Joel

Locusts Will Destroy the Crops
1 Joel son of Pethuel received this message from the LORD:
2 Leaders, listen to this message!
   Listen to me, all you people who live in the land.
   Has anything like this ever happened in your life?
   Did anything like this happen during your fathers’ lifetime?
3 You will tell these things to your children,
   and your children will tell their children,
   and your grandchildren will tell the people of the next generation.
4 What the cutting locust has left,
   the swarming locust has eaten.
   And what the swarming locust has left,
   the hopping locust has eaten.
   And what the hopping locust has left,
   the destroying locust has eaten!

The Locusts—A Powerful Army
5 Drunks, wake up and cry!
   All of you who drink wine, cry
   because your sweet wine is finished.
   You will not taste it again.
6 A powerful nation came to attack my land.
   Its soldiers were too many to count.
   Its weapons were as sharp as a lion’s teeth
   and as powerful as a lion’s jaw.
7 It destroyed my grapevine.
   Its good vines withered and died.
   It destroyed my fig tree,
   stripped off the bark and threw it away.

The People Cry
8 Cry like a young woman crying
   because the man she was ready to marry has died.
9 Priests, servants of the LORD, cry
   because there will be no more grain
   and drink offerings in the LORD’s Temple.
10 The fields are ruined.
   Even the ground is crying
   because the harvest in the field is ruined.
11 Be sad, farmers!
   Cry loudly for the grapes,
   for the wheat, and for the barley,
   because the harvest in the field is ruined.
12 The vines have become dry,
   and the fig tree is dying.
   All the trees in the field—
   the pomegranate, the palm, and the apple—have withered.
   And happiness among the people has died.
13 Priests, put on sackcloth and cry loudly.
   Servants of the altar, cry loudly.
   Servants of my God, you will sleep in sackcloth,
   because there will be no more grain
   and drink offerings in God’s Temple.

The Terrible Destruction of the Locusts
14 Tell the people that there will be a special time of fasting.
   Call them together for a special meeting.
   Bring the leaders and everyone living in the land together
   at the Temple of the LORD your God, and pray
   to the LORD.
15 Be sad because the LORD’s special day is near.
   At that time punishment will come
like an attack from God All-Powerful.  

Our food is gone. Joy and happiness are gone from the Temple of our God.  

We planted seeds, but the seeds became dry and dead lying in the soil. Our plants are dry and dead. Our barns are empty and falling down.  

The animals are hungry and groaning. The herds of cattle wander around confused because they have no grass to eat. The sheep are dying.  

Wild animals also need your help. The streams are dry—there is no water! Fire has changed our green fields into a desert.

The Coming Day of the Lord

Blow the trumpet on Zion.  
Shout a warning on my holy mountain.  
Let all the people who live in the land shake with fear.  
The LORD’s special day is coming; it is near.  
It will be a dark, gloomy day.  
It will be a dark and cloudy day.  
At sunrise you will see the army spread over the mountains.  
It will be a great and powerful army.  
There has never been anything like it before, and there will never be anything like it again.  
The army will destroy the land like a burning fire.  
In front of them the land will be like the Garden of Eden.  
Behind them the land will be like an empty desert.  
Nothing will escape them.  
They look like horses.  
They run like war horses.  
Listen to them.  
It is like the noise of chariots riding over the mountains.  
It is like the noise of flames burning the chaff.  

They are a powerful people, who are ready for war.  
Before this army, people shake with fear.  
Their faces become pale from fear.  
The soldiers run fast.  
They climb over the walls.  
Each soldier marches straight ahead.  
They don’t move from their path.  
They don’t trip each other.  
Each soldier walks in his own path.  
If one of the soldiers is hit and falls down, the others keep right on marching.  
They run to the city.  
They quickly climb over the wall.  
They climb into the houses.  
They climb through the windows like thieves.  
Before them, earth and sky shake.  
The sun and the moon become dark, and the stars stop shining.  
The LORD calls loudly to his army.  
His camp is very large.  
The army obeys his commands.  
His army is very powerful.  
The LORD’S special day is a great and terrible day.  
No one can stop it.

The Lord Tells the People to Change

This is the LORD’s message:  
“Now come back to me with all your heart.  
Cry and mourn, and don’t eat anything!  
Show that you are sad for doing wrong.  
Tear your hearts, not your clothes.”  
Come back to the LORD your God.  
He is kind and merciful.  
He does not become angry quickly.  
He has great love.  
Maybe he will change his mind about the bad punishment he planned.

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14 Who knows, maybe he will change his mind and leave behind a blessing for you. Then you can give grain and drink offerings to the LORD your God.

Pray to the Lord
15 Blow the trumpet at Zion. Call for a special meeting. Call for a special time of fasting.
16 Bring the people together. Call for a special meeting. Bring together the old men, the children, and the small babies still at their mothers' breasts. Let the bride and her new husband come from their bedroom.
17 Let the priests, the LORD's servants, cry between the porch and the altar. All of them should say this: “LORD, have mercy on your people. Don’t let your people be put to shame. Don’t let other people tell jokes about your people. Don’t let the other nations laugh at us and say, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

The Lord Will Restore the Land
18 Then the LORD cared very much about his land. He felt sorry for his people.
19 The LORD spoke to his people. He said, “I will send you grain, wine, and oil. You will have plenty. I will not shame you among the nations anymore.
20 No, I will force the people from the north to leave your land and make them go into a dry, empty land. Some of them will go to the eastern sea and some to the western sea. They did such terrible things, but they will be like a dead and rotting body. There will be such a terrible smell!”

The Land Will Be Made New Again
21 Land, don’t be afraid. Be happy and full of joy. The LORD will do great things.
22 Animals of the field, don’t be afraid. The desert pastures will grow grass. The trees will grow fruit. The fig trees and the vines will grow plenty of fruit.
23 So be happy, people of Zion. Be joyful in the LORD your God. He is good and will give you rain. He will send the early rains and the late rains as before.
24 The threshing floors will be filled with wheat, and the barrels will overflow with wine and olive oil.
25 “I, the Lord, sent my army against you. The swarming locusts and the hopping locusts and the destroying locusts and the cutting locusts ate everything you had. But I will pay you back for those years of trouble.
26 Then you will have plenty to eat. You will be full. You will praise the name of the LORD your God. He has done wonderful things for you. My people will never again be ashamed.
27 You will know that I am with Israel. You will know that I am the LORD your God. There is no other God. My people will never be ashamed again.”

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God Will Give His Spirit to All People

28 “After this,
I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will have dreams,
and your young men will see visions.

29 In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on servants, both men and women.
30 I will work wonders in the sky and on
the earth.
There will be blood, fire, and thick
smoke.
31 The sun will be changed into darkness,
and the moon will be as red as
blood.
Then the great and fearful day of the
Lord will come!
32 And everyone who trusts in the Lord\textsuperscript{a}
will be saved.
There will be survivors on Mount
Zion and in Jerusalem,
just as the Lord said.
Yes, those left alive will be the ones
the Lord has called.

Judah’s Enemies Will Be Punished

3 “Yes, at that time I will bring back the
people of Judah and Jerusalem from
captivity. \textsuperscript{2}I will also gather all the nations
together. I will bring all these nations
down into Jehoshaphat Valley.\textsuperscript{b} There I
will judge them. Those nations scattered
my people, Israel. They forced them to
live in other nations, so I will punish those
nations. They divided up my land. \textsuperscript{3}They
threw lots for my people. They sold boys
to buy a prostitute, and they sold girls to
buy wine to drink.

4 “Tyre! Sidon! All of you areas of Phi-
listia! You are not important to me!\textsuperscript{c} Are
you punishing me for something I did?
You might think that you are punishing me,
but I will soon punish you. \textsuperscript{5}You took
my silver and gold. You took my precious
treasures and put them in your temples.\textsuperscript{d}

6 “You sold the people of Judah and
Jerusalem to the Greeks. That way you
could take them far from their land. \textsuperscript{7}You
sent my people to that faraway place, but
I will bring them back. And I will pun-
ish you for what you did. \textsuperscript{8}I will sell your
sons and daughters to the people of Judah.
Then they will sell them to the faraway
Sabeans.\textsuperscript{e}” This is what the Lord said.

Prepare for War

9 Announce this among the nations:
Prepare for war!
Wake up the strong men!
Let all the men of war come near.
Let them come up!
10 Beat your plows into swords.
Make spears from your pruning
hooks.\textsuperscript{f}
Let the weak man say,
“I am a strong soldier.”
11 All you nations, hurry!
Come together in that place.
Lord, bring your strong soldiers.
12 Wake up, nations!
Come to Jehoshaphat Valley.
There I will sit to judge
all the surrounding nations.
13 Bring the sickle,
because the harvest is ripe.\textsuperscript{g}
Come, walk on the grapes,
because the winepress is full.
The barrels will be full and spilling
over,
because their evil is great.

14 There are many, many people in the
Valley of Decision.\textsuperscript{h}
The Lord’s special day is near in
the Valley of Decision.
15 The sun and the moon will become
dark.

\textsuperscript{a} 2:32 who trusts in the Lord Literally, “who calls on the name
of the Lord,” meaning to show faith in him by worshiping him
or praying to him for help.
\textsuperscript{b} 3:2 Jehoshaphat Valley This name means “The Lord judges.”
\textsuperscript{c} 3:4 You are not important to me Literally, “What are you
to me?”
\textsuperscript{d} 3:5 temples Here, the temples were used to worship idols.
\textsuperscript{e} 3:8 Sabeans A group of people from the Arabian Desert.
\textsuperscript{f} 3:10 pruning hooks These tools were used to prune (cut)
\textsuperscript{g} 3:13 harvest is ripe This time of judgment is compared to
harvest time.
\textsuperscript{h} 3:14 Valley of Decision This is like the name “Jehoshaphat
Valley.”
The stars will stop shining.
16 The LORD God will shout from Zion. He will shout from Jerusalem, and the sky and the earth will shake. But the LORD God will be a safe place for his people. He will be a place of safety for the people of Israel.

Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.
I live on Zion, my holy mountain. Jerusalem will become holy. Strangers will never pass through that city again.

A New Life for Judah Promised
18 “On that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine. The hills will flow with milk, and water will flow through all the empty rivers of Judah. A fountain will come from the LORD’s Temple. It will give water to Acacia Valley.

19 Egypt will be empty. Edom will be an empty wilderness, because they were cruel to the people of Judah. They killed innocent people in their country.

20 But there will always be people living in Judah. People will live in Jerusalem through many generations.

21 Those people killed my people, so I really will punish them!”

The LORD God will live in Zion!

\footnote{3:19 killed innocent people Literally, “shed innocent blood.”}
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