the "New Age" to come and the other in the great battle that proceeds that "New Age" (Note that the Day of the LORD has is a Dark Day for Israel's enemies, but a Glorious Day for the [redeemed of Israel!](#)) And so God will bless Israel with overflow of new wine and ill but He will recompense the armies of the world who come against Israel with an overflow of their blood when He slings the "sickle" of His righteous vengeance! (Joel 3:13-note) **Shuq** is also It is used figuratively of God's creating abundance, an overflowing of crops in the earth (Ps. 65:9).

Here in Joel 2:24 **shuq** refers to the vats of the wine-presses, into which the wine flows when trodden out; here it also applies to the vats of the oil-presses, into which the oil ran as it was pressed out. Through these bountiful harvests God would repay to the people the years, i.e., the produce of the years (Joel 2:25).

Psalms 65:9 You visit the earth and cause it to **overflow**; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.

Joel 2:24 The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will **overflow** with the new wine and oil.

Joel 3:13-note Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats **overflow**, for their wickedness is great

It is worth noting that the blessings in this section are very similar to those promised to the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy if she would obey the LORD. For example Moses records

"And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul,<sup>14</sup> that **He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain** (cf Joel 2:23), that you may **gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil** (cf Joel 2:24).<sup>15</sup> "And **He will give grass in your fields for your cattle** (cf Joel 2:22), and **you shall eat and be satisfied** (cf Joel 2:19, Joel 2:26). (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)

**Comment:** In the Millennium all Israel will have entered into the New Covenant and will have the power of the indwelling Spirit to obey the commandments and to love God with all their heart and soul. And in Joel 2:20-27 we see that the blessings promised mirror those that were promised in Deuteronomy.

**Joel 2:25 "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you.**

- **That the swarming locust has eaten:** Joe 2:2-11 1:4-7 Zec 10:6

**REPENTANCE BRINGS DIVINE**

## RECONCILIATION AND RESTITUTION

This important section (Joel 2:20-27) illustrates that God is [ABLE](#) (see [GOD IS ABLE](#)) and willing to retract pronouncements of judgment and to reverse their effects on peoples and lands.

**Feinberg** - The very losses sustained through the locust plague will be restored and more. The years that the locusts have eaten will be forgotten in the new bounties. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Then - Then** is a marker of sequence, especially in prophetic writings and always begs the question "When is then?" The context (Joel 2:18-27) is clearly describing a time of great divine blessing accompanied by rejoicing and gladness. E.g., God has just promised to cause the vats of new wine and oil to **overflow** in the New Age to come (Joel 2:24). In short this description is of the "good side" of the Day of the LORD! So the question is when will God make up the years (not the year of the plague, but years plural)? Some think God is just referring to the locust plague of Joel 1. While that may be true to some degree, the consummation of the Day of the Lord is many centuries after the literal plague in Joel 1, occurring at some time in the future.

Therefore I would propose that time of the "paying back" or "restitution" (see meaning of **make up to you**" below) will be fulfilled when the [redeemed remnant](#) (Zechariah 12:10-14-note, Zechariah 13:1-note, Zechariah 13:8-9-note, Romans 11:25-29-note) is brought into the renewed land of Israel ruled by the Messiah. Now I will admit that my interpretation may not be correct so I strongly recommend you come to your own conclusion. But just remember that Joel 2:25 is in the middle of other descriptions that are most compatible with the Day of the Lord in the last days, the eschatological Day of the Lord.

**Phillips** seems to agree writing that "Throughout Joel's call for rejoicing (Joel 2:20-27) the prophet anticipated the [millennium](#). He saw a land bearing fruit, barns full to bursting, and people enjoying annual rains. And he made his classic statement of the Lord's glorious promise: **"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten"** (Joel 2:25). Although the statement is clearly millennial in context (**Ed**: Phillips is more dogmatic than I am), by application it is one of those "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4) that the believer can claim when he finally gets right with God." (Exploring the Minor Prophets)

**Moody Bible Commentary** also agrees writing "The future blessing of the Lord will **make up to you for the years** destroyed by the **great army** that the Lord sent in judgment."

**I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you** - First notice that it is Jehovah Himself Who is speaking (first person) which signify they are His Word and thus these promises cannot fail! (cf Joshua 21:45, 23:14; Nu 23:19, 1 Ki 8:56, 1 Th 5:24) The years of the locusts does not speak of a specific time but would seem to include all the "locust like" times the LORD had sent (or allowed) on Israel because of their continued unfaithfulness to their covenant with Jehovah.

**Gilliland** - These glowing promises are His word and cannot fail. Here He undertakes to give full compensation for the losses recently incurred. The same God who commissioned the locusts to come, now that His people have repented, will reimburse, with a full payment, all the costs involved. It is reminiscent of the book of Job where, after his heart-rending losses, his fortunes are doubled as the story ends. In speaking of the "years" consumed by the locusts the Lord refers to the harvests which the insects devoured, and the reference to "years" shows that the locust invasions covered more than one season. The horror of this devastation is recalled by the mention, from Joel 1:4, of the four different nouns for the locusts (in a different order). The invaders are further identified as Jehovah's great army, sent by Him on a mission. That mission has been accomplished and now the same Lord will further advance His purpose for His people.

## "DIVINE REPAYMENT"

**Make up** (make restitution, pay back) ([07999](#))([shalam](#)) is a verb that means to be complete (the wall in Neh 6:15), to be safe, to be sound, to repay (of God to men - Job 34:11, 33), to reward, to restore (Job 8:6), of paying one's vows (Ps 66:13, 76:11, 116:14, 18, Pr 7:14, Eccl 5:4-5), of repaying evil (Ps 137:8 - note that although God used Babyon ["Nebuchadnezzar My servant" Jer 25:9], because of her evil she would be repaid with His just judgment). The most common use of **shalam** is in the [Piel stem](#) (as it is in Joel 2:25) meaning "to pay what is owed." Shalam can function as a legal term for compensation of damages (Ge 21:34, 36, 22:1-7). Shalam is related to the well known Hebrew word shalom or peace. The idea is of **peace** being restored through payment (of tribute to a conqueror, Joshua 10:1), restitution (to one wronged, Exodus 21:36), or simple payment and completion (of a business transaction, 2 Kings 4:7).

In the book of Ruth Boaz bestows a blessing on Ruth for her selfless care for her mother-in-law Naomi praying...

"May the LORD **reward** ([shalam](#); Lxx = apotino = repay, make compensation, only in Philemon 1:19) your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge." (Ru 2:12-note, cf 1 Sa 24:19)

In Nathan's "test" of David after his sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, King David said

"He must make **restitution** ([shalam](#); Lxx = apotino = repay, make compensation, only in Philemon 1:19) for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion. (2 Sa 12:6-note)

On the other hand God repays evildoers for their evil deeds (cf the pagan king Adoni-bezek who recognized this truth in Judges 1:7-note, cf 2 Sa 3:39, Isa 59:18, 66:6, Jer 32:18). In other words, He gives them the punishment they deserve, that is, those who hate the Lord (Deut. 32:41), the proud doer (Ps. 31:23) and his enemies (Isa. 59:18). As Solomon wrote in Proverbs 11:31 (cf Pr 13:21) "If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!"

Here in Joel 2:25 the LORD promises to give back or restore what the locusts have eaten over the **years**. This is amazing, for as God Himself says in Job 41:11 "Who has given to Me that I should **repay** him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine." And so here His restitution to Israel is nothing but **pure grace**! God does not owe us anything! We deserve Hell! And yet He graciously, mercifully offers Heaven! In this passage He will give repentant Jews a bit of "Heaven on earth!" As discussed in this section, this "divine repayment" will be most fully realized in the "good side" of the Day of the LORD, when Messiah reigns in His earthly kingdom and sets Israel high above all the nations of the earth just as He promised in the Blessings and Curses sections of Deuteronomy (cf Dt 28:1)

Joel 2:25 is translated in the Septuagint with the verb antapodidomi means to give back in return for something received. The idea is to practice reciprocity with respect to an obligation. Well, the LORD in the strictest sense owes us nothing, but because of His great grace, mercy and lovingkindness (and commitment to covenant, especially [the Abrahamic and then the New Covenant](#)), He bestows blessings in abundance on those who **return** and **rend** their hearts and not their garments. To be sure, in this context, this promise is given to repentant Israel (cf Joel 2:12, 13) but the principle applies to any person who expresses genuine repentance!

**Matthew Henry** comments "Thus does it *repent* the Lord concerning his servants, when they *repent*, and, to show how perfectly he is reconciled to them, he makes good the damage they have sustained by his judgments, and, like the jailer, washes their stripes. Though, in justice, he distrained upon them, and did them no wrong, yet, in compassion, he makes restitution; as the father of the prodigal, upon his return, made up all he had"

**Duane Garrett** - God's people experience sorrow and loss, but they also experience restoration. In the end that which is gained far outweighs that which was lost. God does not allow the years of suffering to go unrewarded. After punishment comes comfort (Isa 40:1–2), and in the end God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of his people (Rev 7:17).

**Keil and Delitzsch** on the **years** (shanah - [01040](#)) - The plural, shânîm (**years**), furnishes **no certain proof that Joel referred in ch. 1 to swarms of locusts of several successive years**; but is used either with indefinite generality, as in Genesis 21:7, or with a distinct significance, viz., as a poetical expression denoting the greatness and violence of the devastation. (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament)

## JEHOVAH'S GREAT ARMY

**My great army which I sent among you** - Notice that **My great army** signifies God sends the army. This is much like when God called Nebuchadnezzar "My servant" ("I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land" - Jer 25:9). Note also the phrase **among you**. This signifies the army is sent **among** His Chosen People. Suffice it to say that no army of insects or humans can attack Israel unless the Lord God sends it or allows it. He is sovereign and in full control.

Now here is the question - Does this army refer only to the locusts described in chapter 1 or does it have an eschatological meaning? In other words does this description refer to a **great army** in the Day of the Lord in the last days? A number of commentators favor this as reference to the "army" of locusts in chapter 1 (cf Joel 1:6) but they admit the fact Joel 2:25 has the time phrase "**years**" which would imply more than one locust invasion.

On the other hand the fact that Joel 2:25 is clearly in a section which describes the Day of the Lord, would support that this army is not just locusts and that the years are not just past years but include the years in the Day of the Lord. While John MacArthur does not have a specific comment on the timing of Joel 2:25, he definitely includes it in the section entitled "**The Day of the Lord Described: Eschatological (Joel 2:18-3:21)**" Here is his outline

- A. Introduction (2:18–20)
- B. Material Restoration (2:21–27)
- C. Spiritual Restoration (2:28–32)

- D. National Restoration (3:1–21)

Notice that Joel 2:25 is in the section subtitled "Material Restoration (2:21-27)"

Assuming this is an army in the last days, it is important to note that the sovereign God has a redemptive purpose for sending this army against Israel and it is described in Zechariah 12-14. (See Zech 12:1-3-note, then Zech 12:10-14-note, then Zech 13:1-note, then Zech 13:8-9-note)

**Spurgeon** - Who can make the all-devouring locust restore his prey? No one, by wisdom or power, can recover what has been utterly destroyed. God alone can do for you what seems impossible. And here is the promise of his grace: "I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust ate." By giving to his repentant people larger harvests than the land could naturally yield, God could give back to them, as it were, all they would have had if the locusts had never come. And God can restore our lives that have up to now been blighted and eaten up with the locust and sin, by giving us divine grace in the present and in the future. He can yet make it complete and blessed and useful to his praise and glory. It is a great wonder, but Jehovah is a God of wonders; and in the kingdom of his grace, miracles are common....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** - We cannot have back our time. But in a strange and wonderful way, God can give back to us the wasted blessings, the unripe fruits of years where we mourned. It is a great wonder, but Jehovah is a God of wonders; and in the kingdom of his grace, miracles are common. He dealt with them by way of wonders when he struck them and by way of wonders when he returned to them in his mercy.

**Spurgeon** - "I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust ate, the young locust, the destroying locust, and the devouring locust—my great army that I sent against you." The locust year was particularly a year of great disappointment. The people looked for a harvest. In fact, they seemed to see it spring up, and then it was devoured before their eyes. Even so, the ungodly person—the one who has no faith in Christ—is often charmed with the prospect of a happiness that he never reaches. A little more and he will be content. He gets a little more. And this increases his thirst for yet another drink from the golden cup. Run as we may, when the heart shoots with its far-reaching bow, still the arrows are beyond us. The student must know a little more. The ambitious must climb a little higher up the ladder of honor, and then he will be at ease. He learns, he reaches the honor, but the ease is still as distant as ever—perhaps it is even further off. Lost years can never be restored literally. Time once past is gone forever. Let no one make any mistake about this or trifle with the present moment under any notion that the flying hour will ever wing its way back to him. So the meaning of the restoration of the years must be the restoration of those fruits and of those harvests the locusts consumed. We cannot have back our time. But in a strange and wonderful way, God can give back to us the wasted blessings, the unripe fruits of years where we mourned. It is a pity that they should have been eaten by our folly and negligence. But if they have been so, we should not be hopeless concerning them. Jesus said to the man with the demon-possessed son, "If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes" (Mk 9:23). There is a power that is beyond all things and can work great marvels. Who can make the all-devouring locust restore his prey? No one, by wisdom or power, can recover what has been utterly destroyed. God alone can do for you what seems impossible. And here is the promise of his grace: "I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust ate." By giving to his repentant people larger harvests than the land could naturally yield, God could give back to them, as it were, all they would have had if the locusts had never come. And God can restore our lives that have up to now been blighted and eaten up with the locust and sin, by giving us divine grace in the present and in the future. He can yet make it complete and blessed and useful to his praise and glory. It is a great wonder, but Jehovah is a God of wonders; and in the kingdom of his grace, miracles are common.

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### 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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### **Joel 2:25 Losses Overcome Faith's Checkbook**

C H Spurgeon

"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath 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 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 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 Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

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

**Joel 2:26 "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame.**

- **You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied:** Lev 26:5,26 De 6:11,12 8:10 Ne 9:25 Ps 22:26 103:5 Pr 13:25 Song 5:1 Isa 55:2 62:8,9 Mic 6:14 Zec 9:15,17 1Ti 6:17
- **And praise the name of the LORD your God** De 12:7,12,18 26:10,11 1Ti 4:3-5
- **Who has dealt wondrously with you:** Joe 2:20,21 Ge 33:11 Ps 13:6 72:18 116:7 126:2,3 Isa 25:1
- **Then My people will never be put to shame.:** Ps 25:2,3 37:19 Isa 29:22 45:17 49:23 54:4 Zep 3:11 Ro 5:5 Ro 9:33 10:11 1Jn 2:28

### ISRAEL NEVER AGAIN PUT TO SHAME!

**You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied** - Again note this is future tense and will not be perfectly fulfilled until the [redeemed remnant](#) of Israel (Zechariah 12:10-14-note, Zechariah 13:1-note, Zechariah 13:8-9-note, Romans 11:25-29-note) enters into [Messiah's earthly reign in the Millennium](#).

**Life Application Study Bible** adds that "If the Jews would never again experience a disaster like this locust plague ("never again will my people be disgraced"), how do we explain the captivity in Babylon, the Jews' slavery under the Greeks and Romans, and their persecution under Hitler? It is important not to take these verses out of context. This is still part of the "blessings" section of Joel's prophecy. Only if the people truly repented would they avoid a disaster like the one Joel had described. God's blessings are promised only to those who sincerely and consistently follow him. God does promise that after the final day of judgment, his people will never again experience this kind of disaster (Zechariah 14:9-11-note)."

**Satisfied** ([07646](#))([saba](#)) means to be sated (implying sufficiency, though generally not speaking of excess), to be filled or be full and so to be satisfied or have enough (or too much) of something, as when Israel had enough (too much) quail (Ex 16:8, 12). Yahweh is the ultimate Source of physical satiety (Ps. 104:28; satisfaction with His lovingkindness - Ps 90:14). **Satisfied** in Joel 2:26 is translated in the Septuagint with the verb **empimplemi** meaning to be satisfied or have enough (John 6:12 of Jesus feeding 5000 men).

**Praise the name of the LORD your God**- Praise is always fitting but especially when we have experienced God's hand of blessing! Do you (I) frequently (daily) offer up praise and thanksgiving for giving you (me) daily bread (and then some!)?

**Keil and Delitzsch** - On the reception of these benefits the people will praise the Lord, who has shown it such wondrous grace, lit., has acted towards it even to the doing of wonders. (Commentary on the Old Testament – Volume 10: The Minor Prophets)

**Who has dealt wondrously with you** - When God bestows blessing it is not just a "pinch" but is extraordinary. Have you experienced this truth about God?

**Wondrously** (06381)(pala) refers to that which is surpassing or extraordinary. The first use in Ge 18:14 sets the stage for other uses where God says "Is anything **too difficult** for the LORD?" And of course the answer is an emphatic "NO!" In this future time of restoration, God's provision will in short be extraordinary, even miraculous (cf "miracles" in Ex 3:20)! The Septuagint translates **pala** in Joel 2:26 (and Ex 3:20) with the adjective **thaumasios** meaning remarkable, excellent, wonderful, describing that which is a cause of wonder or worthy of amazement, (used only in Mt 21:5 = of the things Jesus did).

**Then My people will never be put to shame.** - Never means not ever or at no time in the future! This clearly is not true today, but will be fulfilled in the Millennial Reign of Christ and His saints, including saved Jews and Gentiles. This is such good news that God repeats it in Joel 2:27! In fact the nations will see God's hand of blessing on Israel and they will be ashamed (**bosh**) (Micah 7:16-note)! In that future day when Jehovah restores His chosen people Israel the Gentiles will see Messiah's wonder working power. At that time the Gentile nations who opposed them with their great military might will be utterly ashamed. They will see in that day that might does not make right especially when that might is used to oppose the little nation of Israel.

**Then** - This marks sequence in a series of events and is especially important to recognize in passages which are clearly prophetic. Zephaniah tells us "when" is "then," writing...

**In that day** (WHEN MESSIAH RETURNS TO SET UP HIS KINGDOM) **you will feel no shame** Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me; For then I will remove from your midst Your proud, exulting ones, And **you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain.** (Zephaniah 3:11-note)

**Put to shame** (0954)(**bosh** from root = "to become pale" or "to blush") is a verb which conveys the primary meaning of to fall into disgrace, normally through failure, either of self or of an object of trust. It is both an external and a subjective experience, ranging from disgrace (Hos. 10:6) to guilt (Ezra 9:6) When failure or sin occurs, there is a disconcerting feeling, a flushing of the face. This Hebrew verb **bosh** often occurs in contexts of humiliation and shattered human emotions, and can include the feeling of public disgrace. The confusion, embarrassment, or dismay when things do not turn out as expected.

And so we see in the eschatological age to come a reversal of the shame of Joel 1:11-note.

**Bosh** is translated here in the Lxx of Joel 2:26 with the verb **kataischuno** which speaks of dishonor, disgrace, of blushing because of shame. **Kataischuno** can also refer to the shame and disappointment that come to one whose faith or hope is shown to be vain.

**Ashamed** - Affected by shame; abashed or confused by guilt or a conviction of some criminal action or indecorous conduct, or by the exposure of some gross errors or misconduct, which the person is conscious must be wrong, and which tends to impair his honor or reputation. Confused by a consciousness of guilt or of inferiority; by the mortification of pride; by failure or disappointment. (Webster, 1828).

**Shame** - A painful sensation excited by a consciousness of guilt, or of having done something which injures reputation; or by the exposure of that which nature or modesty prompts us to conceal. **Shame** is particularly excited by the disclosure of actions which, in the view of men, are mean and degrading. Hence it is often or always manifested by a **downcast look** or by **blushes**, called **confusion of face**. (Webster, 1828)

**Isaiah** records a similar promise

"Fear not, for **you will not be put to shame; And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;** But you will forget the shame of your youth, And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. (Isaiah 54:4)

**Jeremiah** echoes this truth

'Fear not, O Jacob My servant,' declares the LORD, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar And your offspring from the land of their captivity. **And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease (IN THE MILLENNIUM), And no one will make him afraid.** (Jer 30:10-note)

**Spurgeon** - "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied. You will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. My people will never again be put to shame." The nation of Israel had grievously gone astray, and therefore they were visited by a remarkable chastisement. An unusual plague of locusts devoured all the fruit of the field, and the people were vexed with a severe famine. The day of the Lord was terrible, and none of them could endure it. The prophet Joel was commissioned to exhort them to repentance; and if, indeed, they listened to his earnest entreaties, their later history was bright with mercy. By God's good hand on them, they were brought to repentance; they wept and cried to God. And then the same God, who with his left hand

had been wonderful in chastisement, was, with his right hand, equally wonderful in blessing and enriching them. He loaded their floors with wheat, made their baskets overflow with wine and oil, and restored to them the years the locust had eaten so that they ate in plenty and were satisfied and praised the name of the Lord, who had dealt wondrously with them. He dealt with them by way of wonders when he struck them and by way of wonders when he returned to them in his mercy.

**Joel 2:27 "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.**

- **I am in the midst of Israel:** Joe 3:17 Lev 26:11,12 De 23:14 Ps 46:5 68:18 Isa 12:6 Eze 37:26-28 Zep 3:17 2Co 6:16 Rev 21:3
- **that I am the LORD your God** Isa 45:5,18,21,22 53:6 Eze 39:22,28
- **And My people will never be put to shame.:** Joe 2:26 1Pe 2:6

## **THERE IS NO OTHER GOD!**

**Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel-** This same truth is echoed in the last words in Ezekiel **"The LORD is there"** ([Jehovah Shammah](#)) (Ezekiel 48:35)

Other prophets foresaw this glorious day

Ezekiel 37:26-28-note "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and **will set My sanctuary in their midst forever.** 27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 28"And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.""

Zephaniah 3:15-note The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. **The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;**You will fear disaster no more.

Zephaniah 3:17-note **"The LORD your God is in your midst,**A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

**You will know** - The Hebrew verb [yada](#) speaks of intimate knowledge (e.g., it is used of a man "knowing" a woman) and is translated in the Septuagint with the verb [epiginosko](#) which speak of full knowledge, knowledge obtained by experience. Israel will know Jehovah is in their midst because He will literally be in their midst in the Millennium!

**Duane Garrett** has an interesting comment on this section - The saying, "Then you will know that I am the LORD your God" or the like appears repeatedly in the exodus narrative (Ex 6:7; 7:17; 8:22; 11:7; 16:6, 8, 12). It implies that the Lord was about to do some mighty work that would teach the Israelites a lesson about his divine power. The phrase also appears in Nu 16:28, 30, where the earth opened up and swallowed the rebellious sons of Korah. By this the people "knew" that the Lord was God and that Moses was his spokesperson. Ezekiel used the formula about thirty times (e.g., Ezek 6:7; 7:4, 9; 11:10, 12), and it appears sporadically in other Old Testament books as well (e.g., 1 Ki 20:13, 28; Isa 49:23; 60:16; Jer 44:29; cf. also John 8:28).

**Keil and Delitzsch** - They will learn thereby that Jehovah is present among His people, and the only true God, who does not suffer His people to be put to shame. The repetition of [וְגַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ](#), by which the promised grace is guaranteed to the people for all ages, serves as a rhetorical rounding off of the section (see at Joel 2:20). (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Volume 10: The Minor Prophets)

**And that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other** -Notice God's acknowledgement of His covenant communion with the [redeemed remnant](#) = "your God."

**There is no other** - Other is 'od see below. Isaiah 45 echoes this great truth that there is only one TRUE God...

Isaiah 45:5; "I am the LORD, and **there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.** I will gird you, though you have not known Me;

Isaiah 45:18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and **there is none else.**

Isaiah 45:21 "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from



of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And **there is no other God besides Me**, A righteous God and a Savior; **There is none except Me**.

Isaiah 45:22 **"Turn to Me and be saved**, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. (THIS IS THE VERSE THAT RESULTED IN THE SALVATION OF THE FAMOUS PREACHER CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON - SEE SPURGEON'S OWN TESTIMONY).

**And My people will never be put to shame**- Notice the possessive "MY." He is referring in this context to His "Chosen People" the nation of Israel (specifically the repentant, redeemed remnant) and NOT to the Church. And just in case Israel did not see it (or believe it) in Joel 2:26, the Spirit inspires Joel to repeat this wonderful truth - NO SHAME, NO MORE!

**Charles Feinberg** writes that Joel 2:26-27 "end with the same words because God would give fullest assurance of the truth stated. In Joel 2:26 it is used of temporal benefits; in Joel 2:27, of spiritual benefits. God is the sole and only necessary guarantee that all these will be accomplished."

**Will never be put to shame** (0954) See [preceding discussion of bosh](#).

**Other** (05750) ('od form verb 'ud = to repeat or do again) is an adverb meaning again, still, more, longer, also, yet, a going around, beside. 'Od is used frequently in Isaiah to signify there is **no "other"** God beside Jehovah (Isa 45:5, 6, 45:14, 18, 45:21, 22, 46:9, Dt 4:35, 39, Joel 2:27-note). Clearly God wants His people Israel and His children in the NT to know that He alone is God, lest we be prone to wander and be seduced by the false "gods" of this fallen world.

Play [My Deliverer is Coming by Rich Mullins](#) - powerful!

## ESCHATOLOGICAL USES OF 'OD

In Jeremiah 23:4 the Hebrew word 'od is used in an **eschatological (prophetic) sense** to describe a future promise given to Israel- "I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid **any longer** ('od) nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD." See multiple uses in Jeremiah of 'od in descriptions of future prophecies related to Israel = Jer 23:7, Jer 30:8-note, Jer 31:4-5-note, Jer 31:12-note, Jer 31:23-note, Jer 31:29-note, Jer 31:34-note, Jer 31:40-note, Jer 32:15-note, Jer 33:12,13-note, Jer 33:24-note

Other uses of 'od in the context of future prophecy -

And never **again** will they learn war. Isaiah 2:4

"Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, And it will **again** be subject to burning, Like a terebinth or an oak Isaiah 6:13

Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no **longer** a people Isa 7:8

"**again** choose Israel" = Isa 14:1; Ezek 36:15, 30, 37,

"they will no **longer** be two nations and no **longer** be divided into two kingdoms" = Ezek 37:22,

"They will no **longer** defile themselves with their idols" = Ezek 37:23; "I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore" = Ezek 39:7, 28;

"I will not hide My face from them any **longer** for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," = Ezek 39:29; Ezek 43:7, 45:8, Hos 2:16-17,

And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations. Joel 2:19-note, 27,

"Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; Joel 2:27-note

Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will pass through it no **more**. Joel 3:17-note

"I will also plant them on their land, And they will not **again** be rooted out from their land" = Amos 9:15, Micah 4:3, Zeph 3:15,

"The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will **again** choose Jerusalem." = Zech 2:12;

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Old men and old women will **again** sit in the streets of Jerusalem" = Zech 8:4,

while the inhabitants of Jerusalem **again** dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. Zech 12:6-note

It will come about in that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no **longer** be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. Zech 13:2-note

"And if anyone **still** prophesies, Zech 13:3-note

"People will live in it, and there will no **longer** be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security" = Zech 14:11-note

And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day. - Zech 14:21-note

**Joel 2:28 "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.**

- **That I will pour out My Spirit** : Pr 1:23 Isa 32:15 44:3 Eze 39:29 Joh 7:39 Acts 2:16-18
- **on all mankind**: Isa 40:5 49:6 Zec 12:10 Lu 3:6 Ac 2:2-4,33,39 10:44-47 Ac 11:15-18 15:7,8
- **daughters will prophesy**: Isa 54:13 Ac 21:9 Ga 3:28
- **Your young men will see visions** Ge 37:5-10 Nu 12:6 Jer 23:28

**ESV** "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, and your young men shall see visions.

**NLT** "Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.

## THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON ISRAEL

Note that you are reading a Jewish text, you will note that Joel 2:28-32 are in Joel 3 and Joel 3 in English translations is Joel 4 in the Hebrew original.

**NET Note** explains that "Beginning with Joel 2:28, the verse numbers through Joel 3:21 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with Joel 2:28 ET = 3:1 HT, Joel 2:29 ET = 3:2 HT, Joel 2:30 ET = 3:3 HT, Joel 2:31 ET = 3:4 HT, Joel 2:32 ET = 3:5 HT, Joel 3:1 ET = 4:1 HT, etc., through Joel 3:21 ET = 4:21 HT. Thus **Joel in the Hebrew Bible has 4 chapters, the 5 verses of ch. 3 being included at the end of ch. 2 in the English Bible.**" ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

On Pentecost after being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-3,4+), Peter delivers a sermon (beginning in Acts 2:14 and ending in Acts 2:38-40) to an audience of men of Judea and those who lived in Jerusalem and in Acts 2:16-21+ quotes from Joel 2:28-32. As a result of Peter's message on that same day about 3000 souls from this Jewish audience were born again. (Acts 2:41+) Below is Peter's quote from the book of Joel and it is fascinating (? coincidence) that these are the same 5 verses that the Hebrew Bible places in a separate chapter, Joel chapter 3 (as explained above).

Acts 2:16-21 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

17 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, (**PETER NOW BEGINS QUOTING Joel 2:28**) 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS ;

**Comment:** Note that the first phrase "'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS" is not from the book of Joel. This exact Greek phrase is found in the Septuagint version of Isaiah 2:2-commentary which is also a prophecy that deals with the "last days." It is interesting that Isaiah's passage is describing the beginning of the Messiah's earthly kingdom. Below are the actual Greek text from the Septuagint and from the New Testament to show that they are exactly the same words:

- **σται ν τα ς οχ ται ς μ ραι ς** (Isaiah 2:2 Septuagint)
- **σται ν τα ς οχ ται ς μ ραι ς**, (Act 2:17 New Testament)

18 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:29**) EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

19 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:30**) 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

20 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:31**) 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

21 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:32**) 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

**Comment:** Note that Peter is quoting from the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) and not from the Hebrew text. In fact it is notable that the majority of the NT quotes (by various writers) of Old Testament Scriptures are taken from the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#), which certainly substantiates the authenticity and the usefulness of the [Septuagint \(Lxx\) version](#) which I fear many Bible students have largely neglected as an excellent source to supplement their study of the Old Testament Scriptures.

For more on the Septuagint see these two excellent articles from Everett Harrison:

(1) [The Importance of the Septuagint for Biblical Studies. Part 1, Bibliotheca Sacra 112: 448 \(1955\): 344-355](#)

(2) [The Influence of the Septuagint on the NT Vocabulary Bibliotheca Sacra 113 \(Jan. 1956\) 37-45](#)

**John MacArthur** - The abundance of material blessings would be followed by the outpouring of spiritual blessings. When coupled with the other temporal phrases within the passage ("**in those days**" [Joel 2:29] and "**before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes**" [Joel 2:31]), the *term points to a Second Advent fulfillment time frame* (Italics added for emphasis)

**Duane Garrett** - The text is not specific in regard to chronology, but it implies that the gift of the Spirit would come after the nation had recovered from the agricultural and military disasters Deuteronomy had foretold. In 2 Sa 2:1; 8:1; 10:1; 13:1; 21:18, the same Hebrew phrase is translated "in the course of time." Indeed, the temporal aspect is of minimal significance here; what really matters is that this is a new and distinctive manifestation of the Day of the Lord. According to Acts 2:17, Peter understood this phrase in an eschatological sense and so paraphrased it as  $\nu \tau \alpha \varsigma \sigma \chi \acute{\alpha} \tau \alpha \iota \varsigma \mu \acute{\epsilon} \rho \alpha \iota \varsigma$  ("in the last days"). The LXX has  $\mu \epsilon \tau \tau \alpha \tau \alpha$ , "after these things." Peter's transformation of the text implies that he believed that he and his contemporaries had witnessed the beginning of the messianic age.

**Warren Wiersbe** - In Acts 2, Peter did not say that Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled. He said that the same Holy Spirit Joel wrote about ("this is that") had now come and was empowering the believers to praise God in various languages understood by the Jews who were assembled in Jerusalem from many parts of the Roman Empire (Act 2:5–12). In his prophecy, Joel promised "wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.... The sun ... turned into darkness, and the moon into blood" (Joel 2:30–31), but there is no record that any of these things occurred at Pentecost. The miracle that fascinated the crowd was the miracle of the tongues, not remarkable signs of nature. Some say that the darkening of the sun from noon until three o'clock (Matt. 27:45) and the local earthquake (Mt 27:51–54) fulfilled Joel's promise, but Matthew doesn't say so. Invariably, when something happened that fulfilled Scripture, Matthew calls it to our attention (Mt 26:24, 56; 27:9, 35). At least twelve times in his Gospel, Matthew uses the word "**fulfilled**" to point to an Old Testament messianic prophecy, but he doesn't include Joel 2:28–32. Furthermore, Joel's promise included a much wider audience than the one Peter addressed at Pentecost. Peter's audience was made up of men (Acts 2:22, 29+) who were either Jews or Gentile proselytes to Judaism (Acts 2:11). The Gentiles didn't enter into the blessing of the Spirit until Cornelius and his family and friends were converted (Acts 10:1-11:30). Peter used Joel's prophecy to declare that the promised Spirit had come and this was why the believers, men and women (Acts 1:14), were praising God in such an ecstatic manner. Peter was answering the accusation that the believers were drunk (Acts 2:13–16+) and backing up his defense from the Scriptures. When it comes to Israel, "the last days" (or "latter times") will involve both tribulation and exaltation (Isa. 2:1–5; Micah 4:1–5), a time of trouble followed by a time of triumph and glory. As far as the church is concerned, "the last days" involve "perilous times" of satanic opposition in the world and apostasy in the church (1 Ti 4:1–5; 2 Ti 3:1–8; 2 Pe 3:1–9; 1 Jn 2:18–23; Jude 1:18–19)....Certainly the church today needs a new filling of the Spirit of God. Apart from the ministry of the Spirit, believers can't witness with power (Acts 1:8), understand the Scriptures (John 16:13), glorify Christ (John 16:14), pray in the will of God (Rom. 8:26–27), or develop Christian character (Gal. 5:22–23). We need to be praying for revival, a deeper working of the Spirit in His people, leading to confession of sin, repentance, forgiveness, and unity. (**ED:** SEE MY RELATED ARTICLE [A Spirit Filled Church](#)) (Be Amazed)

**It will come about after this** - After what? What has Joel been describing? He has been describing promises that describe the time when the nation will return and rend their hearts. This has not yet occurred as a nation. It follows that while there has been a partial fulfillment as Peter describes in the book of Acts (Acts 2:16-18ff+), there remains a final and complete fulfillment in the last days yet to come.

**It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind**- While clearly the Spirit was poured out on the Jewish

believers at Pentecost at the inception of the Church, in another sense He is "poured" out on every soul that places their faith in the Messiah (cf Ro 5:5-note, Titus 3:5-6-note). And yet these outpourings are not the fulfillment of Joel 2:28ff, for the full outpouring awaits the [Messianic Age](#). Zechariah prophesies that God will make it possible for a **remnant of Israel** to return to Him declaring...

**And I (MESSIAH) will pour out** on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me (MESSIAH) Whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him (MESSIAH), as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born." (Zechariah 12:10ff-[commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** has this note in his introduction to the Book of Acts in his section entitled [Interpretative Challenges](#) - A second issue confronting the interpreter is Peter's quotation from Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:16-21. Some have viewed the phenomena of Acts 2 and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD. 70 as the fulfillment of the Joel passage, while others have reserved its fulfillment to the final Day of the Lord only—but clearly Joel is referring to the final terrible Day of the Lord. **The pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not a fulfillment, but a preview and sample of the Spirit's power and work to be released fully and finally in the Messiah's kingdom after the Day of the Lord.** ([Interpretative Challenges](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

**Duane Garrett on the Spirit poured out** - The prophets often associated the Spirit with the eschatological era, but they did not always do it in precisely the same manner as did Joel. As H. W. Wolff points out, Ezekiel promised that in the age to come God would by his Spirit enable people to obey God from the heart (Ezek 36:26–27). Isaiah foretold a day when God would pour out his Spirit in order to create a new community and a new people of God (32:14–18; 44:3–5). In Joel, by contrast, the gift of the Spirit is prophetic. It enables people to prophesy, to experience revelatory dreams, and to see visions. These different aspects of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit do not contradict but complement each other. The gift of the Spirit connotes direct experience with God, as in Joel, as well as the grace that enables his people to love God from the heart, as in Ezekiel. It also is the distinctive sign and mark of membership in the new people of God, as in Isaiah. In short, the coming age would be an age marked by the presence of the Spirit (contrast 1 Sam 3:1). (New American Commentary)

**NET Note** - This passage plays a key role in the apostolic explanation of the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:17–21. Peter introduces his quotation of this passage with "this is that spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16; cf. the similar *peshar* formula used at Qumran). The New Testament experience at Pentecost is thus seen in some sense as a fulfillment of this Old Testament passage, even though that experience did not exhaustively fulfill Joel's words (**ED COMMENT: IN OTHER WORDS PENTECOST WAS NOT THE PERFECT FULFILLMENT BUT ONLY A PARTIAL PREVIEW OF THINGS TO COME AT THE END OF THIS AGE**). Some portions of Joel's prophecy have no precise counterpart in that experience. For example, there is nothing in the experience recorded in Acts 2 that exactly corresponds to the earthly and heavenly signs described in Joel 3:3–4...The equative language that Peter employs ("this is that") stresses an [incipient](#) fulfillment (**ED: "PARTIAL FULFILLMENT"**) of the Joel passage without precluding or minimizing **a yet future and more exhaustive fulfillment in events associated with the return of Christ** (Bolding added for emphasis). ([Net Notes Joel 2](#))

**Pour out** ((08210)([shaphak](#)) means to pour out literally (of fluid - Ex 4:9, Dt 12:16) or blood on the altar (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7; Dt. 12:27). **Shaphak** describes the casting up of a mound against a city to form a siege ramp for attacking it (2 Sa 20:15; Ezek. 4:2; Da 11:15). A dependent prayer is described as the pouring out of one's soul (1Sa 1:15; Ps. 42:4), one's heart (Ps. 62:8; Lam 2:19); or one's inner parts before the Lord (Lam 2:11).

**Keil and Delitzsch** observe that **shaphak** "signifies communication in rich abundance, like a rain-fall or water-fall. For the communication of the Spirit of God was not entirely wanting to the covenant nation from the very first. In fact, the Spirit of God was the only inward bond between the Lord and His people; but it was confined to the few whom God endowed as prophets with the gift of His Spirit. This limitation was to cease in the future. What Moses expressed as a wish—namely, that the people were all prophets, and the Lord would put His Spirit upon them (Nu 11:29)—was to be fulfilled in the future. (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Volume 10: The Minor Prophets)

But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake?**Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!**"(Numbers 11:29)

**John Calvin** - There is no doubt that the prophet promises something greater here than the fathers had experienced under the law. We know that the grace of the Holy Spirit flourished even among the ancient people; but the prophet promises here not what the faithful had formerly experienced, but something greater. And this may be gathered from the verb '**to pour**' which he employs. For [שפך](#) does not mean merely to give in drops, but to **pour out** in great abundance. But God did not pour out the Holy Spirit so abundantly or copiously under the law, as He has since the manifestation of Christ." (**Ed:** And will do so in the greatest abundance in the New Age to come, the Messiah's Kingdom on earth!)

God poured out both His wrath (Ps. 69:24; Isa. 42:25; Jer. 6:11; Hos. 5:10); and His Spirit and grace on people...

Joel 2:28-29-note (THIS OUTPOURING WILL BE FULFILLED IN THE MILLENNIUM) "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Zech 12:10-note (THIS OUTPOURING WILL BE FULFILLED JUST BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM) "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

**Charles Feinberg** states "The prophet is speaking of the latter days for Israel, a period which covers both the Tribulation period and the reign of the Messiah which follows it. At that time God will pour out His Spirit, the blessed Holy Spirit, upon all flesh."...Several truths are implied here: (1) the figure employed is taken from the analogy of the rain (see Joel 2:23); (2) the pouring out reveals the Spirit is from above; and (3) the Spirit is given in abundance. The outpouring of the Spirit is to be upon all flesh. It will be universal in character and scope. But does this mean universal for all Israel or for all mankind generally? Expositors of the passage are divided, some holding to one position and others holding to the other position just as positively. No one, however, will deny, from the context and the prophetic teaching of other portions of the Old Testament, that all Israel surely is included. Differences of age (young and old), sex (sons and daughters), or position (servants and handmaids) will constitute no barrier nor hindrance to this gift of the Spirit. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

If we compare the words of Isaiah and Peter, we note that **the last days** are the time when Mount Zion will be the chief mountain in the Millennial reign of the Messiah. It is at that time that the prophecy of Joel which Peter quotes will be fulfilled.

Isaiah 2:2-note Now it will come about that **In the last days** The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.

Acts 2:17 'AND IT SHALL BE **IN THE LAST DAYS**,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;

The **outpouring of the Holy Spirit** on Israel is predicted in several OT prophecies...

Isaiah 32:15 Until **the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high** And the wilderness becomes a fertile field, And the fertile field is considered as a forest.

Isaiah 44:3 'For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; **I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants;** 4 And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.'

Ezekiel 36:27 "**I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes** and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 "You (ISRAEL) will live in the land (ISRAEL) that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 37:14 "**I will put My Spirit within you** and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD."

Ezekiel 39:29 "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for **I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,**" declares the Lord GOD.

Zechariah 12:10 "**I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication**, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

**And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions-**

**J Vernon McGee** - In understanding this prophecy, it is of utmost importance to note the time of fulfillment indicated in this passage: "**And it shall come to pass** (afterward)." Joel has been telling us about the coming [Day of the Lord](#). As the first of the writing prophets, he introduced it, and he tells what is going to take place during that period. He has emphasized the fact that it will begin with the darkness of the [Great Tribulation](#) Period (our Lord Jesus gave it that name). We noted the importance of the time sequence in Hosea 3:5 reads: "**Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.**" We identified the "last days" as that time of the Great Tribulation Period which ushers in the kingdom by the coming of Christ to the earth, which is the beginning of the Millennium. This

leads us to conclude that Joel is now speaking of a very definite period of time, that this prophecy is to be fulfilled during the [Day of the Lord](#), after the night of the [Great Tribulation](#). Then God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. (Thru the Bible Commentary)

- [What does it mean that God will pour out His Spirit on all people \(Joel 2:28\)?](#)

## A PROPOSED TIMELINE OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

Below is a schematic of the [Day of the Lord](#). Note that they are 2 suggested possible starting dates - (1) After a pre-tribulation rapture or (2) In the Middle of the Tribulation (aka [The Seventieth Week of Daniel](#)), which is the time the Antichrist commits the "abomination of desolation" in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem (Da 9:27-[note](#); 2 Th 2:3-[note](#); 2 Th 2:4-[note](#)) which sets in motion the 3.5 year [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15-[note](#), named - Mt 24:21-[note](#)). This 3.5 year Great Tribulation is synonymous with (1) [The Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-[note](#)) and (2) "[A time of distress](#)" ([Da 12:1-note](#)). Notice also (and this is critical) that this same 3.5 year period is [synonymous with other time phrases](#) = 1260 days, 42 months, "time, times, and half a time", (if these numbers/phrases are symbolic as some non-literalists claim, then why did the Spirit go to such lengths to inspire four separate synonymous time phrases? Are they simply a coincidence? I think they are given so the Spirit taught reader will NOT miss this crucial time when God pours out His wrath on the godless world and on the nation of Israel). This 3.5 year period of divine wrath unleashed on the planet is without question a major component or manifestation of the time referred to as the Day of the Lord. The Great Tribulation will be "cut short" by the return of the Messiah (Mt 24:22-note, Mt 24:30-note) Notice point (3) below shows that the Day of the Lord extends throughout the Millennium until the heavens and the earth pass away (2 Pe 3:10-note, cf Rev 20:11-[note](#) = "earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them")

**John MacArthur** on the **Day of the Lord** in the book of Joel -

The theme of Joel is the **Day of the Lord**. It permeates all parts of Joel's message, making it the most sustained treatment in the entire OT (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 2:11; 2:31; 3:14). The phrase is employed 19 times by 8 different OT authors (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6,9; Ezek. 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14; Amos 5:18 [2x], Amos 5:20; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:7,14 [2x]; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:5). **The phrase does not have reference to a chronological time period, but to a general period of wrath and judgment uniquely belonging to the Lord.** It is exclusively the day which unveils His character—mighty, powerful, and holy, thus terrifying His enemies. The Day of the Lord does not always refer to an eschatological event; on occasion it has a near historical fulfillment, as seen in Ezekiel 13:5, where it speaks of the Babylonian conquest and destruction of Jerusalem. As is common in prophecy, the near fulfillment is an historic event upon which to comprehend the more distant, eschatological fulfillment.

The **Day of the Lord** is frequently associated with seismic disturbances (e.g., Joel 2:1–11; Joel 2:31; Joel 3:16), violent weather (Ezekiel 13:5ff.), clouds and thick darkness (e.g., Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:7ff.), cosmic upheaval (Joel 2:3,30), and as a "great and very terrible" (Joel 2:11) day that would "come as destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15). The latter half of Joel depicts time subsequent to the **Day of the Lord** in terms of promise and hope. There will be a pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh, accompanied by prophetic utterances, dreams, visions (Joel 2:28,29), as well as the coming of Elijah, an epiphany bringing restoration and hope (Mal. 4:5,6). As a result of the **Day of the Lord** there will be physical blessings, fruitfulness, and prosperity (Joel 2:21ff.; Joel 3:16–21). It is a day when judgment is poured out on sinners that subsequently leads to blessings on the penitent, and reaffirmation of God's covenant with His people. ([Introduction to Joel](#))

### Related Resources:

- [The Prophet's Watchword Day of the Lord](#) -- Richard L. Mayhue - Grace Theological Journal 6:2 Fall 1985
- [Video on the Day of the LORD by Ray Bentley](#) - At Epicenter Conference with Joel Rosenberg

Heaven & earth  
fled away  
(Rev 20:11-[note](#))

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V

Pre-Tribulation Rapture	The Seven Year "Tribulation" 70th Week of Daniel Daniel 9:27-note	(3) Day of Lord extends thru the Millennium  2 Pe 3:10-note	< Great White Throne Judgment of Unbelievers  Rev 21:10-note
(1) Day of the Lord begins before the "Tribulation"	(2) Day of Lord begins in Middle of the "Tribulation"  Messiah returns to cut short the Great Tribulation	1000 Years The Millennial Reign of Christ Rev 20:4,5,6-note	New Heaven New Earth Rev 20:11-15-note
	3.5 Years Synonymous times		

### 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 Spirits 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)

## VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF JOEL 2:28

**Gilliland** has a well reasoned analysis regarding the three major interpretative views of Joel 2:28 -

This short paragraph in Joel (Joel 2:28-32) is the section of his prophecy which most closely connects with the New Testament....When it was alleged that those who spoke in tongues "the wonderful works of God" were "full of new wine" (Acts 2:11-13), Peter quickly responded by citing this prophecy concerning the Spirit and prefacing his defense by stating, "**this is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel ..." (Acts 2:16). It was not a matter of **intoxication** but of **inspiration!** However, the full import of Peter's quotation of Joel has generated no small discussion. What exactly was the nature of the correspondence between "**this**" in Acts 2 and "**that**" in the prophecy of Joel 2? Many suggestions concerning the relationship of these two passages have been expressed....Of the many variations which are voiced, most seem to fall into one of the following three categories:

### THE NORMAL-FULFILLMENT VIEW

Some teach that Acts 2 is a complete accomplishment of Joel's prophecy and that Peter's citation of the prophet is in the normal sense of fulfilment. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place as prophesied and the Church has replaced Israel in the programme of God and no further or future fulfilment need be expected. Many who take this view see the judgments, when the sun and moon will be darkened and the earth will shake, as metaphorical of severe disturbances in society and nature, and as having been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in ad 70.

### THE NON-FULFILLMENT VIEW

Such is the opinion of C. C. Ryrie: "Peter was not saying that the prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost or even that it was partially

fulfilled". Those who agree with this have strongly emphasised that Peter deliberately avoided any mention of "**fulfillment**". In Acts 2:16 he did not say this "**fulfilled** that which was spoken by the prophet Joel". He carefully says, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel". This is quite a contrast with Peter's remark in the previous chapter where, referring to Judas and Psalm 69, he said, "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs **have been fulfilled**" (Acts 1:16). **In other words Peter is indicating analogy not fulfillment.** The parallel is that both in Joel and Acts there is an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit evidenced by supernatural effects. There is no mention in Joel of speaking in tongues but there is mention of seeing visions and dreaming dreams. The two situations were not equal in all respects but did share this common feature of the pouring out of the Spirit and its visible proof. Fulfillment awaits a coming day of millennial blessing. Thus Peter is not confusing two dispensations, rather he is comparing two blessings.

## THE NEAR-FULFILLMENT VIEW

Others, while rejecting option (a), feel that option (b) does not allow for the full force of Peter's language. He does not say *this is like that ...* or, *this is an illustration of that ...*. His words are so emphatic that it is difficult to completely deny some sense of fulfillment in Peter's language. That there was "a" fulfillment of Joel's words they do not deny, but this does not preclude a further fulfillment in a later time frame.

## FOUR CONSIDERATIONS

In choosing between, or in combining, the above options the following four considerations need to be kept in mind.

**First**, any opinion which tends toward the view that [the Church has replaced Israel](#) must be rejected. Such [supercessionism](#), though popular in much preaching and in many publications, does not stand the test of Scriptural examination. The cumulative testimony of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, both prophet and apostle, is that "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Romans 11:2-[note](#)). Though Israel and the church may share blessings this is totally distinct from the transfer of blessing.

**Second**, it is vital to notice that Peter, by the Holy Spirit, makes some changes to the quotation from Joel and introduces explanatory clauses which are not found in the Hebrew text of Joel 2 or in the Septuagint Greek translation. The most remarkable of these changes is where Peter replaces the "**afterward**" ("after this") of Joel 2:28 with "**in the last days**". (ED: See discussion of Last Days) The latter is an expression which denotes the great age of Messianic fulfillment. The outpouring is a signal indicating that this end time era has arrived and the New Testament often associates the events of Christ's first coming with the "**last days**" (Acts 2:17). Peter is not affirming that this outpouring will never happen again. (ED: NOR IS HE SAYING THAT THE SPIRIT WILL NOT BE POURED OUT ON EVERY PERSON BORN AGAIN DURING THE MESSIANIC AGE WHICH OVERLAPS WITH THE CHURCH AGE).

**Third**, in the quotation from the ancient prophet three items are predicted as belonging to "**the last days**". (1) The Spirit will be poured out, (2) supernatural signs will happen on earth and sky, and (3) salvation will be granted to those whom the Lord shall call (ED: AND WHO CALL ON THE LORD). It is noteworthy that Peter highlights the first and third of these items in his message. The Spirit is in evidence and in Acts 2:39 he announces the salvation promise to "as many as the Lord our God shall call". **He does not elaborate the second of the three predictions for the simple reason that this part of the prophecy received no fulfillment at Pentecost nor since.** Such a fulfillment awaits the judgments which will accompany the "great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31). It is a well recognized feature that Old Testament prophecy does not always distinguish between events connected with the two comings of the Lord Jesus (ED: THE FIRST COMING INAUGURATING THE "MESSIANIC AGE" AND THE SECOND COMING THE "DAY OF THE LORD" WITH ITS "COSMIC CHAOS").

**Fourth**, it is also worth remembering that while Joel's prophecy did anticipate the outpouring of the Spirit on "all flesh", the Old Testament prophet made no mention of the fact that simultaneous with this outpouring there would be a baptism into one body. This truth of the church as one body was a revelation unique to the New Testament and formed no part of Old Testament prediction. It may well be that on the lips of Peter the expression "all flesh" had a wider connotation than in the Old Testament prophet. Certainly, in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10) Peter was to witness this blessing as inclusive of Gentiles.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that Peter sees in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost a preliminary fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (some speak of a partial fulfillment, but this is something of a contradiction in terms; preliminary is less objectionable). The "last days" have already commenced (ED: WITH CHRIST'S FIRST COMING) and they will continue until the Second Coming of Christ, at which time there will be a further outpouring of the Holy Spirit (ED: ESPECIALLY ON ISRAEL - SEE Zechariah



12:10ff-note). Price puts it succinctly: "Pentecost fulfills Joel's prediction about the coming of the Spirit. It does not exhaust it, however". It must have been quite startling to Peter's audience to be told, not only that the Spirit had been poured out, but that the one responsible for this outpouring of blessing was none other than "that same Jesus whom ye have crucified" and whom God had made "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Whether it is the Savior's exaltation as the risen Christ in this era, or as the reigning Christ in the age to come, His exaltation in both periods will be demonstrated by the supernatural effusion of the Holy Spirit. ([What the Bible Teaches – Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah](#) - recommended little known resource from scholars in the United Kingdom. )

#### Joel 2:29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

- 1Co 12:13 Ga 3:28 Col 3:11

**In those days** - In those days when Israel's **son's and daughters will prophesy," in those days** when God displays **wonders in the sky...the sun...the moon**, (Joel 2:30-31), **in those days** preceding **the great and awesome Day of the LORD**. (Joel 2:31)

**Garrett** - The major characteristic of the outpouring of the Spirit is its universality. All the people of God receive the Spirit. The text specifically erases the major social distinctions of the ancient world: gender, age, and economic status. In an era in which men (not women), the old (not the young), and the landowners (not slaves) ruled society, Joel explicitly rejected all such distinctions as criteria for receiving the Holy Spirit. For Paul the fulfillment of this text is that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, and neither slave nor free (Gal 3:28). In this text, however, the Spirit is universal in that he is given to all Israel (cf. Ezek 39:29; Zech 12:10) rather than to all humanity (note "your sons and daughters ... your old men ... your young men"; italics added). This does not mean, however, that Joel altogether excluded Gentiles from participation in the kingdom of God. Rather, speaking to his own dispirited generation, he emphasized that Israel and not some other nation would have this great proof that God is among them. From the biblical perspective the Gentiles' reception of the Spirit does not mean that God is no longer God of Israel but that Gentiles have submitted to Israel's God. In summary, for Joel the gift of the Spirit to Israel was vindication of their status as the people of God as well as the source of their power to reconstitute as a community of obedience under God's favor. The surprising turn of events in the New Testament (Acts 10:45) has not invalidated that vision but has extended it. (NAC)

**Charles Feinberg** states "There is no recorded case in the Old Testament where the gift of prophecy was granted to a slave. In the latter days, however, the fond desire of Moses (Nu 11:29) will be realized. The dreams, visions, and prophecy spoken of here are the three modes mentioned in Numbers 12:6. Note that verse 29 reiterates the same truth given in verse 28: "I will pour out my Spirit." The time element is also repeated. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

**Keil and Delitzsch** have an interesting comment on the outpouring of the Spirit on servants or slaves - The outpouring of the Spirit upon slaves (men-servants and maidens) is connected by *vegam*, as being something very extraordinary, and under existing circumstances not to be expected. Not a single case occurs in the whole of the Old Testament of a slave receiving the gift of prophecy. Amos, indeed, was a poor shepherd servant, but not an actual slave. And the communication of this gift to slaves was irreconcilable with the position of slaves under the Old Testament. Consequently even the Jewish expositors could not reconcile themselves to this announcement. The lxx, by rendering it *π το ς δο λους μου κα π τ ς δο λας μου*, have put servants of God in the place of the slaves of men; and the Pharisees refused to the *χλος* even a knowledge of the law (John 7:49). The gospel has therefore also broken the fetters of slavery (Ed: Compare Paul's words in Col 3:11-[note](#) on the radical transformation of the Gospel on its recipients producing "a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."). (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament)

**Servants** (05650) ('**ebed** from '**abad** = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant. Slavery in Israel amounted to indentured servitude. A fellow Israelite could not be held indefinitely against his will. In fact, his time of service was limited to 6 yr (Ex 21:2). The master could be punished if evil intent against the slave was proven (Ex 21:14) or if the slave died (Ex 21:20). These types of servants held a position of honor (Ge 24:2ff; 41:12, 15:2).

#### Joel 2:30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke.

- **I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth:** Mt 24:29 Mk 13:24 Lu 21:11,25,26 Ac 2:19,20 Rev 6:12-17
- **Blood, fire and columns of smoke:** Ge 19:28 Jos 8:20 Jud 20:38,40 Song 3:6 Rev 18:9,18

## THE COMING OF CHRIST

**I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke** - Cosmic signs are clearly linked with the future Day of the LORD and the events he has just described in the previous verses.

Acts 2:16-21 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

17 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:28**) 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS ;

18 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:29**) EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

19 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:30**) 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

20 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:31**) 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

21 (**PETER IS QUOTING Joel 2:32**) 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

**Comment:** Note that Peter is quoting from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew text. Most of the NT quotes from the OT are taken from the Septuagint, which certainly underscores the authenticity and usefulness of the Septuagint which I fear many Bible students have largely neglected as a source to aid their study of the Old Testament Scriptures.

**Keil and Delitzsch** - Judgment upon all nations goes side by side with the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The wonders which God will give in the heavens and upon earth are the forerunners of judgment. Mōphethīm (see at Exodus 4:21) are extraordinary and marvelous natural phenomena. The wonders on earth are mentioned first, in Joel 2:30b; then in Joel 2:31 those in the heavens.

**Blood and fire** recall to mind the plagues which fell upon Egypt as signs of the judgment: the blood, the changing of the water of the Nile into blood (Ex 7:17); the **fire**, the balls of fire which fell to the earth along with the hail (Ex 9:24). **Blood** and **fire** point to bloodshed and war. Timrōth 'âshân ("**columns of smoke**") signifies cloud-pillars (here and in Song 3:6)... This sign has its type in the descent of Jehovah upon Sinai, at which the whole mountain smoked, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a smelting-furnace (Exodus 19:18). We have not to think, therefore, of columns of cloud ascending from basins of fire, carried in front of caravans or armies on the march to show the way (see at Song of Sol. 3:6), but of pillars of cloud, which roll up from burning towns in time of war (Isaiah 9:17). (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Volume 10: The Minor Prophets)

**Joel 2:31** "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

- **The sun will be turned into darkness** : Joe 2:10 3:1,15 Isa 13:9,10 34:4,5 Mt 24:29 27:45 Mk 13:24,25 Lu 21:25 Rev 6:12,13
- **Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes** Zep 1:14-16 Mal 4:1,5

## COSMIC SIGNS PRECEDE THE DAY OF THE LORD

**The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood** - A similar description is given by John describing the Lamb's breaking of the sixth seal on the Scroll ("the title deed to the earth")

I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the **sun** became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole **moon** became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Revelation 6:12-13 [note](#)

Jesus described similar signs that would accompany His return

Matthew 24:29 [commentary](#) "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**MacArthur** - Such phenomena are a common feature of Day of the Lord prophecy (see Isa 13:9, 10; Eze 32:7, 8; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Am 8:9). The ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies takes place during the time of the Beast's reign (Rev 6:12, 13; 8:12). (MacArthur Study Bible)

Mark 13:24-26 "But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, 25 AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "Then (WHEN? WHEN THEY SEE THESE COSMIC SIGNS) they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.

Luke 21:25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 "Then (WHEN? AFTER THE COSMIC SIGNS JUST DESCRIBED) they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.

**Keil and Delitzsch** - In the heavens **the sun** is darkened, and **the moon** assumes a dull, blood-red appearance. These signs also have their type in the Egyptian plague of darkness (Exodus 10:21ff.). The darkening and extinction of the lights of heaven are frequently mentioned, either as harbingers of approaching judgment, or as signs of the breaking of the day of judgment (it was so in Joel 2:2-note, Joel 2:10-note, and is so again in Joel 3:14-note: see also Isaiah 13:10; 34:4; Jeremiah 4:23; Ezekiel 32:1-8; Amos 8:9; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25). What we have to think of here, is not so much periodically returning phenomena of nature, or eclipses of the sun and moon, as extraordinary (ED: SUPERNATURAL) obscurations of the sun and moon, such as frequently occur as accompaniments to great catastrophes in human history (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Volume 10: The Minor Prophets)

**Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes**- Do not miss the context, for although the **Day of the LORD** ([SEE SCHEMATIC ABOVE](#)) is a Day of when God's wrath is poured out, it is also a Day of mercy for all those who call on the Name of the LORD, for as the next verse says, they will be delivered from the wrath of God.

**Life Application Study Bible** - In this Day of judgment and catastrophe, therefore, some will be saved (cf Joel 2:32). God's intention is not to destroy but to heal and to save. However, we must accept His salvation or we will certainly perish with the unrepentant.

- [Will the sun really be turned to darkness and the moon to blood \(Joel 2:31\)?](#)

**Joel 2:32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.**

- **that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered** Ps 50:15 Jer 33:3 Zec 13:9 Acts 2:21 Ro 10:11-14 1Co 1:2
- **For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem:** Isa 46:13 59:20,21 Ob 1:17,21 Joh 4:22 Ro 11:26 Heb 12:22
- **Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls** Isa 10:22 11:11,16 Jer 31:7 Mic 4:6,7 5:3,7,8 Joh 10:16 Ac 2:39 15:17 Ro 8:28-30 9:24,27 11:5,7 2Th 2:13,14

## WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF JEHOVAH WILL BE SAVED

The English pronoun "**whoever**" means someone or anyone who does a particular thing or is in a particular situation; no matter who; regardless of who; whatever person : no matter who. In other words the door of salvation by grace through faith is wide open no matter who you are, where you were born, what race you are, what horrendous sin you have committed, etc, etc. The blood of Jesus is sufficient and [efficacious](#) to provide full atonement for the sins of whoever calls on His Name. Have you called on His Name?

**And it will come about** - When will it "come about?" Primarily the context is the destructive Day of the LORD. In a sense every day is a day of destruction to an unbeliever, for if they die that day, they will go to eternal destruction (see eternal punishment). But if they cry out before they die, their day of destruction mercifully and miraculously becomes their day of deliverance! And on every repentant soul God will pour out His Spirit (Joel 2:28).

The psalmist echoes the truth in Joel 2:32 writing

"Then I called upon the name of the LORD. "O LORD, I beseech You, **save** ([malat](#); Lxx = [rhuomai](#) = rescue

from severe, acute danger!) my life!" (Ps 116:4)

**Keil and Delitzsch** - it is only by the world and its children that the terrible day of the Lord is to be feared; to the children of God it brings redemption (Luke 21:28). Whoever calls upon the name of Jehovah, i.e., the believing worshippers of the Lord, will be exempted from the judgment. "Calling upon the name of Jehovah" signifies not only the public worship of God, but inward worship also, in which the confession of the mouth is also an expression of the heart. (cf Ro 10:9-10-note)...Even the **Rabbins**, with the exception of R. Mose Hakkohen in Aben Ezra, who sees only a reference to some event in Joel's own time, **expect the fulfillment to take place in the future on the advent of the Messiah** (Yarchi, Kimchi, Abarb.)....The outpouring of the Spirit of God, or the communication of it in all (His) fullness to the covenant nation (Keil is referring to the literal nation of Israel), without any limitation whatever, is a standing mark (**ED: A SIGN OR INDICATION**) of the Messianic times (cf Isaiah 32:15 with Isa 11:9+ and Isa 54:13) or New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:33-34-note; Ezekiel 36:26ff-note.; Zechariah 12:10-note) (**ED: SEE [New Covenant in the Old Testament](#)**). (Ibid)

It is notable that Joel 2:32 is quoted twice in the New Testament, once by Peter at Pentecost and once by Paul in the book of Romans. Notice that in both quotations the pronouns "everyone" and "whoever" indicate that God has opened the door of salvation not only to Jews but to Gentiles, as the context of Paul's quotation makes crystal clear when he states in Ro 10:12 that there is **no distinction between Jew and Greek!**

Acts 2:21+ 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT **EVERYONE** WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

Ro 10:12-13+ For there is **no distinction** between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is **Lord of all**, abounding in riches for **all who call on Him**; for "**WHOEVER** (JEW OR GENTILE) WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

**That whoever calls on the Name of the LORD will be delivered**- This has to be one of the greatest promises in all of Scripture! All of us who have been delivered from the wrath to come (1 Th 1:10+) by grace through faith, have experienced Jehovah's supernatural salvation on the day we called on the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ, our Deliverer. In other words we were included in the "everyone" and "whoever" just quoted above in the NT passages from Acts and Romans.

The prophet Zechariah alludes to the whoever among Israel that call upon His Name...

"And I will bring the third part through the fire (THE BELIEVING REMNANT OF ISRAEL WHO COME THROUGH THE "FIRE" OF [Jacob's Distress](#)), Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. **They will call on My name** (THEY ARE PART OF THE "**WHOEVER**" of Joel 2:32), And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW COVENANT - cp Jer 31:31-35, especially Jer 31:33+) (Zechariah 13:9+)

And so in Joel 2:32 a Jewish prophet is speaking to Jewish hearers and telling them that they too can be delivered from the wrath of the Day of the LORD by their Strong Deliverer. **Paul** says it this way Romans 11

I say then, God has not rejected His people (HE IS SPEAKING OF HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE - EVEN THOUGH THEY FOR THE MOST PART HAD REJECTED HIM), has He? May it never be! (PERISH THE THOUGHT ALL YOU WHO THINK OR WHO TEACH THAT GOD IS FINISHED WITH ISRAEL AND THAT ALL OF THE PROMISES OF ISRAEL NOW HAVE PASSED ON TO THE CHURCH! AWAY WITH THAT THOUGHT PAUL WOULD SAY!) For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people (CHOSEN PEOPLE) whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah (A JEWISH PROPHET), how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND (JEWISH) MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant (OF JEWISH PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN MESSIAH) according to God's gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works (LIKE THE PHARISEES AND SO MANY OTHER PIOUS JEWS HAVE BEEN HOPING TO ATTAIN RIGHTEOUS STANDING BEFORE GOD), otherwise grace is no longer grace (GRACE IS FREE FAVOR, WORKS EARN FAVOR, THE FIRST GLORIFIES GOD, THE LATTER GLORIFIES MAN AND GOD WILL SHARE HIS GLORY WITH NO MAN!)....(Ro 11:26) and so all Israel will be saved (ALL THAT BELIEVE IN MESSIAH - SEE Zechariah 12:10-14-note Zech 13:1-note and Zech 13:8-9-note); just as it is written (AND STANDS IMMUTABLY WRITTEN!), "THE DELIVERER ([rhuomai](#)) WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE ([apostrepho](#)) UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." 27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY ([aphaireo](#)) THEIR SINS." 28 From the standpoint of the Gospel they are enemies for your sake, but

from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are **IRREVOCABLE** ([ametameletos](#) - THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO "WIGGLE ROOM," NO "FINE PRINT," AT THE BOTTOM OF GOD'S COVENANT AGREEMENT, FOR THOSE WHO TEACH THAT GOD HAS REVOKED HIS COVENANT PROMISES MADE LITERALLY WITH LITERAL ISRAEL AND [REPLACED LITERAL ISRAEL WITH "SPIRITUAL ISRAEL"](#) AKA, THE CHURCH! THIS FALSE DOCTRINE CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF GOD'S PLUMB-LINE, THE WORD OF TRUTH! IT IS SURELY THE DOCTRINE OF DEMONS!). Ro 11:1-6+ and Romans 11:26-29+)

**Will be delivered** ([04422](#))(**malat**) means to escape (as if by slipperiness), to release, deliver, rescue. Notice the first uses of **malat** in Ge 19:17, 19, 20, 22 in the context of escaping God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. So just as God provided **away of escape** (or deliverance) from the day of His wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah, here in Joel 2:32 He provides **away of escape** from the pouring out of His wrath on the ungodly world in the [Day of the LORD](#)! We see a similar use of one escaping with their physical life when Saul was trying to kill David and "David fled and **escaped** that night...Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and **escaped**." (1 Sa 19:10, 12) And later David said "There is nothing better for me than to **escape** into the land of the Philistines....and I will **escape** from his hand." (1 Sa 27:1)

"Sparks of fire **leap forth**" in (Job 41:19) gives us a great word picture of **escape** as sparks leap out of the fire which is especially apropos in the context of the use in Joel 2:32 which describes the **way of escape** from the **Day of the LORD** which is likened to a fire by Joel (Joel 2:3-[note](#)) and by the prophet Zephaniah who writes that "Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the **day of the LORD'S wrath**; And all the earth will be devoured In the **fire of His jealousy**, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth. (Zeph 1:18)

Ps 124:7 uses **malat** twice to give us another word picture of a bird escaping the trappers "Our soul has **escaped** as a bird out of the snare of the trapper; the snare is broken and we have **escaped**." (Ps. 124:7). In Job three times **malat** describes escape from some type of calamity (Job 1:15-17, 19). **Malat** describes rescue from death in Esther 4:13; Ps. 89:48; Amos 2:14, 15. In Proverbs we read "the descendants of the righteous **will be delivered**" (Pr 11:21) and "he who walks wisely **will be delivered**" (Pr 28:26) which contrasts with "he who tells lies **will not escape**." (Pr 19:5)

Psalms 107:20 says God "sent His word and healed them, and **delivered** (**malat**) them from their destructions."

Psalms 116:4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I beseech You, save my life!"

I love God's Word - This same Hebrew verb **malat** is used by Daniel in his description of the [Day of the LORD](#), writing

Now at that time (WHAT TIME? YOU HAVE TO GO BACK AND READ WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING SINCE Da 11:36-45-[note](#)) Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people (MICHAEL'S "ASSIGNMENT" HAS ALWAYS BEEN "ISRAEL"), will arise. And there will be a time of distress (SEE SIMILAR WORDS BY JESUS - Mt 24:21+; SEE ALSO [Great Tribulation](#) AND [Time of Jacob's Distress](#)) such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time (THIS SHOULD SOUND FAMILIAR BY NOW - RECALL JOEL'S SIMILAR "TIME PHRASE" IN Joel 2:2-[SEE COMMENTS](#) IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD); and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, **will be rescued** (Hebrew = **malat**; = Lxx [[Theodotion](#)] = [sozo](#)). (Daniel 12:1-commentary)

**Carr** has an interesting note on **malat** - malaṭ is one word of the cluster that includes gā'al, yāsha', nāṣal, plālaṭ and shālōm. These words are translated in the LXX by several Greek words: sōzō (including diasōzō and anasōsō) about seventy times, hryomai eight times, and exaireō five times. This distribution suggests that they have similar meanings with somewhat different emphases. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Malat** - 93x in 85v - certainly rescue(1), deliver(7), delivered(9), escape(26), escaped(25), escapes(3), gave birth(1), get away(1), lay(1), leap forth(1), left undisturbed(1), rescue(2), rescued(4), retain(1), save(8), saved(2).

Gen. 19:17; Gen. 19:19; Gen. 19:20; Gen. 19:22; Jdg. 3:26; Jdg. 3:29; 1 Sam. 19:10; 1 Sam. 19:11; 1 Sam. 19:12; 1 Sam. 19:17; 1 Sam. 19:18; 1 Sam. 20:29; 1 Sam. 22:1; 1 Sam. 22:20; 1 Sam. 23:13; 1 Sam. 27:1; 1 Sam. 30:17; 2 Sam. 1:3; 2 Sam. 4:6; 2 Sam. 19:5; 2 Sam. 19:9; 1 Ki. 1:12; 1 Ki. 18:40; 1 Ki. 19:17; 1 Ki. 20:20; 2 Ki. 10:24; 2 Ki. 19:37; 2 Ki. 23:18; 2 Chr. 16:7; Est. 4:13; Job 1:15; Job 1:16; Job 1:17; Job 1:19; Job 6:23; Job 19:20; Job 20:20; Job 22:30; Job 29:12; Job 41:19; Ps. 22:5; Ps. 33:17; Ps. 41:1; Ps. 89:48; Ps. 107:20; Ps. 116:4; Ps. 124:7; Prov. 11:21; Prov. 19:5; Prov. 28:26; Eccl. 7:26; Eccl. 8:8; Eccl. 9:15; Isa. 20:6; Isa. 31:5; Isa. 34:15; Isa. 37:38; Isa. 46:2; Isa. 46:4; Isa. 49:24; Isa. 49:25; Isa. 66:7; Jer. 32:4; Jer. 34:3; Jer. 38:18; Jer. 38:23; Jer. 39:18; Jer. 41:15; Jer. 46:6; Jer. 48:6; Jer. 48:8; Jer. 48:19; Jer. 51:6; Jer. 51:45; Ezek. 17:15; Ezek. 17:18; Ezek. 33:5; Dan. 11:41; Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:32; Amos 2:14; Amos 2:15; Amos 9:1; Zech. 2:7; Mal. 3:15

**Michael Bentley** asks "But does this mean that everyone will be saved in the end? No, because this is not the teaching of Scripture. Writing about Mammoth Hot Springs in the Yellowstone National Park, USA, Theo Laetsch stated, 'A thirsty man may stand at the brink of Mammoth Springs and die of thirst if he refuses to drink water. A man may be offered the full measure of the Holy Spirit and his sanctifying power; he will remain in spiritual death and die eternal death if he refuses, rejects, this gift.' When the Bible states that 'everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved', it means that all those who call in faith, believing on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be delivered from hell. This does not mean that grace is only available for those who feel so frightened that they call on the Lord to have mercy on them. Throughout the Old Testament, we find that it was those who acknowledged that the Lord was their God who 'called upon him'. During the days of Seth 'men began to call on the name of the LORD' (Gen. 4:26), and Abram 'built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the Lord' (Gen. 12:8)." (Opening Up Joel)

**For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape**- Mount Zion in this context would seem to refer to the smaller area of the Temple Mount which is present in the confines of the city of Jerusalem. And so even though Joel 2:3 states "nothing at all escapes (peletah)" here God does provide an "escape clause" so to speak. The word **foreescape** here in Joel 2:32 is the same as in Joel 2:3-note which also uses peletah. It is also worth noting that the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **peletah** in both Joel 2:3 and Joel 2:32 with the great verb **anasozo** which is derived from **sozo** which commonly used in the NT to describe spiritual salvation. So while it is true that **nothing at all escapes** the devastation in the Day of the LORD, God provides a way of escape to all who call **on the name of the LORD!** Glory! Hallelujah! Our God is mighty to save (see this topic) and in the midst of wrath, He remembers mercy! (cf Habakkuk 3:2-note)

Why this focus on Mt Zion and Jerusalem? Because in the future Day of the LORD, the world will come against God's holy city in a futile attempt to completely annihilate Israel (cf Joel 3:2-note, Joel 3:12-note, cf Zech 14:2-note). The world will be defeated and Messiah will establish His earthly kingdom ruling from Zion (today known as Temple Mount) in Jerusalem as described by Joel

(Context = Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision Joel 3:14-15) The LORD roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel. Then (after the Gentiles are defeated - cf [Campaign of Armageddon](#)) you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will pass through it no more. (Joel 3:16-17-note)

**Mount Zion** (06726) See [in depth discussion of Tsiyyon](#) above.

**Keil and Delitzsch** note that **peletah** is "not deliverance, but that which has escaped, or, in a collective sense, those who have escaped the judgment, as the synonym **serīdim** (see [sarid](#)), which follows, clearly shows." (Ibid)

**Escape** (06413)(**peletah** from **palat** = deliver, rescue) is a feminine noun meaning deliverance, something delivered, a remnant (2 Ki 19:30-31). Jacob split his group into two camps so that if Esau attacked one, the other could escape (Gen. 32:8). **TWOT** adds that "those who have escaped do not owe their survival to simply fortuitous circumstances or luck. Their survival is only of God's mercy. As a matter of fact, **pelēṭāh** means not only "escape" but also "deliverance," as in 2 Chr 12:7. "In a little while I will grant them deliverance." Cf. also the statement of Joseph (Ge 45:7): "God sent me before you to make sure that your race would have 'survivors' in the land." The goodness of God in preserving a **remnant**, rather than liquidating the race, is especially emphasized in Ezra 9:8, 13-15." See also a [redeemed remnant](#).

**Isaiah** describes those who **escape** the wrath of God in **the Day of the LORD**..

In that day (THIS IS THE "GOOD SIDE" OF THE DAY OF THE LORD - "THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT" SO TO SPEAK - [IN THE MILLENNIUM](#)) the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the **survivors** (peletah) of Israel. (Isaiah 4:2-commentary)

The prophet **Obadiah** also describes **escape** in "**the day of the LORD** (which) draws near on all the nations." (Obadiah 1:15)

"But on [Mount Zion](#) (NOTE THIS IS EXACTLY THE SITE JOEL MENTIONS) there will be those who **escape** (peletah; Lxx uses [soteria](#)), and it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions. (Obadiah 1:17)

**Comment:** The Hebrew word **peletah** is translated in the Septuagint with the noun [soteria](#) which in the NT describes salvation or deliverance, especially rescue from danger as with Noah who "in reverence prepared an ark for the **salvation** ([soteria](#)) of his household." (Heb 11:7). [Soteria](#) is the word that describes the deliverance brought by Jesus Christ Luke recording "To give to His people the knowledge of **salvation** ([soteria](#)) by the forgiveness of their sins," (Luke 1:77-note)

**Survivors** (08300)(**sarid** from **sarad** = to escape, to flee) is a masculine noun which means those who survive or remain after a judgment or a battle. It is a person who has fled from a battle, that is, a "survivor." In Job 20:21 **sarid** describes physical things that

had not been devoured. All other uses describe those who escape an enemy onslaught. In the negative sense sarid describes situations where there are no survivors (Nu 21:35; Josh 10:28; Jer 42:17).

**Keil and Delitzsch** note that "Sârîd is one who is left after a judgment or a battle; hence in Jeremiah 42:17 and Joshua 8:22 it is connected with pâlîit (one who has escaped from destruction), so that here serîdîm and peletah are actually alike, the serîdîm being just the escaped ones upon Mount Zion."

**Sarid** - 28x in 28v - left(1), remains(1), remnant(2), survived(1), survivor(13), survivors(8), who survived(2).

Nu 21:35; Num. 24:19; Deut. 2:34; Deut. 3:3; Jos. 8:22; Jos. 10:20; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:30; Jos. 10:33; Jos. 10:37; Jos. 10:39; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:8; Jdg. 5:13; 2 Ki. 10:11; Job 18:19; Job 20:21; Job 20:26; Job 27:15; Isa. 1:9; Jer. 31:2; Jer. 42:17; Jer. 44:14; Jer. 47:4; Lam. 2:22; Joel 2:32; Obad. 1:14; Obad. 1:18

**Whom the LORD calls** - Those who call on the Name of the LORD are those whom He has called. See [What is the effectual calling/call?](#)

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**Spurgeon** - "Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, for there will be an escape for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the Lord promised, among the survivors the Lord calls." In the worst times that can ever happen, there is still salvation for people. When day turns to night and life becomes death, when the staff of life is broken and the hope of all has fled, there still remains in God, in the person of his dear Son, deliverance to all those who will call on the name of the Lord. We must call on the true God, not on an idol or an image or an impression of our minds. We must call on the living God—call on him who reveals himself in the Bible—call on him who reveals himself in the person of his dear Son. For whosoever will call on this God will be saved. This way of salvation—calling on the name of the Lord—glorifies God. He asks nothing of us but that we ask everything of him. We are the beggars and he is the benefactor. We are in trouble and he is our deliverer. All we have to do is trust him and beg of him. This is easy enough. This puts the matter into the hands of the Lord and takes it out of our hands.

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#### **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.