

# Joel

## Locusts Will Destroy the Crops

**1** Joel son of Pethuel received this message from the LORD:

<sup>2</sup> 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?

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> What the cutting locust<sup>a</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> Drunks, wake up and cry! All of you who drink wine, cry because your sweet wine is finished. You will not taste it again.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>8</sup> Cry like a young woman crying because the man she was ready to marry has died.

<sup>9</sup> Priests, servants of the LORD, cry because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in the LORD's Temple.

<sup>10</sup> The fields are ruined. Even the ground is crying because the grain is destroyed; the new wine is dried up, and the olive oil is gone.

<sup>11</sup> Be sad, farmers! Cry loudly for the grapes, for the wheat, and for the barley, because the harvest in the field is ruined.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> Be sad because the LORD's special day is near. At that time punishment will come

<sup>a</sup> **1:4 locust** See "locust" in the Word List. Here, Joel might be talking about an enemy army.

like an attack from God All-Powerful. <sup>16</sup>Our food is gone. Joy and happiness are gone from the Temple of our God. <sup>17</sup>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.

<sup>18</sup>The animals are hungry and groaning. The herds of cattle wander around confused because they have no grass to eat. The sheep are dying.<sup>a</sup> <sup>19</sup>LORD, I am calling to you for help. Fire has changed our green fields into a desert. Flames have burned all the trees in the field. <sup>20</sup>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

**2** <sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> They look like horses.  
They run like war horses.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Before this army, people shake with fear.  
Their faces become pale from fear.

<sup>7</sup> The soldiers run fast.  
They climb over the walls.  
Each soldier marches straight ahead.  
They don't move from their path.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> They run to the city.  
They quickly climb over the wall.  
They climb into the houses.  
They climb through the windows like thieves.

<sup>10</sup> Before them, earth and sky shake.  
The sun and the moon become dark,  
and the stars stop shining.

<sup>11</sup> 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

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> Tear your hearts,  
not your clothes.<sup>b</sup>  
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.

<sup>b</sup> **2:13 Tear your hearts, not your clothes** People tore their clothes to show sadness. Here, God wants the people to feel sad for the bad things they had done.

<sup>a</sup> **1:18 dying** Literally, "being punished."

<sup>14</sup> 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

<sup>15</sup> Blow the trumpet at Zion.  
Call for a special meeting.  
Call for a special time of fasting.  
<sup>16</sup> 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.  
<sup>17</sup> Let the priests, the LORD's servants,  
cry between the porch<sup>a</sup> 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

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD cared very much about his land.  
He felt sorry for his people.  
<sup>19</sup> 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.  
<sup>20</sup> No, I will force the people from the  
north<sup>b</sup> 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

<sup>21</sup> Land, don't be afraid.  
Be happy and full of joy.  
The LORD will do great things.  
<sup>22</sup> 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.  
<sup>23</sup> 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.  
<sup>24</sup> The threshing floors will be filled with  
wheat,  
and the barrels will overflow with  
wine and olive oil.  
<sup>25</sup> "I, the Lord, sent my army against you.  
The swarming locusts and the  
hopping locusts  
and the destroying locusts and the  
cutting locusts<sup>c</sup> ate everything  
you had.  
But I will pay you back  
for those years of trouble.  
<sup>26</sup> 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.  
<sup>27</sup> 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."

<sup>a</sup> 2:17 porch An open area in front of the Temple.

<sup>b</sup> 2:20 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

<sup>c</sup> 2:25 swarming locusts . . . cutting locusts See Joel 1:4.

**God Will Give His Spirit to All People**

<sup>28</sup> “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.

<sup>29</sup> In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women.

<sup>30</sup> I will work wonders in the sky and on the earth.

There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.

<sup>31</sup> 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!

<sup>32</sup> And everyone who trusts in the LORD<sup>a</sup> 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** <sup>1</sup>“Yes, at that time I will bring back the people of Judah and Jerusalem from captivity. <sup>2</sup>I will also gather all the nations together. I will bring all these nations down into Jehoshaphat Valley.<sup>b</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup>They threw lots for my people. They sold boys to buy a prostitute, and they sold girls to buy wine to drink.

<sup>4</sup>“Tyre! Sidon! All of you areas of Philistia! You are not important to me!<sup>c</sup> Are you punishing me for something I did? You might think that you are punishing me, but I will soon punish you. <sup>5</sup>You took

<sup>a</sup> **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.

<sup>b</sup> **3:2 Jehoshaphat Valley** This name means “The Lord judges.”

<sup>c</sup> **3:4 You are not important to me** Literally, “What are you to me?”

my silver and gold. You took my precious treasures and put them in your temples.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>6</sup>“You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks. That way you could take them far from their land. <sup>7</sup>You sent my people to that faraway place, but I will bring them back. And I will punish you for what you did. <sup>8</sup>I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah. Then they will sell them to the faraway Sabaeans.<sup>e</sup>” This is what the LORD said.

**Prepare for War**

<sup>9</sup> 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!

<sup>10</sup> Beat your plows into swords.

Make spears from your pruning hooks.<sup>f</sup>

Let the weak man say,

“I am a strong soldier.”

<sup>11</sup> All you nations, hurry!

Come together in that place.

LORD, bring your strong soldiers.

<sup>12</sup> Wake up, nations!

Come to Jehoshaphat Valley.

There I will sit to judge

all the surrounding nations.

<sup>13</sup> Bring the sickle,

because the harvest is ripe.<sup>g</sup>

Come, walk on the grapes,

because the winepress is full.

The barrels will be full and spilling over,

because their evil is great.

<sup>14</sup> There are many, many people in the Valley of Decision.<sup>h</sup>

The LORD's special day is near in the Valley of Decision.

<sup>15</sup> The sun and the moon will become dark.

<sup>d</sup> **3:5 temples** Here, the temples were used to worship idols.

<sup>e</sup> **3:8 Sabaeans** A group of people from the Arabian Desert.

<sup>f</sup> **3:10 pruning hooks** These tools were used to prune (cut) branches of trees. Read Isa. 2:4.

<sup>g</sup> **3:13 harvest is ripe** This time of judgment is compared to harvest time.

<sup>h</sup> **3:14 Valley of Decision** This is like the name “Jehoshaphat Valley.”

The stars will stop shining.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> “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**

<sup>18</sup> “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.

<sup>19</sup> Egypt will be empty.

Edom will be an empty wilderness,  
because they were cruel to the people  
of Judah.

They killed innocent people<sup>a</sup> in  
their country.

<sup>20</sup> But there will always be people living  
in Judah.

People will live in Jerusalem  
through many generations.

<sup>21</sup> Those people killed my people,  
so I really will punish them!”

The LORD God will live in Zion!

<sup>a</sup> **3:19 killed innocent people** Literally, “shed innocent blood.”

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