



## **THE PROPHECY OF JOEL**

By: Dr. Cornelio Hegeman

**MIAMI INTERNATIONAL SEMINARY  
(MINTS)**

**14401 Old Cutler Rd.  
Miami, Florida 33158. USA  
786-573-7000  
[hejkm@aol.com](mailto:hejkm@aol.com)**

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### TEACHER'S MANUAL

APPENDICE JOHN CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON JOEL  
REVIEW OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

with commentaries of:

Genevan Study Bible

Matthew Henry

Wesley Explanatory Notes

John Calvin's Commentary

The Genevan Study Bible notes, Matthew Henry Commentary, Wesley's Explanatory notes were taken from [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com) web page and John Calvin's commentary from [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org). Copies should not be made for commercial purposes.

# THE PROPHECY OF JOEL<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCCION

### OVERALL GOAL:

The student will enter into the prophecy and world of the Minor Prophets with a special study on prophet Joel in order to understand and communicate this message for today.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the prophecy with other Christians
2. To develop personal Bible study techniques while studying a Bible book
3. To familiar oneself with the observations of others who have studied prophecy.
4. To write materials that will be useful in communicating the message of the book
5. To orally present the message of the book, whether that be in preaching or teaching

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Participate in 15 hours of communal dialogue about the Minor Prophet's contents
2. Complete the Bible study exercises as contained in the 8 lessons
3. Read aloud all twelve Minor Prophet books, record it on tape, write one page reflection on each of the 12 books and make oral report of 5 minutes of one of them in class.
4. Write a sermon or study lesson plan on a theme from Joel. No more than 7 pages, 1.5 font at BA level and 12 pages at MA level.
5. Preach or teach the theme that was developed.

### EVALUATION:

1. One point for every hour of class or communal interaction (15%)
2. Four points for each class in which the students came prepared with corresponding questions answered. One point for completion of all (25%)
3. For readings (300 or 500), writing a one page summary for each Minor Prophet book and commenting on these readings in class (25%)
4. Complete manuscript on a theme in Joel (25%)
5. Evaluation for presentation of sermon or lesson (10%)

### APPLICATION:

1. The student will be able to dialogue about the book of Joel with others.
2. The student will develop study skills to study prophecy.
3. The student will have access to the commentaries of other students of the Bible
4. The student will be able to write about a major theme in Joel.
5. The student will be able to orally communicate a major theme of Joel to others.

### REQUIRED MATERIALS:

1. The MINTS Study Manual on the Minor Prophets and Joel
2. Access to two study Bibles
3. Access to at least 2 Commentaries on Joel

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<sup>1</sup> This study in the Minor Prophets reviews and reads all 12 prophets and concentrates its study in one particular book. The same method can be used to study other prophetic books. This is done in order to place the Bible book in its wider literary context.

## FORMAT OF STUDIES

### I. INTERNET/CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

#### A. Internet/Correspondence Students

1. To study via the internet the student has to be accepted by MINTS (see [www.mints.edu](http://www.mints.edu), [mints@ocpc.org](mailto:mints@ocpc.org))
2. To study this course the student has to identify and recommend to MINTS a local mentor who has a degree superior to the level at which the student is studying. If such a person is not available, MINTS is able to suggest alternative methods.
3. The internet/correspondence studies are not interactive but give the students instructions on how to fulfill the requirements of the course.
4. The internet/correspondence courses fulfill the same requirements as other distance education courses of MINTS.

#### B. Internet/correspondence Course Format

1. In order to create a community of dialogue, the student will submit a 7 pages written report on a theme in Joel (besides the other written report) to 7 persons, asking for their reflections in writing. The report and reflections are given to the local mentor.
2. The homework for the 8 lessons is handed in to the course mentor.
3. The tape of the reading out loud of all twelve books is given to Mentor. A one page report on each of the 12 prophets is prepared. One of those reports is expanded into a three page report.
4. 7 page sermon or teaching manuscript (12 pages for MA level) is handed in to the course mentor.
5. The 7 page sermon or teaching manuscript is orally presented and evaluated by local mentor

#### C. The Local Mentor

1. The local mentor is approved by the Academic Dean of MINTS
2. The local mentor gives the instruction to the students.
3. The local mentor receives all of the work assignments and gives grades
4. The local mentor sends a class record to the Academic Dean of MINTS, along with a photocopy of the written reports and final evaluation.
5. The student's final grade is registered with MINTS-Miami registrar and the student and mentor are informed as to the grade

## II. SEMI-PRESENTIAL DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE

A. STUDENTS are enrolled in MINTS and part of a local study group directed by a local mentor

### B. 7 HOUR ORIENTATION

1. Opening devotional on one theme in Joel (10 min.)
2. Explain the class format
3. Review of the Minor Prophets
4. Reading of the book of Hosea
5. Review of lessons 1 and 2
6. Review of lessons 3 and 4
7. Review of lessons 5 and 6
8. Review of lessons 7 and 8
9. Organize follow up class times
10. Organize student's responsibility for follow up class
  - a. identify and explain oral and verbal readings of the Minor Prophets
    1. assign students to reflect on commentary reads for each class
      - a. 25 % of students for class 1, 25% for each class
  - b. students are to prepare answers for questions of lesson 1 and 2 for first follow up class
  - c. 4 class follow-up

### C. FOLLOW-UP CLASSES

1. Class One (2 hours)
  - a. Mentor checks to see if students have completed answers for lessons 1 and 2 (4 pts each)
  - b. Read aloud Joel 1:1-12
  - c. Review of the answers for lessons 1 and 2
  - d. 25% of students reflect on what their oral readings on Minor Prophets.
  - e. Students meet in small groups to share ideas on what they are going to preach or teach on and how to go about that. For class two they should have an extensive outline and started to write.
  - f. Remind students to have the answers to the questions for lessons 3 and 4 done before coming to next class.
2. Class Two (2 hours)
  - a. Mentor checks to see if students have completed answers for lessons 3 and 4 (4 pts)
  - b. Read aloud Joel 1:13-2:11
  - c. Review of the answers for lessons 3 and 4
  - d. 25% of students reflect on what their oral readings on Minor Prophets.
  - e. Students meet in small groups and share outline they have for their writing. For class three 50% of students will present a 10 minute presentation of what they have prepared. The will be evaluated (10%).
  - f. Remind students to have answers to the questions for lessons 5 and 6 done before coming to next class.
3. Class Three (2 hours)
  - a. Mentor checks to see if students have completed the answers for lessons 5 and

6.
  - b. Read aloud Joel 2:12-32
  - c. Review of the answers for lessons 5 and 6
  - d. 25% of the students reflect on what their reading of Minor Prophet.
  - e. Class listens and evaluates 10 minute presentations of 50% of the students.
  - f. Remind the students to have answers to the questions for lesson 7 and 8 done before coming to the next class.
4. Class Four (three hours)
  - a. Mentor checks to see if student have completed the answers for lessons 7 an 8.
  - b. Read aloud Joel 3:1-23
  - c. Review of lessons 7 and 8.
  - d. 25% of the students reflect on what their reading of Minor Prophet.
  - e. 50 % of the class gives their 10 minute sermon or teaching presentation.
  - f. Final manuscript is handed in.

### CLASS RECORD

Name of Student-	Attendance (15%)	Home-Work (25%)	Readings and reflections (25%)	Written Work (25%)	Oral Class Presentation (10%)	Final Mark (100%)

### PLAN OF LESSONS

LESSON ONE	INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY OF JOEL	1:1-3
LESSON TWO	DESCRIPTION AND WOES OF THE LOCUST INVASION	1:4-12
LESSON THREE	CALL TO REPENTANCE IN RESPONSE TO THE LOCUST INVASION	1:13-20
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LESSON SIX	PENTECOSTAL DAY OF THE LORD	2:28-32
LESSON SEVEN	INTERNATIONAL JUDGMENT DAY AND FINAL REFUGE	3:1-16
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## LESSON ONE

### “God speaks through His prophet.”

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY OF JOEL (1:1-3)<sup>2</sup>

The prophet Joel is considered by many as an early minor prophet. He is an early prophet is that he prophesied in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>3</sup> This was before the captivity of the Ten Tribes by the Assyrians and the 6<sup>th</sup> century captivity of Judea by the Babylonians. Joel is a minor prophet only because the book is short in comparison to the Major Prophets.<sup>4</sup>

The central occasion for the prophecy is an ongoing locust plague.<sup>5</sup> God speaks to the people of the covenant in the midst of this plague, calling them to repentance and restoration.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the continual references of Jerusalem, the temple, Mt. Zion and Judea, it is very probable that Joel is addressing Judea. However, the message has implications for future generations, including our own.

The brief introduction of Joel’s lineage, office and situation is intentional. We know that he is an historical person in that his father is Penthuel. He is also identified as a true prophet in that the Word of God came to him. It is not as if he is presenting his own word or prophecy about what God is doing. The description of the locust plague is one of an eye witness. The agricultural detail, religious ceremonial knowledge and the identification of historical places and events all give the reader the distinct impression as to what happened and what would happen with God’s covenant people.

True prophecy is addressed to the people of God as well as others. Joel addresses the elders to listen and prepare the people to listen. He appeals to them to reflect on the seriousness of what has happened in terms of the past, present and future. He instructs the people to be prepared to pass on the message from one generation to another.

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<sup>2</sup> The outline proposed by Douglas Stuart (p. 226-227) is:

- 1:1. Title.
- 1:2-20. Pericope I
- vv 2-7 Description of invasion, including locust metaphor
- vv 8-20 Calls to lamentation and further descriptions, including drought and desolation
- 2:1-17 Pericope II
- vv. 1-11 Description of invasion, with call for alarm (vs. 1)
- vv. 12-17 Call to repentance, including call for special time of fasting (vv. 15-17)
- 2:18-32 Pericope III
- vv. 18-27 Dual promise of removal of foe and restoration of agricultural bounty
- vv 28-32 Special promise of the new age of the Spirit
- 3:1-21 Pericope IV
- vv. 1-16 Eventual military defeat and divine judgment for the nations
- vv. 17-21 Peace and abundance in Jerusalem and Judah

<sup>3</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> century is supported by Hailey, Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Keil and Delitzsch, Boice considers it. The latter dates are supported by Allen and Patterson. Calvin notes that since the time is not clearly spelled out, it should not be considered that important.

<sup>4</sup> According to Douglas Stuart, “The book is relatively free of major textual difficulties, except for 2:23, where the notorious “teacher of righteousness” language originates from a textual corruption and later played a role in the Qumran community’s understanding of its leadership. Minor textual complications emerge at 1:9, 4:8(3.8) and 4:21 (3.21). The Septuagint is often a reliable basis for establishment of the text. The Syriac Vulgate are rarely useful, while the Targum is both expansionistic and eccentric” (p. 234).

<sup>5</sup> Whether this refers to an actual locust plague or is symbolic of the coming Assyrian invasion and exile is bridged by Matthew Henry when he states: . If this nation of worms do not subdue them, another nation shall come to ruin them.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry notes: “Those that outdo their predecessors in sin may justly expect to fall under greater and sorer judgments than any of their predecessors knew.”

The sequence of God's communicating with His people is instructive. God reveals His Word to the prophet. The prophet instructs the local leaders of the people of God to assemble all the people. In the assembly of the people the prophecy is explained and a course of action is laid out as God's people seek to be restored to God.

The main theme of Joel is the "day of the Lord." This day refers to the special intervention of God whether that be for blessing or judgment. In the case of the locust plague, the Day of the Lord is a judgment on the covenant people (1:15; 2:28; 3:14; 3:20).

Concerning chapters one and two most orthodox commentators find agreement as to the context and content of the prophet message's is directed to the people in Joel's day. Such agreement disappears in chapter three as commentators apply the message to the return from exile, to the first coming of Christ, to the second coming of Christ and to the new heavens and new earth.

The historical context of the prophecy is affirmed by a series of calls to assemble (1:2; 1:14; 2:1). The first call (1:2) is to announce to the people what is happening. The second call to assemble (1:14) is a call to fast and repentance. The third call (2:1) explains that the plague will continue if the people do not repent.

So how can we come to an absolute understanding of the message of Joel? The same way in which Joel received the Word of God, so we are to receive the Word of God. We are called together as a Christian congregation in order to listen and study the Word of God in order to know how God wants us to believe, serve and worship.

Our inductive method of study will include extensive cross-referencing Bible verses, so that you can find out for yourself the meaning of the message of Joel using the Word of God.

LESSON ONE (work sheet) (1:1-3)

READING OF 1:1-3	Read the whole book in one setting and propose your own general outline.
<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY of 1:1-3</p> <p>Explanation of important data (from your reading of the Study Bibles and Joel itself, please jot down what you know)</p> <p>Important words:</p> <p>Grammatical annotations:</p> <p>Translation method:</p> <p>Literary genre:</p> <p>Original author and hearers</p> <p>Cultural context:</p> <p>Historical context:</p> <p>Biblical context:</p> <p>Proposed title for the passage</p> <p>Major themes for the passage</p>	
<p>VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITIONAL STUDY</p> <p>1:1. Joel, the recipient of the Word</p>	<p>Why is Joel a true prophet?</p> <p>Why is Joel considered an historical figure?</p>
<p>1.2. Leaders and future generations receive the prophecy</p>	<p>Which leaders are called to listen?</p> <p>How will this prophecy affect other people?</p> <p>Study the following passages:</p> <p>Dt. 4:9.</p> <p>Dt. 6:7.</p> <p>Dt. 32:7.</p> <p>Ps. 78:1-8</p> <p>Mt. 28:19-20.</p> <p>Acts 2:39.</p>
<p>LITERARY AND THEMATIC STUDY</p> <p>Study the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament</p>	<p>Ob. 15</p> <p>Joel 1:15.</p> <p>Joel 2:1.</p> <p>Joel 2:11.</p> <p>Joel 2:31.</p> <p>Joel 3:14.</p> <p>Amos 5:18.</p> <p>Amos 5:20.</p> <p>Is. 2:12.</p> <p>Is. 13:6</p> <p>Is. 13:9.</p> <p>Ez. 13:5.</p> <p>Ez. 30:3.</p> <p>Zech. 14:1.</p> <p>Mal. 4:5.</p>
<p>Study the Day of the Lord in the New Testament</p>	<p>Acts 2:16ff</p> <p>I Thes. 5:2.</p> <p>II Thes. 2:2.</p> <p>2 Peter 3:10</p>
Jot down notes from commentaries	
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY of 1:1-3</p> <p>Thesis:</p> <p>Antithesis:</p> <p>Synthesis:</p> <p>Syncretism:</p>	
<p>DEVOTIONAL STUDY</p> <p>Prayer and Action</p> <p>-Praise to God</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Confession of personal sin</li> <li>-Confession of social sin</li> <li>-Special requests</li> <li>-Thanksgiving to God</li> <li>-Communication of truths of the passage</li> <li>-three main truth statements</li> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ul>	
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## The 1599 Geneva Study Bible

**1:1** The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. The Argument - The Prophet Joel first rebukes those of Judah, that being now punished with a great plague of famine, still remain obstinate. Secondly, he threatens greater plagues, because they grow daily to a more hardness of heart and rebellion against God in spite of his punishments. Thirdly, he exhorts them to repentance, showing that it must be earnest, and proceed from the heart, because they had grievously offended God. And in doing this, Joel promises that God will be merciful, and not forget his covenant that he made with their fathers, but will send his Christ, who will gather the scattered sheep, and restore them to life and liberty, even though they seem to be dead.

**1:2** Hear this, ye <sup>a</sup> old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath <sup>b</sup> this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

- (a) Signifying the princes, the priests, and the governors. (b) He calls the Jews to the consideration of God's judgments, who had now plagued the fruits of the ground for the space of four years, which was because of their sins, and to call them to repentance.

## Matthew Henry Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible

This chapter is the description of a lamentable devastation made of the country of Judah by locusts and caterpillars. Some think that the prophet speaks of it as a thing to come and gives warning of it beforehand, as usually the prophets did of judgments coming. Others think that it was now present, and that his business was to affect the people with it and awaken them by it to repentance. I. It is spoken of as a judgment which there was no precedent of in former ages (v. 1-7). II. All sorts of people sharing in the calamity are called upon to lament it (v. 8-13). III. They are directed to look up to God in their lamentations, and to humble themselves before him (v. 14-20). Verses 1-3. It is a foolish fancy which some of the Jews have, that this Joel the prophet was the same with that Joel who was the son of Samuel (1 Sa. 8:2); yet one of their rabbin very gravely undertakes to show why Samuel is here called *Pethuel*. This Joel was long after that. He here speaks of a sad and sore judgment which was now brought, or to be brought, upon Judah, for their sins. Observe, I. The greatness of the judgment, expressed here in two things:—1. It was such as could not be paralleled in the ages that were past, in history, or in the memory of any living, v. 2. The *old men* are appealed to, who could remember what had happened long ago; nay, and *all the inhabitants of the land* are called on to testify, if they could any of them remember the like. Let them go further than any man's memory, and *prepare themselves for the search of their fathers* (Job 8:8), and they would not find an account of the like in any record. Note, Those that outdo their predecessors in sin may justly expect to fall under greater and sorer judgments than any of their predecessors knew. 2. It was such as would not be forgotten in the ages to come (v. 3): "*Tell you your children of it; let them know what dismal tokens of the wrath of God you have been under, that they make take warning, and may learn obedience by the things which you have suffered, for it is designed for warning to them also. Yea, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation; let them tell it not only as a strange thing, which may serve for matter of talk*" (as such uncommon accidents are records in our almanacs—It is so long since the plague, and fire—so long since the great frost, and the great wind), "*but let them tell it to teach their children to stand in awe of God and of his judgments, and to tremble before him.*" Note, We ought to transmit to posterity the memorial of God's judgments as well as of his mercies.

## JOHN WESLEY'S EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Chapter Overview:

The unheard of judgment of caterpillars and locusts, ver. 1 - 7.

All sorts us people are called on to lament it, ver. 8 - 13.

And to humble themselves before God, 14 - 20.

**1:1** Came to Joel - Probably in the latter end of Jeroboam the second's reign over Israel and in the days of Uzziah, over Judah.

**1:2** Old men - The oldest among you, who can remember things done many years ago.

REFLECTION (compare your written answers with the author's answers in Teacher's Manual)

1. Do you notice any difference of interpretation between the author (Hegeman), the commentaries and yourself (from your inductive, expositional, thematic, analytical and devotional study)?
2. What is the difference between Joel receiving the Word of God and Joel formulating the Word of God?
3. What is the standard to determine true prophecy today?
4. Do you believe the "elders" in verse two refer to old men or to community officials?
5. Do you see a pattern in how God spoke to the people of God in the days of Joel and how God speaks to His church today?

## LESSON TWO

### “The punishment fits the gospel”

#### DESCRIPTION AND WOES OF THE LOCUST INVASION ( 1:4-12)

The prophet explains four levels of disasters or woes. The immediate woe is the invasion of the locusts. However, this is not a “freak of nature” but related to every dimension of life (retributive) but more importantly leads to the offer of God’s grace (gospel). The four levels are:

1. vs. 4. natural disaster
2. vs. 5 moral disaster
3. vs. 6. national disaster
4. vs. 7. religious disaster

A thematic study of the text will show at least 4 levels of observation for each of these disasters

Natural disaster Vs. 4	Moral disaster Vs 5	National disaster Vs. 6	Religious disaster Vs. 7
Chewing locust	Awake drunkards	Nation comes against God’s land	God’s vine wasted
Swarming locust	Drinkers wail and weep	They are strong and cannot be counted	God’s fig tree ruined
Crawling (young) locust	New wine comes	Like lions teeth	Trees are stripped
Consuming locust	Wine cut off	Like lioness fangs	Branches made white

So what is the thematic relationship between these 4 areas of disaster? The misuse of God’s land and vines for drunkenness and religious neglect has caused God to send an all consuming army of locusts to destroy the vines and trees. The source of the drunkenness has been cut off so that the drunkard has to awake and consider what is happening. The punishment of God meets the crime of the people.

The woes meet all the levels of leaders and members of the covenant community (1:8-12). The woes reach the people (vs. 8), the temple (vs. 9), the fields (vs. 10), the farmers (vs. 11) and the fruits (vs. 12).

The people (vs. 8) are to mourn like a betrothed virgin waiting for her husband who is suddenly bereaved of her husband. Instead of being dresses as a bride she is too dressed in sackcloth. Rather than rejoicing she mourns. The relationship between God (husband) and virgin (people of God) is profoundly altered. The crime deeply affects both the bride and the husband.

Due to the locust plague the cereal and thanksgiving offerings are cut off from the temple (vs. 9). The people are cut off from God’s sacrificial system which requires offerings for atonement and worship. Furthermore, the food supply is cut off. The fields lie in ruins (vs. 10), the farmers and vine growers weep (vs. 11) and their fruit is destroyed (vs. 10).

The locust invasion has destroyed the agricultural and religious foundation of the covenant community. The only thing that the covenant people have left is a direct relationship and accountability to God and the need for grace. All the rest has literally been stripped away.

How does this prophecy relate to us today? Take, for example, the 4 hurricanes that hit Florida in the summer and early fall of 2004. There are those who say that the people who died or were affected by floods, tornadoes and hurricanes deserved it. For those who say that such a punishment fits the crime, how do you explain that so many sinners were spared? Is Florida a place for sin seekers! Absolutely. I have lived her long enough to know what goes on in the Norwegian Line lesbian cruises, on South Beach, at the discos, in the theaters, with the Gay communities, with the porn industries, and the list

goes on and on. If God just wanted to lower the number of Floridian sinners, Miami, Orlando and Tampa would have sustained direct hits with much more wind force and even some fire! In other words, in the case of the 4 hurricanes in 2004, it does not seem that the punishment was aimed at the most notorious sinners and that God missed. The worst sinners escaped judgment! What then are we suppose to learn from such natural disasters? One of lessons that struck me was that the all encompassing nature of the hurricanes caught the attention of every single person in Florida and many places beyond. We know that when the hurricanes marched up and down the east and west coast, prior to their hitting, that everyone had the opportunity to reconsider their spiritual life and their relationship with God. Did the power of the hurricanes as well as the mercy of God to spare most of Florida have any affect on the sin barometer of the citizens of Florida? After the storm many Christians and churches started to help the people get restored, there was definitely a “buzz of good news” going around Florida. God’s temporal and also delayed judgment, together with the preaching of the gospel of Jesus, is meant to call sinners to repentance. Many people in Florida were thankful to God for being spared, for being helped in time of need and for being comforted in times of personal and material losses. There are still many in Florida who publicly mock the Father, ignore the Savior and deny the Holy Spirit. But they do so with the experience of the power and awesome force of God on their conscience. The fool says in the midst of a hurricane, there is no God or he calls out to his idol. The wise man calls out to the true and living God in the midst of life’s storms. If God is able to send a hurricane He will also be able to listen to your cry for help.

A helpful reading is James M. Boice’s commentary on Joel.

“This brings us to the bottom line, which is the point of Joel’s prophecy. Both the delays in God’s judgment (the periods of grace) and the previews of judgment in such catastrophic events as locust plagues and earthquakes are for our good that we might repent. In America we have not seen many disasters of this magnitude. But few would deny that times are not good and that even worse times may lie ahead. We have not had earthquakes of the size of the one at Lisbon, but our cities have been ravaged by blight and riot, by corruption and other forms of decay. We have not been destroyed by locusts, but we have seen our economy weakened by the declining value of the dollar, an intolerable balance of payments deficit and shortage of oil and other necessities. We have had drought. Are we to make light of such things? Are we to dismiss them and then merely go our normal way until even greater judgments overtake us? Are we to say, “Such things just happen? Are we to blame Russia or communism or Iran or Islam? No doubt God does use causes, and the opposition of these or other countries may be among them. But the wise will see these things as having come from God and lead us in personal and national repentance.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Boice, p. 105.

LESSON TWO (Work sheet) 1:4-12

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY of 1:4-12          Explanation of important data:          Important words in passage:          Grammatical annotations:          Translation method:          Literary genre:          Original author and hearers          Cultural context:          Historical context:          Biblical context:          Title for the passage:          Theme of the passage</p>	
<p>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY</p>	<p>(Match the Bible reference with the verse it corresponds to in Joel)</p> <p>Gen. 49:9          Ex. 9:31          Ex. 10:1-5, 15          Ex. 28:33.          Ex. 29:38-42          Dt. 28:38-39          Lev. 2:1-2          Lev. 23:13          Lev. 25:23          Jdg 20:26.          Num. 18:12          Num. 23:24          Num. 28:5-8          Num 36:2          2Sam. 12:16.          I King 4:25          Job 6:20          Ps. 78:4          Ps. 105:34          Prov. 2:17.          Prov. 30:25          Is. 5:6,11          Is. 15:6.          Is. 16:8,10          Is. 17:11          Is. 22:12          Is. 24:7,11          Is. 28:1.          Is. 30:6.          Is. 32:10          Is. 33:4          Is. 38:19          Is. 54:5-8          Jer. 3:3,4.          Jer. 4:8          Jer. 12:11          Jer. 14:3,12          Jer. 30:7.          Jer. 31:32          Ez. 7:18.          Ez. 38:16</p>

	<p>Amos 4:9  Amos 5:16  Amos 7:1  Amos 8:10.  Hosea 2:9.  Hosea 3:4.  Hosea 7:5.  Hosea 2:9  Hosea 9:2-4.  Hosea 13:8  Jonah 3:4-5.  Joel 1:13  Joel 2:2,11,25  Joel 3:3  Nahum 3:15  Mich 4:4  Hab. 3:17.  Zech. 3:10  Zech 7:3.  Haggai 2:19  Rev. 9:8</p>
THEMATIC STUDY	
<p>1:4-7 four fold description of disastrous woes  Vs. 4. What is the 4 fold natural disaster?  Vs. 5. What 4 observations are made in relationship to wine.  Vs. 6. What are the 4 observations about these invaders?  Vs. 7. What are the dimensions of this agro-religious disaster?</p>	
<p>1:8-12. Five fold effects of the Woes  Vs. 8. How should the people mourn?  Vs. 9. What happens to the temple duties?  vs. 10. What will happen to the fields?  Vs. 11. How should the agriculturalist respond?  vs. 12. What happens to the fruit of the field as well as human emotions?</p>	
LITERARY STUDY.	Notice the parallelisms
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY  1. Thesis  2. Antithesis  3. Synthesis  4. Syncretism</p>	
<p>DEVOTIONAL STUDY  Prayer and Action  -Praise to God  -Confession of personal sin  -Confession of social sin  -Special requests  -Thanksgiving to God  Communication of truths of the passage  -three main truth statements  1.  2.  3.</p>	
Closing comments	

## GENEVAN STUDY BIBLE

**1:5** Awake, ye <sup>c</sup> drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

(c) Meaning, that the reason for their excess and drunkenness was taken away.

**1:6** For <sup>d</sup> a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth [are] the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

(d) This was another plague with which God had punished them when he stirred up the Assyrians against them.

**1:8** Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the <sup>e</sup> husband of her youth.

(e) Mourn grievously as a woman who has lost her husband, to whom she has been married in her youth.

**1:9** The meat offering and the drink offering is <sup>f</sup> cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.

(f) The signs of God's wrath appeared in his temple, in so much that God's service was discontinued.

**1:10** The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: <sup>g</sup> the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

(g) All comfort and substance for nourishment is taken away.

## MATTHEW HENRY

II. The judgment itself; it is an invasion of the country of Judea by a great army. Many interpreters both ancient and modern understand it of armies of men, the forces of the Assyrians, which, under Sennacherib, *took all the defenced cities of Judah*, and then, no doubt, made havoc of the country and destroyed the products of it: nay, some make the four sorts of animals here names (v. 4) to signify the four monarchies which, in their turns, were oppressive to the people of the Jews, one destroying what had escaped the fury of the other. Many of the Jewish expositors think it is a parabolic expression of the coming of enemies, and their multitude, to lay all waste. So the Chaldee paraphrase mentions these animals (v. 4); but afterwards (ch. 2:25) puts instead of them, *Nations, peoples, tongues, languages, potentates, and revenging kingdoms*. But it seems much rather to be understood literally of armies of insects coming upon the land and eating up the fruits of it. Locusts were one of the plagues of Egypt. Of them it is said, There never were any like them, nor should be (Ex. 10:14), none such as those in Egypt, none such as these in Judah—none like those locusts for bigness, none like these for multitude and the mischief they did. The plague of locusts in Egypt lasted but for a few days; this seems to have continued for four years successively (as some think), because here are four sorts of insects mentioned (v. 4), one destroying what the other left; but others think they came all in one year. We are not told, in the history of the Old Testament, when this happened, but we are sure that no word of God fell to the ground; and, though a devastation by these insects is primarily intended here, yet it is expressed in such a language as is very applicable to the destruction of the country by a foreign enemy invading it, because, if the people were not humbled and reformed by that less judgment which devoured the land, God would send this greater upon them, which would devour the inhabitants; and by the description of that they are bidden to take it for a warning. If this nation of worms do not subdue them, another nation shall come to ruin them. Observe, 1. What these animals are that are sent against them—*locusts and caterpillars, palmer-worms and canker-worms*, v. 4. We cannot now describe how these differed one from another; they were all little insects, any one of them despicable, and which a man might easily crush with his foot or with his finger; but when they came in vast swarms, or shoals, they were very formidable and ate up all before them. Note, God is Lord of hosts, has all creatures at his command, and, when he pleases, can humble and mortify a proud and rebellious people by the weakest and most contemptible creatures. Man is said to be a worm; and by this it appears that he is *less than a worm*, for, when God pleases, worms are too hard for him, plunder his country, eat up that for which he laboured, destroy the forage, and cut off the subsistence of a potent nation. The weaker the instrument is that God employs the more is his power magnified. 2. What fury and force they came with. They are here called a *nation* (v. 6), because they are embodied, and act by consent, and as it were with a common design; for, though *the locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands* (Prov. 30:27), and it is there mentioned as an instance of their *wisdom*. It is prudence for those that are weak severally to unite and act jointly. They are *strong*, for they are *without number*. The *small dust of the balance* is light, and easily blown away, but a heap of dust is weighty; so a worm can do little (yet one worm served to destroy Jonah's gourd), but numbers of them can do wonders. They are said to have *teeth of a lion*, of a *great lion*, because of the great and terrible execution they do. Note, Locusts become as lions when they come armed with a divine commission. We read of the locusts out of the bottomless pit, that *their teeth were as the teeth of lions*, Rev. 9:8. 3. What mischief they do. They *eat up* all before them (v. 4); what one leaves the other devours; they destroy not only the grass and corn, but the trees (v. 7): *The vine is laid waste*. There vermin eat the leaves which should be a shelter to the

fruit while it ripens, and so that also perishes and comes to nothing. They eat the very bark of the fig-tree, and so kill it. Thus the *fig-tree does not blossom*, nor is there *fruit in the vine*. III. A call to the drunkards to lament this judgment (v. 5): *Awake and weep, all you drinkers of wine*. This intimates, 1. That they should suffer very sensibly by this calamity. It should touch them in a tender part; the *new wine* which they loved so well should be *cut off from their mouth*. Note, It is just with God to take away those comforts which are abused to luxury and excess, to *recover the corn and wine* which are *prepared* for Baal, which are made the food and fuel of a base lust. And to them judgments of that kind are most grievous. The more men place their happiness in the gratification of sense the more pressing temporal afflictions are upon them. The drinkers of water need not to care when the vine was laid waste; they could live as well without it as they had done; it was no trouble to the Nazarites. But the *drinkers of wine will weep and howl*. The more delights we make necessary to our satisfaction the more we expose ourselves to trouble and disappointment. 2. It intimates that they had been very senseless and stupid under the former tokens of God's displeasure; and therefore they are here called to *awake and weep*. Those that will not be roused out of their security by the word of God shall be roused by his rod; those that will not be startled by judgments at a distance shall be themselves arrested by them; and when they are going to partake of the forbidden fruit a prohibition of another nature shall come *between the cup and the lip*, and *cut off the wine from their mouth*.

**Verses 8-13** The judgment is here described as very lamentable, and such as all sorts of people should share in; it shall not only rob the drunkards of their pleasure (if that were the worst of it, it might be the better borne), but it shall deprive others of their necessary subsistence, who are therefore called to lament (v. 8), as a virgin laments the death of her lover to whom she was espoused, but not completely married, yet so that he was in effect her husband, or as a young woman lately married, from whom the *husband of her youth*, her young husband, or the husband to whom she was married when she was young, is suddenly taken away by death. Between a new-married couple that are young, that married for love, and that are every way amiable and agreeable to each other, there is great fondness, and consequently great grief if either be taken away. Such lamentation shall there be for the loss of their corn and wine. Note, The more we are wedded to our creature-comforts that harder it is to part with them. See that parallel place, Isa. 32:10–12. Two sorts of people are here brought in, as concerned to lament this devastation, countrymen and clergymen. I. Let the husbandmen and vine-dressers lament, v. 11. Let them be ashamed of the care and pains they have taken about their vineyards, for it will be all labour lost, and they shall gain no advantage by it; they shall see the fruit of their labour eaten up before their eyes, and shall not be able to save any of it. Note, Those who labour only *for the meat that perishes* will, sooner or later, be ashamed of their labour. The *vine-dressers* will then express their extreme grief by *howling*, when they see their vineyards stripped of leaves and fruit, and the vines withered, so that nothing is to be had or hoped for from them, wherewith they might pay their rent and maintain their families. The destruction is particularly described here: *The field is laid waste* (v. 10); all is consumed that is produced; *the land mourns*; the ground has a melancholy aspect, and looks ruefully; all the inhabitants of the land are in tears for what they have lost, are in fear of perishing for want, Isa. 24:4; Jer. 4:28. "The *corn*, the bread-corn, which is the staff of life, is *wasted*; the *new wine*, which should be brought into the cellars for a supply when the old is drunk, is *dried up*, is *ashamed* of having promised so fair what it is not now able to perform; the oil *languishes*, or is *diminished*, because (as the Chaldee renders it) *the olives have fallen off*." The people were not thankful to God as they should have been for the *bread that strengthens man's heart*, the *wine that makes glad the heart*, and the *oil that makes the face to shine* (Ps. 104:14, 15); and therefore they are justly brought to lament the loss and want of them, of all the products of the earth, which God had given either for necessity or for delight (this is repeated, v. 11, 12)—the *wheat and barley*, the two principal grains bread was then made of, wheat for the rich and barley for the poor, so that the rich and poor meet together in the calamity. The trees are destroyed, not only the *vine and the fig-tree* (as before, v. 7), which were more useful and necessary, but other trees also that were for delight—the *pomegranate, palm-tree, and apple-tree*, yea, all the *trees of the field*, as well as those of the orchard, timber-trees as well as fruit-trees. In short, all *the harvest of the field has perished*, v. 11. And by this means *joy has withered away from the children of men* (v. 11); the *joy of harvest*, which is used to express great and general joy, has come to nothing, is turned into shame, is turned into lamentation. Note, The perishing of the harvest is the withering of the joy of the children of men. Those that place their happiness in the delights of the sense, when they are deprived of them, or in any way disturbed in the enjoyment of them, lose all their joy; whereas the children of God, who look upon the pleasures of sense with holy indifference and contempt, and know what it is to make God their hearts' delight, can rejoice in him as the *God of their salvation* even when the *fig-tree does not blossom*; spiritual joy is so far from withering then, that it flourishes more than ever, Hab. 3:17, 18. Let us see here, 1. What perishing uncertain things all our creature-comforts are. We can never be sure of the continuance of them. Here the heavens had given their rains in due season, the earth had yielded her strength, and, when the appointed weeks of harvest were at hand, they saw no reason to doubt but that they should have a very plentiful crop; yet then they are invaded by these unthought-of

enemies, that lay all waste, and not by fire and sword. It is our wisdom not to lay up our treasure in those things which are liable to so many untoward accidents. 2. See what need we have to live in continual dependence upon God and his providence, for our own hands are not sufficient for us. When we see the *full corn in the ear*, and think we are sure of it—nay, when we have *brought it home*, if *he blow upon it*, nay, if he do not bless it, we are not likely to have any good of it.

## JOHN WESLEY

- 1:4** Palmer - worm - Four sorts of insects, are here mentioned, which succeeded each other, and devoured all that might be a support to the Jews, whence ensued a grievous famine.
- 1:5** Is cut off - Suddenly cut off even when you are ready to drink it, and totally cut off by these devouring vermin.
- 1:6** A nation - An innumerable multitude of locusts and caterpillars, called a nation here, as Solomon calls the conies and the ant, [Proverbs 30:25,26](#), and perhaps a prognostic of a very numerous and mighty nation, that ere long will invade Judah. Strong - Mighty in power, and undaunted in courage, if you refer it to the Assyrian or Babylonians; if to those vermin, they are, though each weak by itself, yet in those multitudes, strong and irresistible. A great lion - Such waste as lions make, these the locusts do, and the Assyrians will make.
- 1:8** The husband of her youth - Espoused to her, but snatched away by an untimely death.
- 1:9** The drink - offering - By the destruction of the vines, all wine (out of which they ought to offer the drink - offering) failed.
- 1:10** The corn - The wheat and barley, is eaten up in its greenness. Dried up - The drought was so great, that the vines were withered, and all their hopes of new wine cut off. The oil - The olive - trees. Languished - This is a plain account of the reason why the priests were called to mourn, and why the meal - offering and drink - offering were cut off.
- 1:11** Be ye ashamed - This is a just cause why you should lament and enquire why God is so displeased with you.

## REFLECTION

1. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown write: “The Hebrews make the first species (of locust) refer to Assyria and Babylon; the second species, to Medo-Persia; the third, to Greco-Macedonia and Antiochus Epiphanes; the fourth, to the Romans. Though the primary reference be to literal locusts, the Holy Spirit doubtless had in view the successive empires which assailed Judea, each worse than its predecessor, Rome being the climax.” What do you think?
2. What has been a recent natural disaster in your area of the world? What was the response of the Christian community in preparing for, sustaining and responding to the natural disaster?
3. How do you see the relationship between natural disasters and God?

## LESSON THREE

**“A disaster is God’s microphone to get our attention.”**

### **CALL TO REPENTANCE IN RESPONSE TO THE LOCUST INVASTION (1:13-20)**

Section 1:4-12 makes clear that the substance for food and temple offerings have been destroyed. A major ingredient for communal worship was taken away from the covenant people. Yet God speaks to them and is willing to lead them. There is more to one’s relationship to God than relating to him through a sacrificial system. The Lord wants to see true humility.<sup>8</sup> Section 1:13-20 addresses the covenant people’s leaders.

The steps for communal repentance are:

1. The religious leaders are to hear the Word of the Lord and communicate that to the people.
2. They are to call for a communal fast.
3. The leaders and people are to congregate in the house of the Lord
4. Together, they are to appeal and cry out for the mercy of God.

This is a national disaster prayer day. After September 11, 03, the people of the United States were called together by their religious leaders in order to pray. Terrorists had struck the financial and military centers of the greatest nation in the world. The USA’s intelligence service, both the CIA and FBI, was in disarray and could not prevent this barbaric act. Both the leaders and USA citizens felt vulnerable to the onslaught of militant Islam. President Bush called on the people of faith to pray. It would be up to the Christian churches to issue the call to prayer, repentance and restoration through faith in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father.

Did true repentance take place in the USA after 9/11? It would not be an understatement to say that skepticism flourished, especially in the following federal elections. It was astonishing to hear and read about the improprieties of the political candidates and the nation. Undoubtedly, our national weaknesses were exposed. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church was under going investigations and prosecutions about the sexual abuses of the priest against children. Certain Evangelical TV evangelists continued in their materialistic and heretical ways. Was there repentance, that is, a turning away from sin?

The only true measurement for the repentance of sin is when the sinners confesses his sin to the Father and is saved by believing in the Savior. True repentance transforms the sinner into a person where the holiness of the Spirit continues to change his inner being and outward actions. There continues to be a lot of moral and religious talk in America politics, society and the church. However, is the presence of the HOLY Spirit evident? The holiness of the Spirit requires that the sinner completely denounces sin and embraces salvation by faith alone in the true Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father.

The prophet Joel recognized that the locust plague, as it continued to advance, was part of the “Day of the Lord” (1:15). However, the punishment of God on the nation was not the only manifestation of the “Day of the Lord.” Chapter 2 announces the Day of the Lord as a spiritual restoration (2:28-32). Chapter 3 points to the end times coming of the Day of the Lord (3:14).

Chapter one begins with the prophet receiving the authoritative Word of the God. The chapter ends with a prophetic crying out to God for mercy. With the land, temple, sacrificial system, priesthood

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<sup>8</sup> Mt. 5:3.

and personal life in disarray, there is only one hope, the gracious intervention of a loving and merciful God.

One prophet, Joel, was called by God to speak to the leaders of God's people. One intercessor is found at the end of chapter 1 interceding for God's people. The echoes of Joel's prophecy and prayer ring throughout the corridors of history.

Justin Martyr, 2nd century Church Father..."When you hear the words of the prophets spoken as though in their own persons, you are not to think that they are uttered by the inspired men themselves, but by the divine Word who moves them."

Athanasius, 3<sup>rd</sup> century Church Father..."The Holy Scripture is mightier than all synods...The whole of our Scriptures, the Old Testament and the New Testament, are...a book whole inspired by God from beginning to end."

Antonio de Montesino, Dominican friar in 16<sup>th</sup> century Santo Domingo..."Tell me, by what right do you keep these Indians in such cruel and horrible servitude?...Why do you keep them so oppressed and weary, not giving them enough to eat, nor taking care of them in their illnesses? For with the excessive work you demand of them, they fall ill and die, or rather, you kill them with your desire to extract and acquire gold every day...Are these not men? Have they not rational souls? Are you not bound to love these as you love yourselves? Be certain that in such a state as this, you can no more be saved than the Moors or Turks..." (Dec., 21, 1511, en Santo Domingo, Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*. Vol. II, p. 176. English version)

Martin Luther, 16<sup>th</sup> century reformer (1483-1546)... "Unless I am convinced by Sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I will not recant. My conscience is held captive by the Word of God and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe."

John Knox, 16<sup>th</sup> century Presbyterian reformer. "'Give me Scotland or I die.'"

Richard Baxter..."As a dying man I preach to dying people."

John Bunyan, Baptist and Puritan preacher, author of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1628-1688)... "If you let me out today, I shall preach again tomorrow."

Jonathan Edwards, preacher of the First Great Awakening in 18<sup>th</sup> century USA..."When God is about to do a great work, He pours out a spirit of supplication."

Abraham Lincoln, president of the USA..."Let us have faith that right makes might."

William Wilberforce, 1791 speech, House of Commons in Great Britain..."Never, never will we desist till we...extinguish every trace of this bloody traffic (slavery), of which our posterity looking back to the history of those enlightened times, will scarce believe that it has been suffered to exist so long a disgrace and dishonour to this country."

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army ...'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face --

whose mercy you have professed to obey -- and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world. “

Francis Schaeffer, 20<sup>th</sup> century apologist... "What does God say to our generation? Exactly the same thing that He said to Israel two thousand five hundred years ago when he said through Ezekiel: "I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols." I believe that this is how God looks at much of the modern church and at our Western culture. I believe that is how He looks at much of our cinema, drama, and art. And above everything else this is the way He looks at the churches in which a gospel that is not gospel is being preached. God is saddened. Should we not be moved?" (*The Church before the watching World*, pp. 56-57).

#### REFLECTIONS

1. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown write: “**20. beasts . . . cry . . . unto thee**--that is, look up to heaven with heads lifted up, as if their only expectation was from God ([Job 38:41](#), [Psalms 104:21](#), [145:15](#), [147:9](#); compare [Psalms 42:1](#)). They tacitly reprove the deadness of the Jews for not even now invoking God.” Please comment.
2. Why is intercessory prayer important?
3. Are you aware of intercessory prayer ministries that are going on?

LESSON THREE (work sheet) 1:13-20

CROSS REFERENCE STUDY	Exodus 32:11-14 Num 10:3 Numb. 29:35 Lec. 23:36 Dt. 16:8 Jer. 42:1-4 Dan 9:1-19 Amos 7:7-6
INDUCTIVE STUDY Explanation of important data: Important words in passage: Grammatical annotations: Translation method: Literary genre: Original author and hearers Cultural context: Historical context: Biblical context: Title for the passage: Theme of the passage	
THEMATIC STUDY	
Thematic study of 1:13-18: THE CULTIC RESPONSE TO THE ALARMING AND SELF-EVIDENT WOES	
Vs. 13. How are the priests to respond?	
Vs. 14. How is the religious community to respond?	
Vs. 15. What special event had arrived?	
Vs. 16. What would be the result?	
Vs. 17. What happened to the plant world?	
Vs. 18. What happened to the animal world?	
Thematic Study of 1:19-20 THE FINAL APPEAL	
Vs. 19. To whom does the prophet make his final appeal?	
Vs. 20. What was the prophet's own summary?	
DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS 1. Thesis 2. Antithesis 3. Synthesis 4. Syncretism	
DEVOTIONAL ANALYSIS Prayer and Action -Praise to God -Confession of personal sin -Confession of social sin -Special requests -Thanksgiving to God Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. 2. 3.	
Commentary notes and closing comments	

## GENEVAN STUDY BIBLE

**1:13** <sup>h</sup> Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

(h) He shows that the only means to avoid God's wrath, and to have all things restored, is true repentance.

**1:15** Alas for the day! for the <sup>i</sup> day of the LORD [is] at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

(i) We see by these great plagues that utter destruction is at hand.

**1:20** The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the <sup>k</sup> fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness. (k) That is, drought.

## MATTHEW HENRY

3. See what ruinous work sin makes. A paradise is turned into a wilderness, a fruitful land, the most fruitful land upon earth, *into barrenness*, for the *iniquity of those that dwelt therein*. II. Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, lament, for they share deeply in the calamity: *Gird yourselves* with sackcloth (v. 13); nay, they *do mourn*, v. 9. Observe, The priests are called the *ministers of the altar*, for on that they attended, and the *ministers of the Lord* (of my God, says the prophet), for in attending on the altar they served him, did his work, and did him honour. Note, Those that are employed in holy things are therein God's ministers, and on him they attend. The ministers of the altar used to rejoice before the Lord, and to spend their time very much in singing; but now they must *lament and howl*, for the *meat-offering* and *drink-offering* were *cut off from the house of the Lord* (v. 9), and the same again (v. 13), *from the house of your God*. "He is your God in a particular manner; you are in a nearer relation to him than other Israelites are; and therefore it is expected that you should be more concerned than others for that which is a hindrance to the service of his sanctuary." It is intimated, 1. That the people, as long as they had the fruits of the earth brought in in their season, presented to the Lord his dues out of them, and brought the offerings to the altar and tithes to those that served at the altar. Note, A people may be filling up the measure of their iniquity apace, and yet may keep up a course of external performances in religion. 2. That, when the meat and drink failed, the meat-offering and drink-offering failed of course; and this was the sorest instance of the calamity. Note, As far as any public trouble is an obstruction to the course of religion it is to be upon that account, more than any other, sadly lamented, especially by the priests, the Lord's ministers. As far as poverty occasions the decay of piety and the neglect of divine offices, and starves the cause of religion among a people, it is indeed a sore judgment. When the famine prevailed God could not have his sacrifices, nor could the priests have their maintenance; and therefore let *the Lord's ministers mourn*. [Verses 14-20](#) We have observed abundance of tears shed for the destruction of the fruits of the earth by the locusts; now here we have those tears turned into the right channel, that of repentance and humiliation before God. The judgment was very heavy, and here they are directed to own the hand of God in it, his *mighty hand*, and to *humble themselves* under it. Here is, I. A proclamation issued out for a general fast. The priests are ordered to appoint one; they must not only mourn themselves, but they must call upon others to mourn too: "*Sanctify a fast*; let some time be set apart from all worldly business to be spent in the exercises of religion, in the expressions of repentance and other extraordinary instances of devotion." Note, Under public judgments there ought to be public humiliations; for by them the *Lord God calls to weeping and mourning*. With all the marks of sorrow and shame sin must be confessed and bewailed, the righteous of God must be acknowledged, and his favour implored. Observe what is to be done by a nation at such a time. 1. A day is to be appointed for this purpose, a *day of restraint* (so the margin reads it), a day in which people must be restrained from their other ordinary business (that they may more closely attend God's service), and from all bodily refreshments; for, 2. It must be a *fast*, a religious abstaining from meat and drink, further than is of absolute necessity. The king of Nineveh appointed a fast, in which they were to *taste nothing*, Jonah 3:7. Hereby we own ourselves unworthy of our necessary food, and that we have forfeited it and deserve to be wholly deprived of it, we punish ourselves and mortify the body, which has been the occasion of sin, we keep it in a frame fit to serve the soul in serving God, and, by the appetite's craving food, the desires of the soul towards that which is better than life, and all the supports of it, are excited. This was in a special manner seasonable now that God was depriving them of their *meat and drink*; for hereby they accommodated themselves to the affliction they were under. When God says, *You shall fast*, it is time to say, *We will fast*. 3. There must be a solemn assembly. The *elders* and the *people*, magistrates and subjects, must be *gathered together*, even *all the inhabitants of the land*, that God might be honoured by their public humiliations, that they might thereby take the more shame to themselves, and that they might excite and stir up one another to the religious duties of the day. All had contributed to the national guilt, all shared in the national calamity, and therefore they must all join in the professions of repentance. 4. They must come together in the temple, *the house of the Lord their God*, because that was the house of prayer, and there they might be hope to meet with God because it was the place which he

had *chosen to put his name there*, there they might hope to speed because it was a type of Christ and his mediation. Thus they interested themselves in Solomon's prayer for the acceptance of all the requests that should be put up in or towards this house, in which their present case was particularly mentioned. 1 Ki. 7:37, *If there be locust, if there be caterpillar*. 5. They must *sanctify* this fast, must observe it in a religious manner, with sincere devotion. What is a fast worth if it be not sanctified? 6. They must *cry unto the Lord*. To him they must make their complaint and offer up their supplication. When we cry in our affliction we must *cry to the Lord*; this is *fasting to him*, Zec. 7:5. II. Some considerations suggested to induce them to proclaim this fast and to observe it strictly. 1. God was beginning a controversy with them. It is time to *cry unto the Lord*, for *the day of the Lord is at hand*, v. 15. Either they mean the continuance and consequences of this present judgment which they now saw but breaking in upon them, or some greater judgments which this was but a preface to. However it be, this they are taught to make the matter of their lamentation: *Alas, for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand*. Therefore *cry to God*. For, (1.) "The day of his judgment is very near, it is *at hand*; it *will not slumber*, and therefore you should not. It is time to fast and pray, for you have but a little time to turn yourselves in." (2.) It will be very terrible; there is no escaping it, no resisting it: *As a destruction from the Almighty shall it come*. See Isa. 13:6. It is not a correction, but a destruction; and it comes from the hand, not of a weak creature, but of *the Almighty*; and *who knows* (nay, who does not know) *the power of his anger*? Whither should we go with our cries but to him from whom the judgment we dread comes? There is no fleeing from him but by fleeing to him, no escaping destruction from the Almighty but by making our submission and supplication to the Almighty; this is *taking hold on his strength, that we may make peace*, Isa. 27:5. 2. They saw themselves already under the tokens of his displeasure. It is time to fast and pray, for their distress is very great, v. 16. (1.) Let them look into their own houses, and was no plenty there, as used to be. Those who kept a good table were now obliged to retrench: *Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?* If, when God's hand is lifted up, men *will not see*, when his hand is laid on *they shall see*. Is not the meat many a time cut off before our eyes? Let us then labour for that spiritual meat which is not before our eyes, and which cannot be cut off. (2.) Let them look into God's house, and see the effects of the judgment there; joy and gladness were *cut off from the house of God*. Note, The house of our God is the proper place of joy and gladness; when David goes to the *altar of God*, it is to God *my exceeding joy*; but when *joy and gladness are cut off from God's house*, either by corruption of holy things or the persecution of holy persons, when serious godly decays and love waxes cold, then it time to cry to the Lord, time to cry, *Alas!* 3. The prophet returns to describe the grievousness of the calamity, in some particulars of it. Corn and cattle are the husbandman's staple commodities; now here he is deprived of both. (1.) The caterpillars have devoured the corn, v. 17. The *garners*, which they used to fill with corn, *are laid desolate*, and *the barns broken down*, because *the corn has withered*, and the owners think it not worth while to be at the charge of repairing them when they have nothing to put in them, nor are likely to have any thing; for *the seed it rotten under the clods*, either through too much rain or (which was the more common case in Canaan) for want of rain, or perhaps some insects under ground ate it up. When one crop fails the husbandman hopes the next may make it up; but here they despair of that, the seedness being as bad as the harvest. (2.) The cattle perish too for want of grass (v. 18): *How do the beasts groan!* This the prophet takes notice of, that the people might be affected with it and lay to heart the judgment. The groans of the cattle should soften their hard and impenitent hearts. *The herds of cattle*, the large cattle (black cattle we call them), *are perplexed*; nay, even *the flocks of sheep*, which will live upon a common and be content with very short grass, *are made desolate*. See here the inferior creatures suffering for our transgression, and groaning under the double burden of being serviceable to the sin of man and subject to the curse of God for it. *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*. III. The prophet stirs them up to cry to God, with the consideration of the examples given them for it. 1. His own example (v. 19): *O Lord! to thee will I cry*. He would not put them upon doing that which he would not resolve to do himself; nay, whether they would do it or no, he would. Note, If God's ministers cannot prevail to affect others with the discoveries of divine wrath, yet they ought to be themselves affected with them; if they cannot bring others to cry to God, yet they themselves be much in prayer. In time of trouble we must not only pray, but cry, must be fervent and importunate in prayer; and to God, from whom both the destruction is and the salvation must be, ought our cry to be always directed. That which engaged him *to cry to God* was, not so much any personal affliction, as the national calamity: *The fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness*, which seems to be meant of some parching scorching heat of the sun, which was as fire to the fruits of the earth; it consumed them all. Note, When God *calls to contend by fire* it concerns those that have any interest in heaven to cry mightily to him for relief. See Num. 11:2; Amos 7:4, 5. 2. The example of the inferior creatures: *"The beasts of the field do not only groan, but cry unto thee*, v. 20. They appeal to thy pity, according to their capacity, and as if, though they are not capable of a rational and revealed religion, yet they had something of dependence upon God by natural instinct." At least, when they groan by reason of their calamity, he is pleased to interpret it as if they cried to him; much more will he put a favourable construction upon the groanings of his own children, though sometimes so feeble that they *cannot be uttered*, Rom. 8:26. The beasts are here said to *cry unto God*, as from him the *lions seek their meat* (Ps. 104:21) and the

young *ravens*, Job 38:41. The complaints of the brute-creatures here are for want of water ( *The rivers are dried up*, through the excessive heat), and for want of grass, for the *fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness*. And what better are those than beasts who never cry to God but for corn and wine, and complain of nothing but the want of delight of sense? Yet their crying to God in those cases shames the stupidity of those who cry not to God in any case.

#### **JOHN WESLEY'S NOTES**

- 1:14** Sanctify ye - Ye priests, set apart a day wherein to afflict yourselves, confess your sins, and sue out your pardon. Into the house - The courts of the temple, where the people were wont to pray.
- 1:15** The day of the Lord - A day of greater trouble than yet they felt, troubles which God will heap upon them. Shall it come - Unless fasting, prayers and amendment prevent.
- 1:16** Cut off - Devoured by locusts, or withered with drought.
- 1:17** Laid desolate - Run to ruin because the owners discouraged with the barrenness of the seasons, would not repair them.
- 1:19** The fire - The immoderate heats. The wilderness - The world, only means places not ploughed, and less inhabited than others.
- 1:20** Cry - They utter their complaints, their sad tones, they have a voice to cry, as well as an eye to look to God.

## LESSON FOUR

**“If God is in your troubles then your troubles are not all bad.”**

### **ULTIMATE SURPRISE ABOUT THE LOCUST INVASION (2:1-14)**

Three levels of people were called to respond to God’s Word in chapter one. The leaders, the people as a whole and the prophet Joel. The fact that at least the prophet understood the severity of the sins against God is a note of hope. However, Joel was not able to stem the locust tide. There would be one far greater than Joel who would be able to do that.

Chapter two reveals that the commander of the army of locust is God Himself (2:11, 25). The commander of the army of locust is speaking with the covenant people through the prophet Joel. That is an amazing panorama for living! God is present in our troubles. He may even be in charge of the forces against us. But even that is not the biggest surprise. What is even more amazing is that as the offended God and opposing force, He communicates with us to deliver us. What grace! What sovereignty! The purpose of our troubles is to call us back to the Lord.

After the announcement that the army of locust is “His army” the Lord also announces “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” (2:13)

If you are a serious Bible student you have to be impressed with this display of the sovereignty of God. God is able to use the forces of nature to accomplish His will. He is not the author of sin and evil, but in His wrath He is able to use the tools of destruction to accomplish His purpose of calling His people to repentance.

The covenant people of Joel’s day and today’s readers may be tempted to not associate natural events and natural disasters with God. Yet, this prophecy specifically shows that God is not only the Creator of the locust but He is their commander in this expedition of destruction. The good news is that this all powerful commander is approachable. The forces of nature are not blind. These forces have a moral purpose. God’s work is related to His holy being and His gospel word.

The truth that the forces of nature have a moral purpose is not taught in all Christian seminaries and absolutely not by secular humanists. This is a concept that is misunderstood even by Calvinists! For that reason, we need to carefully study this prophecy and respond to its moral dimensions and mission implications.

As a student of the Bible, as well as sinner saved by grace, you have to be amazed that a God who is just, and who must punish evil, is also a God of mercy. We do not receive the full punishment for our crimes against God. In fact, God the Father sent His Son to take the infernal punishment for His people. Yes, there are consequences for our sinful behaviour but after our temporal punishment comes the offer of salvation. Mercy, not receiving what we deserve, triumphs over judgement, which is receiving what we deserve. And that is the good news.

The tsunami in the Far East in the winter of 2005 hit upon the shores of some societies that have been resistant to the gospel being openly proclaimed within their borders.<sup>9</sup> People groups who have been very resistant to the gospel had to concede to the introduction of emergency aid, much of it provided by Christians throughout the world. In vain the gospel detractors tried to close the door to the infiltration of the message of the gospel in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and other resistant and Islamic influenced nations. The same effects are seen in the Christian response to the opening of Afghanistan, the earthquakes in Turkey, Iran and war and Iraq. Secular humanism and anti-Christian religions look at the

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<sup>9</sup> The Jan.-Feb. 2005 issue of *Mission Frontiers*, citing from [www.globalchristianity.com](http://www.globalchristianity.com) show a relationship between the countries and people suffering from wars and natural disasters and unreached people groups.

natural disasters, the wars and poverty as human created situations, but the Christian closely associates man's disasters to their rejection of the true and living God. God is not mocked nor disassociated with natural disasters, wars and poverty. Yet, because of His mission of grace, He expects His people to respond with love, justice, grace and mercy in those situations, just as He has responded to our disasters of sin through sending His Son to save us.

*Finitum non capax infinitum.* "The finite cannot contain (or grasp) the infinite."

A.W. Tozer..."His love disposes him to desire our everlasting welfare and his sovereignty enables him to secure it. Nothing can hurt a good man."

John Gerstner..."Evil must have come from God's purpose and not his nature" (*Handout Theology* 4.4).

John Gerstner..."Decrees are fixed but "change in all around, I see" which is the result of all the fixity. Fixed changes...God fixedly decreed life, activity, choice, responsibility, blessings and cursing, heaven and hell" (*Handout Theology* 10.5, 10.7).

Corrie Ten Boom..."Every Experience God gives, every person he puts in our lives, is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see."

## REFLECTIONS

1. Jamiesen, Fausset, Brown (JFB) insist that: "the locusts are only the symbols of human foes. The immense Assyrian host of invaders under Sennacherib (compare [Isaiah 37:36](#)) destroyed by God ([Joel 2:18,20,21](#)), may be the primary objects of the prophecy; but ultimately the last antichristian confederacy, destroyed by special divine interposition, is meant. **there hath not been ever the like--** (Compare [Joel 1:2](#), [Exodus 10:14](#))."

Unlike JFB, the author of this study (Hegeman) argues that the locust refer to a real plague of locust. Hegeman argues that the figures of speech in 2:1-11 use the symbolism of a human army to describe the locust's army and not the other way around. However, if later prophecy wants to use the imagery of locust plague to speak about a human invasion, so be it, but the imagery of this particular prophecy cannot be reversed. What do you think?

2. Does the admission that the Lord is the commander of the locust army make the Lord guilty of evil?
3. In an AOL poll conducted after the devastating 2005 hurricane Katrina in Florida and the Gulf coast, more than 50% of the contestants did not think that God uses hurricanes to punish people. What do you think?
4. How does verse 2:13 make you see the relationship between God's justice and His mercy?

LESSON FOUR (work sheet) 2:1-14

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY</p> <p>Explanation of important data:</p> <p>Important words in passage:</p> <p>Grammatical annotations:</p> <p>Translation method:</p> <p>Literary genre:</p> <p>Original author and hearers</p> <p>Cultural context:</p> <p>Historical context:</p> <p>Biblical context:</p> <p>Title for the passage:</p> <p>Theme of the passage</p>	
CROSS REFERENCE STUDY	<p>What are some examples where the Lord led the opposing forces?</p> <p>Joel 2:25</p> <p>Isaiah 10:5-7 ; Isaiah 13:4</p> <p>Jeremiah 25:9 ; Jeremiah 43:10</p> <p>Zeph. 1:18 ; Mal. 4:1,5</p>
THEMATIC STUDY	
2:1 Sound of National Alarm	How will be Day of the Lord be announced?
2.2. Description of the Day of the Lord	What is the Day of the Lord compared to?
2.3.	What are the results of the locust's march?
2:4-9. Description of the invasion of locusts	What metaphors are used to describe the invasion of the locusts?
2:8-9	How are the locusts like a human army?
2:9	What happens to the earth, sun, moon and stars?
2:10-11. The Leader of the army of locusts	Who is the leader of the locust army?
2:12-13. The gracious heart of God	How would you describe the heart of God from these texts?
LITERARY STUDY	Do the figures of speech describe a human army or an army of locusts?
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY</p> <p>1. Thesis</p> <p>2. Antithesis</p> <p>3. Synthesis</p> <p>4. Syncretism</p>	
<p>DEVOTIONAL STUDY</p> <p>Prayer and Action</p> <p>-Praise to God:</p> <p>-Confession of personal sin:</p> <p>-Confession of social sin:</p> <p>-Special requests:</p> <p>-Thanksgiving to God:</p> <p>Communication of truths of the passage</p> <p>-three main truth statements</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	
Final comments	

**The 1599 Geneva Study Bible**

**2:1** Blow ye <sup>a</sup> the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for [it is] nigh at hand;

(a) He shows the great judgments of God which are at hand, unless they repent.

**2:2** A <sup>b</sup> day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon

the mountains: a <sup>c</sup> great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, [even] to the years of many generations.

(b) Of affliction and trouble. (c) Meaning, the Assyrians.

2:3 A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land [is] as the garden of <sup>d</sup> Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

(d) The enemy destroyed our plentiful country, wherever he went.

2:6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces <sup>e</sup> shall gather blackness.

(e) They will be pale and black because of fear, as in ([Nahum 2:10](#)).

2:8 Neither shall one <sup>f</sup> thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and [when] they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

(f) For none will be able to resist them.

2:10 The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the <sup>g</sup> sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

(g) Read ([Joel 2:31](#); [Isaiah 13:10](#); [Ezekiel 32:7](#); [Joel 3:15](#); [Matthew 24:29](#))

2:11 And the LORD shall <sup>h</sup> 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?

(h) The Lord will stir up the Assyrians to execute his judgments.

2:13 And <sup>i</sup> rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

(i) Mortify your affections and serve God with pureness of heart, and not with ceremonies.

2:14 Who knoweth [if] he will <sup>k</sup> return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; [even] a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

(k) He speaks this to stir up their slothfulness, and not that he doubted of God's mercies, if they did repent. For the way in which God repents, See [Geneva](#)

## MATTHEW HENRY

In this chapter we have, *I. A further description of that terrible desolation which should be made in the land of Judah by the locusts and caterpillars (v. 1–11). II. A serious call to the people, when they are under this sore judgment, to return and repent, to fast and pray, and to seek unto God for mercy, with directions how to do this aright (v. 12–17). III. A promise that, upon their repentance, God would remove the judgment, would repair the breaches made upon them by it, and restore unto them plenty of all good things (v. 18–27). IV. A prediction of the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah in the world, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the latter days (v. 28–32). Thus the beginning of this chapter is made terrible with the tokens of God's wrath, but the latter end of it made comfortable with the assurances of his favour, and it is in the way of repentance that this blessed change is made; so that, though it is only the last paragraph of the chapter that points directly at gospel-times, yet the whole may be improved as a type and figure, representing the curses of the law invading men for their sins, and the comforts of the gospel flowing in to them upon their repentance.*

[Verses 1-11](#) Here we have God contending with his own professing people for their sins and executing upon them the judgment written in the law (Deu. 28:42), *The fruit of thy land shall the locust consume*, which was one of those diseases of Egypt that God would bring upon them, v. 60. I. Here is the war proclaimed (v. 1): *Blow the trumpet in Zion*, either to call the invading army together, and then the trumpet sounds a charge, or rather to give notice to Judah and Jerusalem of the approach of the judgment, that they might *prepare to meet their God* in the way of his judgments and might endeavor by prayers and tears, the church's best artillery, to put by the stroke. It was the priests' business to sound the trumpet (Num. 10:8), both as an appeal to God in the day of their distress and a summons to the people to come together to seek his face. Note, It is the work of ministers to give warning from the word of God of the fatal consequences of sin, and to reveal his wrath from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And though it is not the privilege of Zion and Jerusalem to be exempted from the judgments of God, if they provoke him, yet it is their privilege to be warned of them, that they might make their peace with him. Even in *the holy mountain the alarm must be sounded*, and then it sounds most dreadful, Amos 3:2. Now, *shall a trumpet be blown in the city*, in the holy city, *and the people not be afraid?* Surely they will. Amos 3:6. *Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble*; they shall be made to tremble by the judgment itself; let them therefore tremble at the alarm of it. II. Here is a general idea given of the day of battle, which *cometh*, which is *nigh at hand*, and there is no avoiding it. It is the *day of the Lord*, the day of his judgment, in which he will both manifest and magnify himself. It is *a day of darkness and gloominess* (v. 2), literally so, the swarms of locusts and caterpillars being so large and so thick as to darken the sky (Ex. 10:15), or rather figuratively; it will be a melancholy time, a time of grievous affliction. And it will come *as the morning spread upon the mountains*; the

darkness of this day will come as suddenly as the morning light, as irresistibly, will spread as far, and grow upon them as the morning light. III. Here is the army drawn up in array (v. 2): They are a *great people, and a strong*. Any one sees the vast numbers that there shall be of locusts and caterpillars, destroying the land, will say (as we are all apt to be most affected with what is present), "Surely, never was the like before, nor ever will be the like again." Note, Extraordinary judgments are rare things, and seldom happen, which is an instance of God's patience. When God had drowned the world once he promised never to do it again. The army is here describe to be, 1. Very bold and daring: *They are as horses*, as war-horses, that rush into the battle and *are not affrighted* (Job 39:22); and *as horsemen*, carried on with martial fire and fury, *so they shall run*, v. 4. Some of the ancients have observed that the head of a locust is very like, in shape, to the head of a horse. 2. Very loud and noisy— *like the noise of chariots*, of many chariots, when driven furiously over rough ground, *on the tops of the mountains*, v. 5. Hence is borrowed part of the description of the locusts which St. John saw rise out of the bottomless pit. Rev. 9:7, 9, *The shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared to the battle; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses running to the battle*. Historians tell us that the noise made by swarms of locusts in those countries that are infested with them has sometimes been heard six miles off. The noise is likewise compared to that of a *roaring fire*; it is like the *noise of a flame that devours the stubble*, which noise is the more terrible because that which it is the indication of is devouring. Note, When God's judgments are abroad they make a great noise; and it is necessary for the awakening of a secure and stupid world that they should do so. (3.) They are very regular, and keep ranks in their march; though numerous and greedy of spoil, yet they are *as a strong people set in battle array* (v. 5.): *They shall march every one on his ways*, straight forward, as if they had been trained up by the discipline of war to keep their post and observe their right-hand man. *They shall not break their ranks, nor one thrust another*, v. 7, 8. Their number and swiftness shall breed no confusion. See how God can make creatures to act by rule that have no reason to act by, when he designs to serve his own purposes by them. And see how necessary it is that those who are employed in any service for God should observe order, and keep ranks, should diligently go on in their own work and stand in one another's way. 4. They are very *swift*; they *run like horsemen* (v. 4), *run like mighty men* (v. 7); they *run to and fro in the city*, and *run upon the wall*, v. 9. When God *sends forth his command on earth* his word *runs very swiftly*, Ps. 147:15. Angels have wings, and so have locusts, when God makes use of them. IV. Here is the terrible execution done by this formidable army, 1. In the country, v. 3. View the army in the front, and you will see a *fire devouring before them*; they consume all as if they breathed fire. View it in the rear, and you will see those that come behind as furious as the foremost: *Behind them a flame burns*. When they are gone, then it will appear what destruction they have made. Look upon the fields that they have not yet invaded, and they are *as the garden of Eden*, pleasant to the eye, and full of good fruits; they are the pride and glory of the country. But look upon the fields that they have eaten up and they are *as a desolate wilderness*; one would not think that these had ever been like the former, and yet so they were perhaps but the day before, or that those should ever be made like these, and yet so they shall be perhaps by tomorrow night; yea, and *nothing shall escape them* than can possibly be made food for them. Let none be proud of the beauty of their grounds any more than of their bodies, for God can soon change the face of both. 2. In the city. They shall *climb the wall* (v. 7), they shall *run upon the houses*, and *enter in at the windows like a thief* (v. 9); when Egypt was plagued with *locusts*, they filled *Pharaoh's houses* and the *houses of his servants*, Ex. 10:5, 6. The locusts out of the bottomless pit, Satan's emissaries, and missionaries of the man of sin, do as these locusts. God's judgments too, when they come with commission, cannot be kept out with bars and bolts; they will find or force their way. V. The impressions that should hereby be made upon the people. They shall find it to no purpose to make opposition. These enemies are invulnerable and therefore irresistible: *When they fall upon the sword they shall not be wounded*, v. 8. And those that cannot be hurt cannot be stopped; and therefore *before their faces the people shall be much pained* (v. 6), as the merchants are in pain for their trading ships when they hear they are just in the mouth of a squadron of the enemies. "One is in pain for his field, another for his vineyard, *and all faces gather blackness*," which denotes the utmost consternation imaginable. Men in fear look pale, but men in despair look black; the whiteness of a sudden fright, when it is settled, turns into blackness. What is the matter of our pride and pleasure God can soon make the matter of our pain. The terror that the country should be in is described (v. 10) by figurative expressions: *The earth shall quake and the heavens tremble*; even the hearts that seemed undaunted, so firm that nothing would frighten them, as immovable as heaven or earth, shall be seized with astonishment. Or when the inhabitants of the land are made to quake it seems to them as if all about them trembled too. Through the prevalency of their fear, or for want of the supports of life which they used to have, their eye shall wax dim and their sight fail them, so that to them *the sun and moon shall seem to be dark*, and the stars to *withdraw their shining*. Note, When God frowns upon men the lights of heaven will be small joy to them; for man, by rebelling against his Creator, has forfeited the benefit of all the creatures. But, though this is to be understood figuratively, there is a day coming when it will be accomplished in the letter, when the *heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll*, and *the earth, and all the works that are therein*, shall be *burnt up*. Particular judgments should awaken us to think of the general judgment. VI. We are here directed to look up both him who

is the commander-in-chief of this formidable army, and that is God himself, v. 11. It is *his army*; it is *his camp*. He raised it; he gives it commission; he *utters his voice before it*, as the general gives orders to his army what to do and makes a speech to animate the soldiers; it is the Lord that gives the word of command to all these animals, which they exactly observe. Some think that with this cloud of locusts God sent terrible thunder, for that is called, *The voice of the Lord*, and was another of the plagues of Egypt, and this made the heavens and the earth tremble. It is the *day of the Lord* (as it was called, v. 1), for in this war we are sure he carries the day; it must needs be his, for *his camp is great* and numerous. Those whom he makes war upon he can, as here, overpower with numbers; and whoever he employs to *execute his word*, as the minister of his justice, is sure to be made *strong* and *par negotio*—*equal to what he undertakes*; whom God gives commission to he girds with strength for the executing of that commission. And this makes the *great day* of the Lord *very terrible* to all those who in that day are to be made the monuments of his justice; for *who can abide it?* None can escape the arrests of God's wrath, can make head against the force of it, or bear up under the weight of it, 1 Sa. 6:20; Ps. 76:7.

VS.12-14. [Verses 12-17](#) We have here an earnest exhortation to repentance, inferred from that desolating judgment described and threatened in the foregoing verses: *Therefore now turn you to the Lord*. 1. "Thus you must answer the end and intention of the judgment; for it was sent for this end, to convince you of your sins, to humble you for them, to reduce you to your right minds and to your allegiance." God brings us into straits, that he may bring us to repentance and so bring us to himself. 2. "Thus you may stay the progress of the judgment. Things are bad with you, but thus you may prevent their growing worse; nay, if you take this course, they will soon grow better." Here is a gracious invitation, I. To a personal repentance, exercised in the soul, *every family apart, and their wives apart*, Zec. 12:12. When the judgments of God are abroad, each person is concerned to contribute his *quota* to the common supplications, having contributed to the common guilt. Every one must mend one and mourn for one, and then we should all be mended and all found among God's mourners. Observe, 1. What we are here called to, which will teach us what it is to repent, for it is the same that the Lord our God still requires of us, we having all made work for repentance. (1.) We must be truly humbled for our sins, must be sorry we have by sin offended God, and ashamed we have by sin wronged ourselves, both wronged our judgments and wronged our interests. There must be outward expressions of sorrow and shame, *fasting*, and *weeping*, and *mourning*; tears for the sin that procured it. But what will the outward expressions of sorrow avail if the inward impressions be not agreeable, and not only accompany them, but be the root and spring of them, and give rise to them? And therefore it follows, *Rend your heart, and not your garments*; not but that, according to the custom of that age, it was proper for them to rend their garments, in token of great grief for their sins and a holy indignation against themselves for their folly; but, "Rest not in the doing of that, as if that were sufficient, but be more in care to accommodate your spirits than to accommodate your dress to a day of fasting and humiliation; nay, rend not your garments at all, unless withal you rend your hearts, for the sign without the thing signified is but a jest and a mockery, and an affront to God." Rending the heart is that which God looks for and requires; that is the *broken and contrite heart* which he *will not despise*, Ps. 51:17. When we are greatly grieved in soul for sin, so that it even *cuts us to the heart* to think how we have dishonoured God and disparaged ourselves by it, when we conceive an aversion to sin, and earnestly desire and endeavor to get clear of the principles of it and never to return to the practice of it, then we rend our hearts for it, and then will God *rend the heavens* and come down to us with mercy. (2.) We must be thoroughly converted to our God, and come home to him when we fall out with sin. *Turn you even to me, said the Lord* (v. 12), and again (v. 13), *Turn unto the Lord your God*. Our fasting and weeping are worth nothing if we do not with them turn to God as our God. When we are fully convinced that it is our duty and interest to keep in with him, and are heartily sorry we have ever turned the back upon him, and thereupon, by a firm and fixed resolution, make his glory our end, his will our rule, and his favour our felicity, then we *return to the Lord our God*, and this we are all commanded and invited to do, and to do it quickly. 2. What arguments are here used to persuade this people thus to turn to the Lord, and to turn to him *with all their hearts*. When the heart is rent for sin, and rent from it, then it is prepared to turn entirely to God, and to be devoted entirely to him, and he will have it all or none. Now, to bring ourselves to this, let us consider, (1.) We are sure that he is, in general, a good God. We must *turn to the Lord our God*, not only because he has been just and righteous in punishing us for our sins, the fear of which should drive us to him, but because he is *gracious and merciful*, in receiving upon us our repentance, the hope of which should draw us to him. He is gracious and merciful, delights not in the death of sinners, but desires that they may turn and live. *He is slow to anger* against those that offend him, but of *great kindness* towards those that desire to please him. These very expressions are used in God's proclamation of his name when he caused *his goodness*, and with it all his glory, to *pass before Moses*, Ex. 34:6, 7. *He repents him of the evil*, not that he changes his mind, but, when the sinner's mind is changed, God's way towards him is changed; the sentence is reversed, and the curse of the law is taken off. Note, That is genuine, ingenuous, and evangelical repentance, which arises from a firm belief of the mercy of God, which we have sinned against, and yet are not in despair. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The goodness of God, if it be rightly understood, instead of emboldening us to go on in sin, will be the most powerful inducement to repentance, Ps.

130:4. The act of indemnity brings those to God whom the act of attainder frightened from him. (2.) We have reason to hope that he will, upon our repentance, give us that good which by sin we have forfeited and deprived ourselves of (v. 14), that he will *return and repent*, that he will not proceed against us as he has done, but will act in favour of us. *Therefore* let us repent of our sins against him, and return to him in a way of duty, because then we may hope that he will repent of his judgments against us and return to us in a way of mercy. Now observe, [1.] The manner of expectation is very humble and modest: *Who knows if he will?* Some think it is expressed thus doubtfully to check the presumption and security of the people, and to quicken them to a holy carefulness and liveliness in their repentance, as Jos. 24:19. Or, rather, it is expressed doubtfully because it is the removal of a temporal judgment that they here promise themselves, of which we cannot be so confident as we can that, in general, God is gracious and merciful. There is no question at all to be made but that if we truly repent of our sins God will forgive them, and be reconciled to us; but whether he will remove this or the other affliction which we are under may well be questioned, and yet the probability of it should encourage us to repent. Promises of temporal good things are often made with a peradventure. *It may be, you shall be hid*, Zep. 2:3. David's sin is pardoned, and yet the child shall die, and, when David prayed for its life, he said, as here, *Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me* in this matter likewise? 2 Sa. 12:22. The Ninevites repented and reformed upon such a consideration as this, Jonah 3:9. [2.] The matter of expectation is very pious. They hope God will return and repent, and *leave a blessing behind him*, not as if he were about to go from them, and they could be content with any blessing in lieu of his presence, but *behind him*, that is, "After he has ceased his controversy with us, he will bestow a blessing upon us;" and what is it? It is a *meat-offering and a drink-offering to the Lord our God*. The fruits of the earth are called a *blessing* (Isa. 45:8) because they depend upon God's blessing and are necessary blessings to us. They had been deprived of these, and that which grieved them most while they were so was that God's altar was deprived of its offerings and God's priests of their maintenance; that therefore which they comfort themselves with the prospect of in their return of plenty is that then there shall be meat-offerings and drink-offerings in abundance brought to God's altar, which they more desired than to see the wonted abundance of meat and drink brought to their own tables. Thus when Hezekiah was in hopes that he should recover of his sickness he asked, *What is the sign that I shall go up*, not to the thrones of judgment, or to the council board, but *to the house of the Lord?* Isa. 38:22. Note, The plentiful enjoyment of God's ordinances in their power and purity is the most valuable instance of a nation's prosperity and the greatest blessing that can be desired. If God give the blessing of meat-offering and the drink-offering, that will bring along with it other blessings, will sanctify them, sweeten them, and secure them.

## LESSON FIVE

### “Restoration is measured in terms of what you have repented from”

#### LAST CALL FOR REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION FROM THE LOCUST INVASION (2:15-27)

Joel 2:12-17 prescribes a heartfelt and comprehensive repentance that is required by God of His people.<sup>10</sup> All of the covenant people are called to present themselves before God and ask for His mercy.<sup>11</sup>

Restoration is promised in 2:18-27. God is willing and able to bring a reversal to the woes described in chapter 1. The “repentance of God” brings revival to His people. When God’s people repent of their sin and appeal to God’s grace, God is able to take away the punitive demands of the Law, relent from sending more calamity and leave a blessing (2:14-14).<sup>12</sup>

Since Judah and Jerusalem were not completely destroyed by the locusts, it is understood that the judgment was partial and that repentance took place.

What is so amazing with God’s promised restoration is that it is described in terms of the reversals of the woes. The prophecy describes this reversal in exact detail. This means that when we repent before the Lord today, God will restore what is missing.

Are the blessings of repentance and restoration happening today among God’s people? When it does happen we call this revival. Is there true revival today? I believe there are parts of the Body of Christ that are being revived. In some denominations the revival comes from within the institutional church, in other denominations the revival takes place outside of the historical walls of Christendom. Both the Missouri Lutheran Church and Southern Baptist Church have experienced both a theological as well as spiritual revival in their denominations. The formation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), coming out of the liberal PCUSA, as well as the formation of the United Reformed Churches (URC), coming out of the CRC, are representative of theological revival.

John Armstrong, a Baptist theologian, editor of the magazine, *Reformation and Revival*, speaks about revival as "God's extra-ordinary usage of ordinary means." By "means" he refers to preaching, teaching, personal and communal prayer, and ethical. In times of revival there is faithful preaching of the Word; private and corporate prayer; regular, systematic instruction in doctrine; and a faithful response to the ethical demands of Scripture.<sup>13</sup>

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 119, "*Revive me, O Lord, according to your Word*" (119:107). Or as Habbacuc prophecies, "*Oh Lord, revive your Work...in wrath remember mercy*" (3:2). There were times of revival in the Old Testament, as God's people were led back to the Word. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came in a special way. But such a revival did not stop there. The apostle Peter preached in Acts 3: "*Brethren...Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of God*" (3:19).

LESSON FIVE. (Work Sheet) 2:15-27

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew Henry: When the heart is rent for sin, and rent from it, then it is prepared to turn entirely to God.

<sup>11</sup> Genevan Study Bible: That as all have sinned, so all may show forth signs of their repentance, so that men seeing the children who are not free from God's wrath, might be the more deeply touched with the consideration of their own sins.

Matthew Henry. 7. "*He repents him of the evil*, not that he changes his mind, but, when the sinner's mind is changed, God's way towards him is changed; the sentence is reversed, and the curse of the law is taken off." God does not morally repent, he does not have sin, but he is able to change his mind as whether or not to punish.

<sup>13</sup> John Armstrong, "The Holy Spirit Working in Revival," LMC Conference lectures, 1996.

<b>INDUCTIVE STUDY</b> Explanation of important data: Important words in passage: Grammatical annotations: Translation method: Literary genre: Original author and hearers Cultural context: Historical context: Biblical context: Title for the passage: Theme of the passage				
<b>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY</b>  Match the woes with the restoration		<b>WOES</b>	<b>RESTORATION</b>	
	1.4.	Locust devour	Locust destroyed	2.25
	1.8	Fear, mourning	Faith, rejoicing	2.21
	1.7.	Trees dry up	Trees blossom	2.22
	1.7	Fig tree dries up	Fig tree blossoms	2.22
	1.7.	Vine dries up	Wine	2.22
	1.8	Grain gone	Grain comes	2.24
	1.10	Wine dries up	Wine comes	2.24
	1.10	Oil dried up	Oil returns	2.24
	1.18	Cattle moan	Wild animals	2.22
	1.20/23	Drought	Green pastures	2.22
	1.20	Pastures burned	Green pastures	2.22
	1.13/26	Crying	Rejoicing	2.26.
	1.27	Hunger	Eating	2.26
	1.11/28	shame	No shame	2:27
<b>THEMATIC STUDY</b>				
2:15-17. Call to the covenant people				
Vs. 2:15-16	Who should seek repentance?			
Vs. 2:17.	What should the priest do?			
Summary statement for 2:15-17				
2:18-27 Restoration for a repentant people				
2:18	Why will God's people be restored?			
2:19	Is the restoration only spiritual?			
2:20	Where will the locust be sent?			
2:21-27	As you review the relationship between the woes and restoration, is there anything that strikes you?			
Summary statement for 2:18-27				
<b>DIALECTICAL STUDY</b> 1. Thesis 2. Antithesis 3. Synthesis 4. Syncretism				
<b>DEVOCIONAL STUDY</b> Prayer and Action -Praise to God -Confession of personal sin -Confession of social sin				

-Special requests -Thanksgiving to God Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. 2. 3.	
FINAL COMMENTS	

## GENEVAN STUDY BIBLE

**2:16** Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the <sup>l</sup> children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

(l) That as all have sinned, so all may show forth signs of their repentance, so that men seeing the children who are not free from God's wrath, might be the more deeply touched with the consideration of their own sins.

**2:18** Then will the LORD be <sup>m</sup> jealous for his land, and pity his people.

(m) If they repent he shows that God will preserve and defend them with a most fervent affection.

**2:20** But I will remove far off from you the <sup>n</sup> northern [army], and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the <sup>o</sup> east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

(n) That is, the Assyrians your enemies.

(o) Called the Salt Sea, or Persian Sea: meaning, that even though this army was so great that it filled all from this sea to the Mediterranean Sea, yet he would scatter them.

**2:23** Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain <sup>p</sup> moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month].

## MATTHEW HENRY

15-17. II. They are here called to a public national repentance, to be exercised in the solemn assembly, as a national act, for the glory of God and the excitement of one another, and that the neighbouring nations might know and observe what it was that qualified them for God's gracious returns in mercy to them, which they would be the admiring witnesses of. Let us see here, 1. How the congregation must be called together, v. 15, 16. The trumpet was blown (v. 1), to sound an *alarm of war*; but now it must be blown in order to a treaty of peace. God is willing to show mercy to his people if he do but find them in a frame fit for it; and therefore, Call them together; *sanctify a fast*. By the law many annual feasts were appointed, but only one day in the year was to be observed as a fast, the *day of atonement*, a day to *afflict the soul*; and, if they had kept close to God and their duty, there would have been no occasion to observe any more; but now that they had by sin brought the judgments of God upon them they are often called to fasting. What was said ch. 1:14 is here repeated: "*Call a solemn assembly; gather the people* (press them to come together upon this errand); *sanctify the congregation*; appoint a time for solemn preparation beforehand and put them in mind to prepare themselves. Let not the greatest be excused, but *assemble the elders*, the judges and magistrates. Let not the meanest be passed by, but *gather the children, and those that suck the breasts*." It is good to bring little children, as soon as they are capable of understanding any thing, to religious assemblies, that they may be trained up betimes in the way wherein they should go; but these were brought even when they were at the breast and were kept fasting, that by their cries for the breast the hearts of the parents might be moved to repent of sin, which God might justly so visit upon their children that the *tongue of the sucking child* might *cleave to the roof of his mouth* (Lam. 4:4), and that on them God might have compassion, as he had on the infants of Nineveh, Jonah 4:11. New-married people must not be exempted: *Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber and the bride out of her closet*; let them not take state upon them as usual, not put on their ornaments, nor indulge themselves in mirth, but address themselves to the duties of the public fast with as much gravity and sadness as any of their neighbours. Note, Private joys must always give way to public sorrows, both those for affliction and those for sin. 2. How the work of the day must be carried on, v. 17. (1.) The priests, *the Lord's ministers*, must preside in the congregation, and be God's mouth to the people, and theirs to God; who should stand in the gap to turn away the wrath of God but those whose business it was to make intercession upon ordinary occasions? (2.) They must officiate *between the porch and the altar*. There they used to attend about the sacrifices, and therefore now that they have no sacrifices to offer, or next to none, there

they must offer up spiritual sacrifices. There the people must see them weeping and wrestling, like their father Jacob, and be helped into the same devout frame. Ministers must themselves be affected with those things wherewith they desire to affect others. It was *between the porch and the altar* that Zechariah the son of Jehoiada was put to death for his faithfulness; that precious blood God would require at their hands, and therefore, to turn away the judgment threatened for it, there they must *weep*. (3.) They must pray. Words here are put into their mouths, which they might in their prayers enlarge upon. Their petition must be, *Spare thy people, O Lord!* God's people, when they are in distress, can expect no relief against God's justice but what comes from his mercy. They cannot say, Lord, *right us*, but, Lord, *spare us*. We deserve the correction; we need it; but, Lord, mitigate it. The sinner's supplication is, *Spare us, good Lord*. Their plea must be taken from the relation wherein they stand to God ("They are *thy people*, and *thy heritage*, therefore have compassion on them"), but especially from the concern of God's glory in their trouble—"Lord, *give not thy heritage to reproach*, to the reproach of famine; let not the land of Canaan, that has so long been celebrated as the glory of all lands, now be made the scorn of all lands; let not *the heathen rule over them*, as they will easily do when thy heritage is thus impoverished and disabled to subsist. Let not the heathen make them a *proverb*, or a *by-word*" (so some read it); "let it never be said, *As poor and beggarly as an Israelite*." Note, The maintaining of the credit of the nation among its neighbours is a blessing to be desired and prayed for by all that wish well to it. But that reproach of the church is especially to be dreaded and deprecated which reflects upon God: "Let them not say *among the people, Where is their God*—that God who has promised to help them, whom they have boasted so much of and put such a confidence in?" If God's heritage be destroyed, the neighbours will say, "God was either weak and could not relieve them or unkind and would not." Deu. 32:37, *Where are now their gods in whom they trusted?* And Sennacherib thus triumphs over them. *Where are they gods of Hamath and Arpad?* But it must by no means be suffered that they should say of Israel, *Where is their God?* For we are sure that our God is in the heavens (Ps. 115:2, 3), is in his temple, Ps. 11:4.

[Verses 18-27](#) See how ready God is to succour and relieve his people, how he *waits to be gracious*; as soon as ever they humble themselves under this hand, and pray, and seek his face, he immediately meets them with his favours. They prayed that God would *spare them*, and see here with what *good words and comfortable words* he answered them; for God's promises are real answers to the prayers of faith, because with him saying and doing are not two things. Now observe, I. Whence this mercy promised shall take rise (v. 18): God will be *jealous for his land* and *pity his people*. He will have an eye, 1. To his own honour, and the reputation of his covenant with Israel, by which he had conveyed to them that good land and had given in the value of it very high; now he will not suffer it to be despised nor disparaged, but will be jealous for the credit of his land, and the inhabitants of it, who had been praised as a happy people and therefore must not lie open to reproach as a miserable people. 2. To their distress: He will *pity his people*, and, in pity to them, he will restore them their forfeited comforts. God's compassion is a great encouragement to those that come humbly to him as penitents and as petitioners. II. What his mercy shall be, in several instances:—1. The destroying army shall be dispersed and defeated (v. 20): "*I will remove far off from you the northern army*, that army of locusts and caterpillars that invaded you from the north, brought in upon the wings of a north wind, an army which you could put no stop to the progress of; but, when you have made your peace with God, he will ease you of these soldiers that are quartered upon you and will *drive them into a land barren and desolate*, into that vast howling wilderness that Israel wandered in, where, after having surfeited upon the plenty of Canaan, they shall perish for want of sustenance. Those that have their *face to the east sea* (the Dead Sea, which lay east of Judea) shall perish in that, and the rear of the army shall be lost in the Great Sea," called here the *utmost sea*. They had made the land barren and desolate, and now God will cast them into a land barren and desolate. Thus those whom God employs for the correction of his people come afterwards to be themselves reckoned with; and the rod is thrown into the fire. Nothing shall remain of these swarms of insects but the ill savour of them. When Egypt was eased of the plague of locusts they were carried away to the Red Sea, Ex. 10:19. Note, When an affliction has done its work it shall be removed in mercy, as the locusts of Canaan were from a penitent people, not as the locusts of Egypt were removed, in wrath, from an impenitent prince, only to make room for another plague. Many interpreters, by this northern army, understand that of Sennacherib, which was dispersed when God by it had *accomplished his whole work upon Mount Zion and upon Jerusalem*, Isa. 10:12. This enemy shall be driven away, because *he has done great things*, has done a great deal of mischief, and has *magnified* to do it, has done it in the pride of his heart; therefore it follows (v. 21), *The Lord will do great things for his people*, as the enemy has done great things against them, to convince them that wherein they deal proudly he is, and will be, above them, that, what great things soever they did, they did no more than God commissioned them to do; and as, when he said to them, Go, they went, so, when he said to them, Come, they came, to show that they were *soldiers under him*. 2. The destroyed land shall be watered and made fruitful. When the army is scattered, yet what shall we do if the desolation they have made continue? It is therefore promised (v. 22) that *the pastures of the wilderness*, the pastures which the locusts had left as bare as

the wilderness, shall again *spring* and the *trees shall again bear their fruit*, particularly the *fig-tree and the vine*. But, when we see how the country is wasted, we are tempted to say, *Can these dry bones live? If the Lord should make windows in heaven*, it cannot be; but it shall be, for (v. 23) *the Lord has given* and will give you *the former rain and the latter rain*, and, if he give them in mercy, he will give them moderately, so that the rain shall not turn into a judgment, and he will give them in due season, the *latter rain in the first month*, when it was wanted and expected. It would make it comfortable to them to see it coming from the hand of God, and ordered by his wisdom, for then we are sure it is well ordered. *He has given you a teacher of righteousness*, (so the margin reads it, for the same word that signifies the *rain* signifies a *teacher*. and that which we translate *moderately* is *according to righteousness*), and this *teacher of righteousness*, says one of the rabbins, is the King Messias, and of him many others understand this; for he is a *teacher come from God*, and he shows us the way of *righteousness*. But others understand it of any prophet that *instructs unto righteousness*, and some of Hezekiah particularly, others of Isaiah. Note, It is a good sign that God has mercy in store for a people when he sends them teachers of righteousness, pastors after his own heart. 3. All their losses shall be repaired (v. 25): *"I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten; you shall be comforted according to the time that you have been afflicted, and shall have years of plenty to balance the years of famine."* 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 lost by his sin and folly, and took him into his family, as in his former estate. The locusts and caterpillars are here called *God's great army which he sent among them*, and he will repair what they had devoured because they were his army. 4. They shall have great abundance of all good things. The earth shall yield her increase, and they shall enjoy it. Look into the stores where they lay up, and you shall find *the floors full of wheat, and the fats overflowing with wine and oil* (v. 24), whereas, in the day of their distress, the *wine and oil languished* and *the barns were broken down*, ch. 1:10, 17. Look upon their tables, where they lay out what they have laid up, and you shall find that they *eat in plenty and are satisfied*, v. 26. They do not eat to excess, nor are surfeited; we hope the *drunkards* are cured by the late affliction of their inordinate love of wine and strong drink, for, though they were brought in howling for their scarcity (ch. 1:5), they are now brought in again here singing for the plenty of it; but now all shall have enough, and shall know when they have enough, for God will make their food nourishing and give them to be content with it. These are the mercies promised, and in these *God does great things* (v. 21), *He deals wondrously with his people*, v. 26. Herein he glorifies his power, and shows that he can relieve his people though their distress be ever so great, and glorifies his goodness, that he will do it upon their repentance though their provocations were ever so great. Note, When God deals graciously with poor sinners that return to him it must be acknowledged that he deals wondrously and does great things. Some expositors understand these promises figuratively, as pointing at gospel-grace, and having their accomplishment in the abundant comforts that are treasured up for believers in the covenant of grace and the satisfaction of soul they have therein. When God sends us his promises to be the matter of our comfort, his graces to be the grounds of it, and his Spirit to be the author of it, we may well own that he has sent us (according to his promise here, v. 19) *corn, and wine, and oil*, or that which is unspeakably better, and we have reason to be satisfied therewith. III. What use shall be made of these returns of God's mercy to them and the good account they shall turn to. 1. God shall have the glory thereof, for they shall *rejoice in the Lord their God* (v. 23), and what is the matter of their rejoicing shall be the matter of their thanksgiving; they shall *praise the name of the Lord their God* (v. 26) and not praise their idols, nor call their corn and wine the *rewards that their lovers had given them*. Note, The plenty of our creature-comforts is a mercy indeed to us when by them our hearts are enlarged in love and thankfulness to God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy, though we serve him but poorly. When God restores to us plenty after we have known scarcity, as it is doubly pleasant to us, so it should make us the more thankful to God. When Israel comes out of a wilderness into a Canaan, and there eats and is full, surely he will then *bless the Lord*, with a very sensible pleasure, for *that good land which he has given him*, Deu. 8:10. 2. They shall have the credit, and comfort, and spiritual benefit, thereof. When God gives them plenty again, and gives them to be satisfied with it, (1.) Their reputation shall be retrieved; they and their God shall be no more reflected upon as unfaithful to one another when they have returned to him in a way of duty and he to them in a way of mercy (v. 19): *"I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen, that triumphed in your calamities and insulted over you;"* and v. 26, 27, *"My people shall never be ashamed, as they have been, of their good land which they used to boast of, but shall again and ever have the same occasion to boast of it."* Note, It redounds much to the honour of God when he does that which saves the honour of his people; and those that are his people indeed, though they may be for a time, shall not be always, a *reproach among the heathens*; if we be rightly ashamed of our sins against God, we shall never be ashamed of our glorying in God. (2.) Their joys shall be revived (v. 23): *Be glad and rejoice, O land!* and all the inhabitants of it. Times of plenty are commonly times of joy; yet the favour of God *puts gladness into the heart* more than those who have *corn, and wine, and oil increase*. But especially *be glad them, you children of*

*Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, v. 23. They mourned in Zion (v. 15), and therefore there in a particular manner they shall rejoice; for those that sow in penitential tears shall certainly reap in thankful joys. The children of Zion, who led the rest in fasting, must lead the rest in rejoicing. But observe, They shall rejoice in the Lord their God, not so much in the good themselves that are given them as in the good hand that gives them and in the return of his favour to them, as theirs in covenant, which these good things are the tokens and pledges of. The joy of harvest and the joy of a feast must both terminate in God, whose love we should taste in all the gifts of his bounty, that we may make him our chief joy, as he is our chief good, and the fountain of all good to us. (3.) Their faith in God shall be confirmed and increased. When temporal mercies are made by the grace of God to be of spiritual advantage to us, and plenty for the body is so far from being an enemy (as with many it proves) that it becomes a friend to the prosperity of the soul, then they are mercies indeed to us. This is promised here (v. 27): You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, the Holy One in the midst of thee (Hos. 11:9), and that I am the Lord your God, and none else. As it proves that the Lord is God, and there is none other, because he wounds and he heals, he forms light and darkness, he does good and evil (Isa. 45:7; Deu. 32:39), so it proves him to be God of Israel, a God in covenant with his people and a father to them, that as a father he both corrects them when they offend and comforts them when they repent. It was the burden of the threatenings in Ezekiel's prophecy, Such and such evils I will bring upon you, and you shall know that I am the Lord; and the same is here made the crown of the promises: You shall eat, and be satisfied, and rejoice, and thus you shall know that I am the Lord. Note, We should labour to grow in our acquaintance with God by all providences, both merciful and afflictive. When God gives to his people plenty, and peace, and joy, upon their return to him, he thereby gives them to understand that he is pleased with their repentance, that he has pardoned their sins, and that he is theirs as much as ever—that they are taken into the same covenant with him, for he is the Lord their God, and into the same communion, for he is in the midst of them, nigh unto them in all that they call upon him for, and, as the sun in the centre of the worlds, so in the midst of them as to diffuse his benign influences to all the parts of his land. 3. Even the inferior creatures shall share therein and be made easy thereby: Fear not, O land! v. 21. Be not afraid, you beasts of the field, v. 22. They had suffered for the sin of man, and for God's quarrel with him; and now they shall fare the better for man's repentance and God's reconciliation to him. Nay, the beasts were said to cry unto God (ch. 1:20); and now that cry is answered, and they are directed not to be afraid, for they shall have plenty of all that which their nature craves. God, in sparing Nineveh, had an eye to the cattle (Jonah 4:11), for the cattle had fasted, ch. 3:8. This may lead us to think of the restitution of all things, when the creature, that is now made subject to vanity and groans under it, shall be brought, though not into the glorious joy, yet into the glorious liberty, of the children of God, Rom. 8:21.*

## REFLECTIONS

1. Revival was promised by the prophet Joel if the people had turned to the Lord, congregated as instructed, listened to the explanation of God's Word, seen their wicked ways, repented and pleaded for the mercy of God. Does that happen today as well?
2. Why is it significant that in revival, God's people are restored to their former relationship with God?
3. What is the goal of spiritual revival?

## LESSON SIX

**“All who call upon the name of the Lord are Pentecostals.”**

### **PENTECOSTAL DAY OF THE LORD (2:28-32)**

The prophecy of Joel reveals three special “days of the Lord.” Chapters one and two describe the Day of the Lord as a time of temporal judgment. At the end of chapter two the Day of the Lord is a time of spiritual restoration (2:28-32).<sup>14</sup> Finally, the closing chapter speaks about a final and apocalyptic judgment that ushers in the final consummation. Each manifestation of these days is to fulfill the overall redemptive mission of God that “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (2:32). The good news about eternal salvation and temporal blessings is for today. “Today is the day of salvation.” And, “today hear His voice.”

Chapters one and chapter 2:1-27 leave the reader in a frustrated state. God repeatedly calls on His people to repent and it seems as if only Joel is responding. Then in 2:28 we read about a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the lives of God’s people and holiness will abound. The Holy Spirit brings holiness. Holiness is the state of being separated from sin and dedicated to the glory of God.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will bring a greater manifestation of a holiness that pleases God and preserves the sinner. The outpouring of God’s Spirit is desperately needed in the sinful lives of the covenant people. Salvation and deliverance will come to Jerusalem and the temple. Such salvation came when the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ came.

The Pentecostal churches have a special affinity for this prophecy of Joel, as it is partially fulfilled in Acts 2 and is associated with the special gifts of the Spirit. However, the prophecy and its initial fulfillment in Acts 2 is for “all people” who receive the Holy Spirit. The result of receiving the Spirit is “and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” All people who truly call upon the name of God for salvation are part of the Pentecostal blessing.

Joel’s prophecy points to the need for the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people, including young, old, free, servants, male and female. The priesthood of all believers is the model for the new age. Elders (presbyters) and church leaders will be necessary to organize the expanded priesthood (Ephesians 4:12) but the exalted High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, will lead His people to the ends of time. The gospel of God’s kingdom will be preached in all nations and then the end will come.

The fullness of Spirit will be needed to face the outpouring of God’s wrath on all those who reject Him. God promises deliverance for the remnant but the end is coming. This is the subject matter of chapter 3.

However, the overall impact of Joel 2:28-32 is that help and deliverance is on its way. God’s mission in the history of redemption will be accomplished.

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew Henry: “The promises of corn, and wine, and oil, in the foregoing verses, would be very acceptable to a wasted country; but here we are taught that we must not rest in those things. God has reserved some better things for us, and these verses have reference to those better things, both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, with the happiness of true believers in both.”

LESSON SIX (work sheet) 2:28-32

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY                  Explanation of important data:                  Important words in passage:                  Grammatical annotations:                  Translation method:                  Literary genre:                  Original author and hearers                  Cultural context:                  Historical context:                  Biblical context:                  Title for the passage:                  Theme of the passage</p>	
<p>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY</p>	<p>Genesis 41:38                  Ex. 31:3                  Num. 11:17-29                  Num. 27:18                  Judg. 3:10; 4:4-7; 6:34; 13:5; 14:6,19; 15:14.                  Isaiah 11:2                  Isaiah 44:3                  Isaiah 59:21                  Isaiah 61:1-3                  Ez. 39:29                  Mt. 24:29-30                  Mt. 27:45                  Mark 13:25-26                  Acts 2:16-21, 39                  Acts 10:45                  Romans 10:13                  Galatians 3:28                  Rev. 6:12-14</p>
<p>THEMATIC STUDY</p>	
<p>2:28. Announcement of another type of Day of the Lord - Describe what kinds of "Days of the Lord" are found in Joel and the Bible.</p>	<p>1. Joel 1:15; Zeph. 1:14.                  2. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:20                  3. Joel 2:31; I Thes. 5:2</p>
<p>2:28-29 Recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p>Who will receive the Holy Spirit and what will they do:</p>
<p>2:30-31 Response of creation to the coming of the Lord</p>	<p>How will the creation respond to the coming of the Lord?</p>
<p>2:32. The announcement of the good news of salvation</p>	<p>What is so good about the announcement of salvation in 2:32.</p>
<p>Summary statement of 2:28-32</p>	
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY                  1. Thesis                  2. Antithesis                  3. Synthesis                  4. Syncretism</p>	
<p>DEVOTIONAL STUDY Prayer and Action                  -Praise to God                  -Confession of personal sin                  -Confession of social sin                  -Special requests                  -Thanksgiving to God                  Communication of truths of the passage                  -three main truth statements                  1.                  2.                  3.</p>	
<p>Closing comments</p>	

## GENEVAN STUDY BIBLE

**2:28** And it shall come to pass afterward, [that] I will pour <sup>q</sup> out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream <sup>r</sup> dreams, your young men shall see visions: (q) That is, in greater abundance, and more broadly than in times past. And this was fulfilled under Christ, when God's graces and his Spirit under the Gospel were abundantly given to the Church; ([Isaiah 44:3](#); [Acts 2:17](#)) ([John 7:38-39](#)).

(r) As they had visions and dreams in ancient times, so will they now have clearer revelations.

**2:30** And I will shew <sup>s</sup> wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

(s) He warns the faithful what terrible things would come, with the intent that they should not look for continual quietness in this world: and yet in all these troubles he would preserve them.

**2:31** The <sup>t</sup> sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

(t) The order of nature will seem to be changed because of the horrible afflictions that will be in the world; ([Isaiah 13:10](#); [Ezekiel 32:7](#); [Joel 3:15](#); [Matthew 24:29](#)).

**2:32** And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call <sup>u</sup> on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the <sup>x</sup> remnant whom the LORD shall call.

(u) God's judgments are for the destruction of the unbelievers, and to exhort the godly to call upon the name of God, who will give them salvation. (x) Meaning the Gentiles by this; ([Romans 10:13](#)).

### MATTHEW HENRY

[Verses 28-32](#) The promises of corn, and wine, and oil, in the foregoing verses, would be very acceptable to a wasted country; but here we are taught that we must not rest in those things. God has reserved some better things for us, and these verses have reference to those better things, both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, with the happiness of true believers in both. We are here told, I. How the kingdom of grace shall be introduced by a plentiful *effusion of the Spirit*, (v. 28, 29). We are not at a loss about the meaning of this promise, nor in doubt what it refers to and wherein it had its accomplishment, for the apostle Peter has given us an infallible explication and application of it, assuring us that when the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1, etc.), that was the very thing *which was spoken of here by the prophet Joel*, v. 16, 17. That was the gift of the Spirit, which, according to this prediction, was *to come*, and we are not to *look for any other*, any more than for another accomplishment of the promise of the Messiah. Now, 1. The blessing itself here promised is the *pouring out of the Spirit of God*, his gifts, graces, and comforts, which the blessed Spirit is the author of. We often read in the Old Testament of the Spirit of the Lord coming by drops, as it were, upon the judges and prophets whom God raised up for extraordinary services; but now the Spirit shall be poured out plentifully in a full stream, as was promised with an eye to gospel-times, Isa. 44:3. *I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed*. 2. The time fixed for this is *afterwards*; after the fulfilling of the foregoing promises this shall be fulfilled. St. Peter expounds this of *the last days*, the days of the Messiah, by whom the world was to have its last revelation of the divine will and grace in the last days of the Jewish church, a little before its dissolution. 3. The extent of this blessing, in respect of the persons on whom it shall be bestowed. The Spirit shall be *poured out upon all flesh*, not as hitherto upon Jews only, but upon Gentiles also; for in Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, Rom. 10:11, 12. Hitherto divine revelation was confined to the seed of Abraham, none but those of the land of Israel had the Spirit of prophecy; but, in the last days, *all flesh shall see the glory of God* (Isa. 40:5) and shall come to *worship before him*, Isa. 66:23. The Jews understand it of all flesh in the land of Israel, and Peter himself did not fully understand it as speaking of the Gentiles till he saw it accomplished in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius and his friends, who were Gentiles (Acts 10:44, 45), which was but a continuation of the same gift which was bestowed on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit shall be poured out *upon all flesh*, that is, upon all those whose hearts are made hearts of flesh, soft and tender, and so prepared to receive the impressions and influences of the Holy Ghost. *Upon all flesh*, that is, upon some of all sorts of men; the gifts of the Spirit shall not be so sparing, or so much confined, as they have been, but shall be more general and diffusive of themselves. (1.) The Spirit shall be poured out upon some of each sex. Not *your sons* only, but *your daughters*, shall prophesy; we read of four sisters in one family that were prophetesses, Acts 21:9. Not the parents only, but the children, shall be filled with the Spirit, which intimates the continuance of this gift for some ages successively in the church. (2.) Upon some of each age: "*Your old men*, who are past their vigour and whose spirits begin to decay, *your young men*, who have yet but little acquaintance with and experience of divine things, shall yet *dream dreams* and *see visions*;" God will reveal himself by dreams and visions both to the young and old. (3.) Upon those of the meanest rank and condition, *even upon the servants and the handmaids*. The Jewish doctors say, *Prophecy does not reside on any* but such as are *wise, valiant, and rich*, not upon the soul of a *poor man*, or a

man *in sorrow*. But in Christ Jesus there is *neither bond nor free*, Gal. 3:28. There were many that *were called being servants* (1 Co. 7:21), but that was no obstruction to their receiving the Holy Ghost. (4.) The effect of this blessing: *They shall prophesy*; they shall receive new discoveries of divine things, and that not for their own use only, but for the benefit of the church. They shall interpret scripture, and speak of things secret, distant, and future, which by the utmost sagacities of reason, and their natural powers, they could not have any insight into nor foresight of. By these extraordinary gifts the Christian church was first founded and set up, and the scriptures were written, and the ministry settled, by which, with the ordinary operations and influences of the Spirit, it was to be afterwards maintained and kept up. II. How the kingdom of glory shall be introduced by the universal change of nature, v. 30, 31. The pouring out of the Spirit will be very comfortable to the righteous; but let the unrighteous hear this, and tremble. There is a *great and terrible day of the Lord* coming, which shall be ushered in with *wonders in heaven and earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke, the turning of the sun into darkness and the moon into blood*. This is to have its full accomplishment (as the learned Dr. Pocock thinks) in the day of judgment, at the end of time, before which these signs will be performed in the letter of them, yet so that it was accomplished in part in the death of Christ (which is called the *judgment of this world*, when the earth quaked and the sun was darkened, and a *great and terrible day* it was), and more fully in the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a type and figure of the general judgment, and before which there were many amazing prodigies, besides the convulsions of states and kingdoms prophesied of under the figurative expressions of turning the *sun into darkness and the moon into blood*, and the *wars and rumours of wars, and distress of nations*, which our Saviour spoke of as the *beginning of these sorrows*, Mt. 24:6, 7. But before the last judgment there will be *wonders indeed in heaven and earth*, the dissolution of both, without a metaphor. The judgments of God upon a sinful world, and the frequent destruction of wicked kingdoms by fire and sword, are prefaces to and presages of the judgment of the world in the last day. Those on whom the Spirit is poured out shall foresee and foretell that *great and terrible day of the Lord*, and expound the *wonders in heaven and earth* that go before it; for, as to his first coming, so to his second, all the prophets did and do bear witness, Rev. 10:7. III. The safety and happiness of all true believers both in the first and second coming of Jesus Christ, v. 32. This speaks of particular persons, for to them the New Testament has more respect, and less to kingdoms and nations, than the Old. Now observe here, 1. That there is a salvation wrought out. Though the day of the Lord will be great and terrible, yet *in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance* from the terror of it. It is the day of the Lord, the day of his judgment, who knows how to separate between the precious and the vile. In the everlasting gospel, which *went from Zion*, in the church of the first-born typified by Mount Zion, and which is the Jerusalem that is from above, there is *deliverance*; a way of escaping the *wrath to come* is found out and laid open. Christ is himself not only the *Saviour*, but *the salvation*; he is so *to the ends of the earth*. This deliverance, laid up for us in the covenant of grace, is in performance of the promises made to the fathers. *There shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said*. See Lu. 1:72. Note, This is ground of comfort and hope to sinners, that, whatever danger there is in their case, there is also deliverance, deliverance for them, if it be not their own fault. And, if we would share in this deliverance, we must ourselves apply to the gospel—Zion, to God's Jerusalem. 2. That there is a remnant interested in this salvation, and for whom the deliverance is wrought. It is *in that remnant* (that is, among them) that the deliverance is, or in their souls and spirits; there are the earnest and evidences of it. *Christ in you, the hope of glory*. They are called a *remnant*, because they are but a few in comparison with the multitudes that are left to perish; a little remnant but a chosen one, a *remnant according to the election of grace*. And here we are told who they are that shall be delivered in the great day. (1.) Those that sincerely call upon God: *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord*, whether Jew or Gentile (for the apostle so expounds it, Rom. 10:13, where he lays this down as the great rule of the gospel by which we must all be judged), *shall be delivered*. This calling on God supposes knowledge of him, faith in him, desire towards him, dependence on him, and, as an evidence of the sincerity of all this, a conscientious obedience to him; for, without that, crying *Lord, Lord*, will not stand us in any stead. Note, It is the praying remnant that shall be the saved remnant. And it will aggravate the ruin of those who perish that they might have been saved on such easy terms. (2.) Those that are effectually called to God. The deliverance is sure to the *remnant whom the Lord shall call*, not only with the common call of the gospel, with which many are called that are not chosen, but with a special call into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, whom *the Lord predestinates, or prepares*, so the Chaldee. St. Peter borrows this phrase, Acts 2:39. Note, Those only shall be delivered in the great day that are now effectually called from sin to God, from self to Christ, from things below to things above.

#### REFLECTIONS

1. What is the difference of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit prior to Pentecost as compared to during and after Pentecost?
2. What is the purpose of the “signs of the times?” (i.e. vs. 2:30-31)
3. What is the relationship between the call of God and those who call on the name of the Lord?

## LESSON SEVEN

### “Valley of Decision”

#### INTERNATIONAL JUDGMENT DAY AND FINAL REFUGE (3:1-16)

When evangelical theologians open their mouths about the end times, my hermeneutical alarm system goes crazy. It's a gracious thing that we cannot lose our salvation about asking the wrong questions and having the wrong answers about the last days. I remember a dear friend of mine explain that the northern army of Joel 2:20 was the Russian army being repulsed by Israel in the Day of Armagedon. However, the “northern army” is an army of locusts, or if it refers to a human army it would be the Assyrian army!<sup>15</sup> When Joel 3 is interpreted to be a future millennial reign, we miss the implications that it has for the time of Joel and our present situation. This is not to say that there will be a glorious manifestation of the judgment and reign of Christ in the future, but our millennial view should not determine how we read Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

The disciples had similar tendencies as manifest in Acts 1:6. They wanted to know when Israel was going to be nationally restored. Jesus instructed them that it was not for them to know the times or dates....”but you will receive power...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) So, the Pentecostal Day of the Lord (Joel 2:28-32) came (Acts 2) but not all of the prophecies were fulfilled at that given moment. (i.e. Joel 2:30,31; Acts 2:19-20) Rather, it was the inauguration of new era in redemption history which would come to its completion with the second coming of Jesus.

As we look at the end times, we need to keep the Lord's instruction to His disciples in mind. 1) Do not be concerned about the times and season for the restoration of the nation of Israel; 2) be filled with the Holy Spirit; 3) be witnesses to Jesus in Israel and outside of Israel; and 4) this Holy Spirit witness will continue until it reaches every nation in the world. It is through these hermeneutical eye glasses that we need to read Joel 3.

Joel 3:1 implies that the end time judgment is related to the inauguration of the new era of the Holy Spirit outpouring. Joel 2:28 says: “And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” Joel 3:1 shows continuity when it says: “In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem.” What could be the greatest fortune for Judah and Jerusalem but the coming of the Messiah? Their fortune will be found in the first and second coming of the Messiah. That will be the time of harvest

“Also for you, Judah, a harvest is appointed. Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people” (Hosea 6:11)

The restoration of the fortunes of God's people are not only related to the end times but they flow out of the covenant promises to Abraham and the blessings of the Law. Genesis 12: 1-3 records the covenant plan of God for the people of God in the midst of the nations. Deuteronomy 30:1-10; 32 gives the basis for God's blessings and curses.<sup>17</sup> God's redemptive plan all flow to the same source: “But the Lord will be a refuge for His people (3:16).”

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<sup>15</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, Brown.

<sup>16</sup> The author's eschatological view is that future is to be seen in relationship to the extension of the gospel (Acts 1:8) and that the signs of the times are providential workings of God to further the proclamation of the gospel to all people.

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Stuart., p. 228, notes 17 corresponding themes between Deut. 32 and Joel 1:1-2:17.

LESSON SEVEN (Work sheet) 3:1-16

<p><b>INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY</b>          Explanation of important data:          Important words in passage          Grammatical annotations:          Translation method:          Literary genre:          Original author and hearers          Cultural context:          Historical context:          Biblical context:          Title for the passage:          Theme of the passage</p>	
<p><b>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY.</b> In today's study we will take an extensive look at the Bible references</p>	<p>Vs. 1.          Gen. 12:1-3          Gen. 49:10-11          Dt. 30:1-10          Jer. 40:3          Ez. 38:8          Zeph. 3:20          Acts 1:6-8          Vs. 2.          2 Cron. 20:1-30          Isaiah 1:3,9          Isaiah 13:9          Isaiah 22:1,16          Isaiah 66:18          Jer. 2:35          Jer. 25:31          Jer. 29:14          Ez. 36:5          Ez. 38:22          Vs. 3          Ez. 24:6;          Joel 1:15;          Am. 2:6          Vs. 4          Mt. 11:21;          Mt. 13: 39          Mt. 24:31          Mt. 25: 31-46          Rev. 14:20          Rev. 16:16          Rev. 19:11-21          Rev. 21:3          Vs. 12          Ps. 82:1          Ps. 96:13          Is. 2:4          Vs. 5          I Ki. 15:18          2 Ch. 21:16-17          Vs. 6          Ez. 27:13          Zech. 9:13          Vs. 7</p>

	<p>Isaiah 43:5-6  Jer. 23:8  Vs. 8  Gen. 10:7  I Ki. 10:1-13  2Ch. 9:1  Is. 14:2  Is. 23:1  Is 60:14  Jer. 30:16  Vs. 9  Is. 8:9  Jer. 46:4  Eze. 38-39  Rev. 19  Vs. 10  Nu. 25:7  Is. 2:4  Zech 12:8  Vs. 11  Is 13:1-22  Ez. 38:15-16  Zeph. 3:8  Vs. 12  Ps. 82:1  Ps. 96:3  Is. 2:4  Vs. 13  Jer. 25:8-38  Hos. 6:11  Mt. 13:39  Mark 4:29  Rev. 14: 14-20  Vs. 14  Is. 2:4  Is. 13:4  Is. 22:1  Is. 34:2-8  Ez. 36:5  Joel 1:15  Zep. 1:7  Vs. 15  Job 9:7  Ez. 32:7  Vs. 16  Jdg. 5:4-5  2Sam. 22:3  Ps. 46:1  Is. 14:16  Is. 25:4  Is. 42:13  Ez. 38:19  Jer. 16:19  Amos 1:2  Zech. 9:12  Zech. 12:8</p>
THEMATIC STUDY	
3:1-3    Announcement of God's International	3:1. When will the nations be judged?

Judgement	
	3:2. Where will the nations be judged?
	3.3. Why will all the nations be judged?
3:4-8. God's charge against the nation's crimes	3.4. Is the charge of against against all nations in general or are some nations singled out? 3.4,7 What principle of judgment does God use? 3.5-6 What two crimes are specifically mentioned?
3:9-16 The battle plan of God is announced	3:9. What is Joel to announce to the nations. 3.11 Who are "your warriors" in verse 11? 3:16. What promise is given to God's people in light of His judgment?
DIALECTICAL STUDY 1. Thesis 2. Antithesis 3. Synthesis 4. Syncretism	.
DEVOTIONAL STUDY Prayer and Action -Praise to God -Confession of personal sin -Confession of social sin -Special requests -Thanksgiving to God Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. 2. 3.	
Final observations	

## GENEVAN STUDY BIBLE

**3:1** For, behold, in <sup>a</sup> those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, (a) When I will deliver my Church, which consists of both Jews and Gentiles.

**3:2** I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the <sup>b</sup> valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and [for] my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

(b) It appears that he alludes to the great victory of Jehoshaphat, whom God used without man's help to destroy the enemies, ([2 Chronicles 20:20-26](#)); also he is referring to this word Jehoshaphat, which signifies pleading or judgment, because God would judge the enemies of his Church, as he did there.

**3:3** And they have cast lots for my people; and have <sup>c</sup> given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

(c) That which the enemy received for the sale of my people, they bestowed upon harlots and drink.

**3:4** Yea, and <sup>d</sup> what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me <sup>e</sup> a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly [and] speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

(d) He takes the cause of his Church in hand against the enemy, as though the injury were done to himself.

(e) Have I done you wrong, that you will render me the same?

**3:8** And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they <sup>f</sup> shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken [it].

(f) For afterward God sold them by Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, because of the love he had for his people, and by this they were comforted, as though they themselves had sold them.

**3:10** <sup>g</sup> Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I [am] strong.

(g) When I will execute my judgments against my enemies, I will cause everyone to be ready, and to prepare their weapons to destroy one another, for my Church's sake.

**3:13** Put ye in the <sup>h</sup> sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness [is] great.

(h) In this way he will encourage the enemies when their wickedness is completely ripe to destroy one another,

which he calls the valley of God's judgment.

**3:16** The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD [will be] the <sup>1</sup> hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

- (i) God assures his own against all trouble, that when he destroys his enemies, his children will be delivered.

## MATTHEW HENRY

In the close of the foregoing chapter we had a gracious promise of deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem; now this whole chapter is a comment upon that promise, showing what that deliverance shall be, how it shall be wrought by the destruction of the church's enemies, and how it shall be perfected in the everlasting rest and joy of the church. This was in part accomplished in the deliverance of Jerusalem from the attempt that Sennacherib made upon it in Hezekiah's time, and afterwards in the return of the Jews out of their captivity in Babylon, and other deliverances wrought for the Jewish church between that and Christ's coming. But it has a further reference, to the great redemption wrought out for us by Jesus Christ, and the destruction of our spiritual enemies and all their agents, and will have its full accomplishment in the judgment of the great day. Here is a prediction, *I. Of God's reckoning with the enemies of his people for all the injuries and indignities that they had done them, and returning them upon their own head (v. 1-8). II. Of God's judging all nations when the measure of their iniquity is full, and appearing publicly, to the everlasting confusion of all impenitent sinners and the everlasting comfort of all his faithful servants (v. 9-17). III. Of the provision God has made for the refreshment of his people, for their safety and purity, when their enemies shall be made desolate (v. 18-21). These promises were not of private interpretation only, but were written for our learning, "that we, through patience and comfort of this scripture, might have hope."*

[Verses 1-8](#) We have often heard of the *year of the redeemed*, and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*; now here we have a description of the transactions of that year, and a prophecy of what shall be done when it comes, whenever it comes, for it comes often, and at the end of time it will come once for all. I. It shall be the *year of the redeemed*, for God will *bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*, v. 1. Though the bondage of God's people may be grievous and very long, yet it shall not be everlasting. That in Egypt ended at length in their deliverance into the glorious liberty of the children of God. *Let my son go, that he may serve me*. That in Babylon shall likewise end well. And the Lord Jesus will provide for the effectual redemption of poor enslaved souls from under the dominion of sin and Satan, and will proclaim that *acceptable year*, the year of jubilee, the release of debts and servants, and the *opening of the prison to those that were bound*. There is a day, there is a time, fixed for the *bringing again of the captivity* of God's children, for the redeeming of them *from the power of the grave*; and it shall be the *last day* and the end of all time. II. It shall be the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*. Though God may suffer the enemies of his people to prevail against them very far and for a long time, yet he will call them to an account for it, and will lead captivity captive (Ps. 68:18), will lead those captive that led his people captive, Rev. 13:10. Observe, 1. Who those are that shall be reckoned with— *all nations*, v. 2. This intimates, (1.) That all the nations had made themselves liable to the judgment of God for wrong done to his people. Persecution is the reigning crying sin of the world; that *lying in wickedness* itself is set against godliness. The enmity that is in the old serpent, *the god of this world*, against the seed of the woman, appears more or less in the *children of this world*. *Marvel not if the world hate you*. (2.) That, whatsoever nation injured God's nation, they should not go unpunished; for he that touches the Israel of God shall be made to know that he touches the apple of his eye. Jerusalem will be a *burdensome stone to all people*, Zec. 12:3. But the neighboring nations shall be particularly reckoned with— *Tyre, and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine*, or the Philistines, who have been troublesome neighbours to the Israel of God, v. 4. When the more remote and potent nations that laid Israel wastes are reckoned with the impotent malice of those that lay near them, and *helped forward the affliction*, (Zec. 1:15), and made a hand of it (Eze. 26:2), shall not be passed by. Note, Little persecutors shall be called to an account as well as great ones; and, though they could not do much mischief, shall be reckoned with according to the *wickedness of their endeavors* and the mischief they would have done. 2. The sitting of this court for judgment. They shall all be *gathered* (v. 2), that those who have combined together against God's people, *with one consent* (Ps. 83:5), may together receive their doom. They shall be *brought down into the valley of Jehoshaphat*, which lay near Jerusalem, and there *God will plead with them*, (1.) Because it is fit that criminals should be tried in the same country where they did the fact. (2.) For their greater confusion, when they shall see that Jerusalem which they have so long endeavored and hoped for the ruin of, in spite of all their rage, made a *praise in the earth*. (3.) For the greater comfort and honor of God's Jerusalem, which shall see God pleading their cause. (4.) Then shall be re-acted what God did for Jehoshaphat when he gave him victory over those that

invaded him, and furnished him and his people with matter of joy and praise, in the *valley of Berachah*. See 2 Chr. 20:26. (5.) It was in this valley of Jehoshaphat (as Dr. Lightfoot suggests) that Sennacherib's army, or part of it, lay, when it was destroyed by an angel. They came together to ruin Jerusalem, but God brought them together for their own ruin, as *sheaves into the floor*, Mic. 4:12. 3. The plaintiff called, on whose behalf this prosecution is set on foot; it is for *my people*, and for *my heritage Israel*. It is their cause that God will now plead with jealousy. Note, God's people are *his heritage*, his *peculiar*, his *portion*, his *treasure*, above all people, Ex. 19:5; Deu. 32:9. They are his demesne, and therefore he has a good action against those that trespass upon them. 4. The charge exhibited against them, which is very particular. Many affronts they had put upon God by their idolatries, but that for which God has a quarrel with them is the affront they have put upon his people and upon the vessels of his sanctuary. (1.) They had been very abusive to the people of Israel, had *scattered them among the nations* and forced them to seek for shelter where they could find a place, or carried them captive into their respective countries and there industriously dispersed them, for fear of their incorporating for their common safety. They *parted their land*, and took every one his share of it as their own; nay, they have *cast lots for my people*, and *sold them*. When they had taken them prisoners, [1.] They made a jest of them, made a scorn of them as of no value. They would not release them and yet thought them not worth the keeping; they made nothing of playing them away at dice. Or they made a dividend of the prisoners *by lot*, as the soldiers did of Christ's garments. [2.] They made a gain of them. When they had them they *sold* them, yet with so much contempt that they did *not increase their wealth by their price*, but sold them for their pleasure rather than their profit; they *gave a boy* taken in war for the *hire of a harlot*, and a *girl* for so many bottles of wine as would serve them for one sitting, a *goodly price* at which they valued them, and goodly preferment for a son and daughter of Israel to be a slave and a drudge in a tavern or a brothel. Observe, here, how that which is got by sin is commonly spent upon another. The spoil which these enemies of the Jews gathered by injustice and violence they scattered and threw away in drinking and whoring; such is frequently the character, and such the conversation, of the enemies and persecutors of the people of God. The Tyrians and Philistines, when they seized any of the children of Judah and Jerusalem, either took them prisoners in war or kidnapped them, they sold them to the Grecians (with whom the men of Tyre traded in the *persons of men*, Eze. 27:13), that they *might remove them far from their own border*, v. 6. It was a great reproach to Israel, God's first-born, his free-born, to be thus bought and sold among the heathen. (2.) They had unjustly seized *God's silver and gold* (v. 5), by which some understand the wealth of Israel. The silver and gold which God's people had he calls his, because they had received it from him and devoted it to him; and whosoever robbed them God took it as if they had robbed him and would make reprisals accordingly. Those who take away the estates of good men for well-doing will be found guilty of sacrilege; they take God's *silver and gold*. But it seems rather to be meant of the *vessels and treasures of the temple*, which God here calls his *goodly pleasant things*, precious and desirable to him and all that are his. These they *carried into their temples* as trophies of their victory over God's Israel, thinking that therein they triumphed over Israel's God, nay, and that their idols triumphed over him. Thus the ark was put in Dagon's temple. Thus they did unjustly. "*What have you to do with me* (v. 4), with my people; what wrong have they done you? What provocation have they given you? You had nothing to do with them, and yet you do all this against them. Devices are devised against the *quiet in the land*, and those offended and harmed that are harmless and inoffensive: *Will you render me a recompence?*" Can they pretend that either God or his people have done them any injury, for which they may justify themselves by the law of retaliation in doing them these mischiefs? No; they have no colour for it. Note, It is no new thing for those who have been very civil and obliging to their neighbours to find them very unkind and unneighbourly and for those who do no injuries to suffer many. 5. The sentence passed upon them. In general (v. 4), "*If you recompense me, if you pretend a quarrel with me, if you provoke me thus to jealousy, if you touch the apple of my eye, I will swiftly and speedily return your recompence upon your own head.*" Those that contend with God will find themselves unable to make their part good with him. He will recompense them *suddenly*, when they little think of it, and have not time to prevent it; if he take them to task, he will soon effect their ruin. Particularly, it is threatened, (1.) That they should not gain their end in the mischief they designed against God's people. They thought to *remove them so far from their border* that they should never return to it again, v. 6. But (says God) "*I will raise them out of the place whither you have sold them*, and they shall not, as you intended, be buried alive there." Men's selling the people of God will not deprive him of his property in them. (2.) That they shall be paid in their own coin, as Adonibezek was (v. 8): "*I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the children of Judah; you shall lie as much at their mercy as they have been at yours,*" Isa. 60:14. Thus the Jews *had rule over those that hated them*, Esther 9:1. And then they shall justly be *sold to the Sabeans*, to a *people far off*. This (some think) had its accomplishment in the victories obtained by the Maccabees over the enemies of the Jews; others think it looks as far forward as the last day, when the *upright shall have dominion* (Ps. 49:14) and *the saints shall judge the world*. It is certain that none ever hardened his heart against God, or his church, and prospered long; no, not Pharaoh himself, for *the Lord has spoken it*, for the comfort of all his suffering servants, that *vengeance is his and he will repay*.

[Verses 9-17](#) What the psalmist had long before ordered to be *said among the heathen* (Ps. 96:10) the prophet here will have in like manner to be published to all nations, That *the Lord reigns*, and that *he comes, he comes to judge the earth*, as he had long been judging in the earth. The notice here given of God's judging the nations may have reference to the destruction of Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and to the Antichrist especially, and all the proud enemies of the Christian church; but some of the best interpreters, ancient and modern (particularly the learned Dr. Pollock), think the scope of these verses is to set forth the day of the last judgment under the similitude of God's making war upon the enemies of his kingdom, and his gathering in the harvest of the earth, both which similitudes we find used in the Revelation, ch. 19:11; 14:18. Here we have, I. A challenge given to all the enemies of God's kingdom to do their worst. To signify to them that God is preparing war against them, they are called upon to prepare war against him, v. 9–11. When the hour of God's judgment shall come effectual methods shall be taken to gather all nations *to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*, Rev. 16:14; 20:8. It seems to be here spoken ironically: "*Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; let all the forces of the nations be summoned to join in confederacy against God and his people.*" It is like that, Isa. 7:9, "*Associate yourselves, O you people! and gird yourselves, but you shall be broken to pieces. Prepare war; muster up all your strength; wake up the mighty men; call them into your service; excite them to vigilance and resolution; let all the men of war draw near. Let them come and enter the lists with Omnipotence if they dare; let them not complain for want of weapons, but let them beat their ploughshares into swords and their pruning-hooks into spears.* Let them resolve, if they will, never to return to their husbandry again, but either to conquer or die; let none plead unfitness to bear arms, but *let the weak say, I am strong* and will venture into the field of battle." Thus does a God of almighty power bid defiance to all the opposition of the powers of darkness; let the *heathen rage*, and the *kings of the earth take counsel together, against the Lord and his Christ*; let them *assemble, and come, and gather themselves together*; but he that sits in heaven shall laugh at them, and, while he thus calls them, he has them in derision, Ps. 2:1, 4. The heathen must be wakened, must be raised from the dead, that they may *come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat*, to receive their doom (v. 12), may come up out of their graves, come up *into the air*, to meet the Lord there. Jehoshaphat signifies *the judgment of the Lord*. Let them come to the place of God's judgment, which perhaps is the chief reason for the using of this name here, but it is put together as a proper name for the sake of allusions to the place so called, which we observed before; let them come thither where God will *sit to judge the heathen*, to that *throne of glory* before which shall be *gathered all nations* (Mt. 25:32), for before the judgment-seat of Christ *we must all appear*. The challenge (v. 9) is turned into a summons, v. 12. It is not only, *Come if you dare*, but *You shall come* whether you will or no, for there is no escaping the judgments of God. II. A charge given to the ministers of God's justice to appear and act against these daring enemies of his kingdom among men: And therefore *cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord!* v. 11. When they bring their forces into the field, let God bring his, let the archangel's trumpet sound a charge, to call together his *mighty ones*, that is, his angels. Perhaps it is with reference to this that Christ's coming from heaven at the last day is said to be *with his mighty angels*, 2 Th. 1:7. These are the *hosts of the Lord*, that shall fight his battles when he shall put down all opposing rule, principality, and power when he shall *judge among the heathen*, Ps. 110:6. Some think these words (v. 9, 10), *Prepare war, wake up the mighty men*, are not a challenge to the enemies' hosts, but a charge to God's hosts; let them *draw near, and come up*. When God's cause is to be pleaded, either by the law or by the sword, he has those ready that shall please it effectually, witnesses ready to appear for him in the court of judgment, soldiers ready to appear for him in the field of battle. They shall *beat ploughshares into swords*, if need be. However, it is plain that to them the charge in given (v. 13), *Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe*; that is, *their wickedness is great*, the measure of it is full, and they are ripe for ruin. Our Saviour has expounded this, Mt. 13:39. *The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels*. And they are commanded to *thrust in their sickle. their sharp sickle*, and gather in both the *harvest* and the *vintage*, Rev. 14:15, 18. Note, The greatness of men's wickedness makes them ripe for God's judgment. III. The vast appearance that shall be in that great and solemn day (v. 14): *Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision*, the same which before was called the *valley of Jehoshaphat*, or *of the judgment of the Lord*, for the *day of the Lord is near* in that valley. Note, 1. The judgment-day, that day of the Lord, has all along been looked upon, and spoken of, as *nigh at hand*. Enoch said, *Behold, the Lord comes*, as if the Judge were then standing before the door, because it is certain that that day will come and will come according to the appointment, and a *thousand years with God are but as one day*; things are ripening apace for it; we ought always to be ready for it, because our judgment is at hand. 2. The day of judgment will be the *day of decision*, when every man's eternal state will be determined, and the controversy that has been long depending between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan shall be finally decided, and an end put to the struggle. *The valley of the distribution of judgment* (so the Chaldee), when *every man shall receive according to the things done in the body*. *The valley of threshing* (so the margin), carrying on the metaphor of the *harvest*, v. 13. The proud enemies of God's people will then be crushed and broken to pieces, and made as the *dust of the summer threshing-floors*. 3. Innumerable multitudes will be gathered together to receive their final doom in that day, as in the destruction of Gog we read of the valley of *Hamon-Gog*, and the city of *Hamonah* (Eze. 39:15, 16),

both signifying the *multitude* of the vanquished enemies; it is the word here used, *Hamonim, Hamonim*, expressed by the way of admiration—O what vast multitudes of sinners will divine justice be glorified in the ruin of at that day! *A multitude of living* (says one of the rabbin) *and a multitude of dead*, for Christ shall come *to judge both the quick and the dead*. IV. The amazing change that shall then be made in the kingdom of nature (v. 15): *The sun and moon shall be darkened*, as before, ch. 2:31. Their glory and lustre shall be eclipsed by the far greater brightness of that glory in which the Judge shall then appear. Nay, they shall themselves be set aside in the dissolution of all things; for the damned sinners in hell shall not be allowed their light, for God himself will be *their everlasting light*, Isa. 60:19. Those that fall under the wrath of God in that day of wrath shall be cut off from all comfort and joy, signified by the darkening not only of sun and moon, but of the stars also. V. The different impressions which that day will make upon the children of this world and the children of God, according as it will be to them. 1. To the wicked it will be a terrible day. *The Lord* shall then speak *from Zion and Jerusalem*, from the throne of his glory, from heaven, where he manifests himself in a peculiar manner, as sometimes he has done in the *glorious high throne of his sanctuary*, which yet was but a faint resemblance of the glory of that day. He shall speak *from heaven*, from *the midst* of his saints and angels (so some understand it), the holy society of which may be called *Zion and Jerusalem*; for, when we come to the *heavenly Jerusalem*, we come to the *innumerable company of angels*; see Heb. 12:22, 25. Now is speaking in that day will be to the wicked as *roaring*, terrible as the roaring of a lion (for so the word signifies); he long kept silence, but now *our God shall come, and shall not keep silence*, Ps. 50:3, 21. Note, The judgment of the great day will make the ears of those to tingle that continue the implacable enemies of God's kingdom. God's voice will then *shake terribly* both *heaven and earth* (Isa. 2:21), yet *once more*, Hag. 2:6; Heb. 12:26. This denotes that the voice of God will in the great day speak such terror to the wicked as were enough to put even heaven and earth into a consternation. When God comes to pull down and destroy his enemies, and make them all his footstool, though heaven and earth should stand up in defence of them and undertake their protection, it shall be all in vain. Even they shall shake before him and be an insufficient shelter to those whom he comforts forth to contend with. Note, As blessings out of Zion are the sweetest blessings, and enough to make heaven and earth sing, so terrors out of Zion are the sorest terrors, and enough to make heaven and earth shake. 2. To the righteous it will be a joyful day. When the heaven and earth shall tremble, and be dissolved and burnt up, then will the Lord be the *hope of his people* and the *strength of the children of Israel* (v. 16), and *then shall Jerusalem be holy*, v. 17. The saints are the Israel of God; they are *his people*; the church is his Jerusalem. They are in covenant and communion with him; now in the great day, (1.) Their longings shall be satisfied: *The Lord will be the hope of his people*. As he always was the founder and foundation of their hopes, so he then will be the crown of their hopes. He will be the *harbour* of his people (so the word is), their receptacle, refuge, and home. The saints in the great day shall arrive at the desired haven, shall put to shore after a stormy voyage; they shall go to be for ever at home with God, to their Father's house, the house *not made with hands*. (2.) Their happiness shall be confirmed. God will be in that day the *strength of the children of Israel*, enabling them to bid that day welcome and to bear up under the weight of its glories and joys. In this world, when the judgments of God are abroad, and sinners are falling under them, God is and will be the hope and strength of his people, the strength of their heart, and their portion, when other men's hearts fail them for fear. (3.) Their holiness shall be completed (v. 17): *Then shall Jerusalem be holy*, the *holy city* indeed; such shall the heavenly Jerusalem be, such the glorious church, *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*. *Jerusalem shall be holiness* (so the word is); it shall be perfectly holy; there shall be no remainder of sin in it. The gospel-church is a holy society, even in its militant state, but will never be holiness itself till it comes to be triumphant. Then *no stranger shall pass through her any more*; there shall not enter into the New Jerusalem any thing that defiles or works iniquity; none shall be there but those who have a right to be there, none but its own citizens; for it shall be an unmixed society. (4.) God shall in all this be manifested and magnified: *So shall you know that I am the Lord your God*. By the sanctifying and glorifying of the church God will be known in his holiness and glory, as the God that dwells in his holy mountain and makes it holy by dwelling in it; and those that are sanctified and glorified are so *through the knowledge of him* that called them. The knowledge which true believers have of God is, [1.] An appropriating knowledge. They know that he is *the Lord their God*, yet not theirs only, but theirs in common with the whole church, that he is their God, but *dwelling in Zion his holy mountain*; for, though faith appropriates, it does not engross or monopolize the privileges of the covenant. [2.] It is an experimental knowledge. They shall find him their *hope and strength* in the worst of times, and so they shall *know that he is the Lord their God*. Those know best the goodness of God who have tasted and seen it, and have found him good to them.

## REFLECTION

1. In introducing (3:1) the most conflictive (as far as evangelical interpreters is concerned) part of the prophecy, Matthew Henry gives an overall summary:  
“ We have often heard of the *year of the redeemed*, and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*; now here we have a description of the transactions of that year, and a prophecy of what shall be done when it comes, whenever it comes, for it comes often, and at the end of time it will come once for all. I. It shall be the *year of the redeemed*, for God will *bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*, v. 1. Though the bondage of God’s people may be grievous and very long, yet it shall not be everlasting. That in Egypt ended at length in their deliverance into the glorious liberty of the children of God. *Let my son go, the he may serve me*. That in Babylon shall likewise end well. And the Lord Jesus will provide for the effectual redemption of poor enslaved souls from under the dominion of sin and Satan, and will proclaim that *acceptable year*, the year of jubilee, the release of debts and servants, and the *opening of the prison to those that were bound*. There is a day, there is a time, fixed for the *bringing again of the captivity* of God’s children, for the redeeming of them *from the power of the grave*; and it shall be the *last day* and the end of all time.”  
Do you see the relationship between the times of restoration (out of Egypt, out of Babylon, out of sin and out of the world?)
2. The prophet condemns the sins of the nations against the people of Judah in verse 3:2-8. What do these condemnations say about God’s nature and purpose?
3. To what judgments and era do the verses 3:9-16 refer to: 1. judgment of nations who captured Judah; or 2) judgment of the nations before Jesus second coming?

## LESSON EIGHT

### “God’s ways will be made known”

#### FINAL RESTORATION (3:17-21)

Everyone would like to live in Paradise, but who are willing to go through the journey of getting there? For Joel and the covenant people in his day, in order to get to the promises of chapter 3, verse 17, they had to experience delayed judgment, spiritual revival and international judgment of the first two chapters and the beginning of chapter 3. This gives the connecting word “then” (3:17) more meaning.

Then what? “Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill.” This is the end purpose of God’s special interventions known as the “day of the Lord.” For the people in Joel’s day it would be to recognize that God rules the universe through His temple in Jerusalem. For us today, it is to recognize that God rules the universe through the King of kings and the Lord of lords who dwells in the throne room of the universe. This progression in God’s kingdom rule was established in Jesus Christ. He is the personal tabernacle of God, in Him the fullness of deity dwells. He was cast out of the earthly Jerusalem and temple. He died to pardon His people and rose again in victory over sin, death and the enemies of God. He ascended into heaven to reign forever.

The heavenly Jerusalem has been established. Even though the earthly Jerusalem would be run over by the Persians, the Romans, the Crusaders, the Muslims, the Jews and other “foreigners”, the children of God look for a city made without hands, the heavenly city (Hebrews 11:10).

*“For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God.”*

Orthodox interpreters point out three possibilities as to the identity of Jerusalem that will never again be invaded by foreigners (aliens): 1) the heavenly Jerusalem in which the Messiah rules now; 2) an earthly Jerusalem re-established just prior to the second coming of the Messiah; and 3) a restored earthly Jerusalem inhabited by the Messiah after the second coming, in the new heavens and the new earth.

I would affirm option number 1. Since the Lord instructed his disciples not to be preoccupied about the national restoration of Israel (and Jerusalem, by implication) but rather bear witness to Him in Jerusalem, Judea and beyond these places to Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:6-8); and since the Lord reigns today from the heavenly Jerusalem, it seems that our focus should be on extending the kingdom of God now, rather than wait for a future national restoration. A future restoration will occur and it will include:

1. True theology, the saving knowledge of the true God, will be restored. God’s people will know that only the true God dwells on the throne (vs. 17a).
2. True covenant membership, only God’s people dwelling with God, will be restored. Foreigners will not invade Jerusalem (vs. 17b).
3. Unprecedented agricultural prosperity will be restored, so that the worship of God and the wellbeing of His people are provided (vs. 18).
4. Justice will be given to the enemies of God’s people (vs. 19).
5. Jerusalem and Judah will be continually inhabited (vs. 20).
6. God’s kingdom will be sustained by the blood of the Lamb, the gospel of salvation through faith in the bloodied sacrifice and resurrected Lord (vs. 21).

The prophecy of Joel ends in the last verse of chapter 3. It is the most important verse. It's a gospel verse. It speaks to the sins of God's people: "their blood guilt." It speaks about God's righteous wrath, "which I have not pardoned." God does not have to pardon the sinner. The sinners, including God's sinning people, deserved all the judgment that God has poured out upon them, as described in the prophecy of Joel, and they deserve the full punishment as described in the last chapter. But His judgment is tempered by grace. Grace overcomes judgment. God declares, "I will pardon."

Oswald J. Smith apply said about evangelism: "We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first." The same principles needs to be applied to the interpretation of prophecy.

LESSON EIGHT (Work sheet) 3:17-21

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY          Explanation of important data:          Important words in passage:          Grammatical annotations:          Translation method:          Literary genre:          Original author and hearers          Cultural context:          Historical context:          Biblical context:          Title for the passage:          Theme of the passage</p>	
<p>CROSS-REFERENCE STUDY</p>	<p>(fill in your own cross reference texts, I am getting tired of finding these references for you)</p>
<p>LITERARY STUDY          How would you outline or diagram chapter 3?</p>	
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY          1. Thesis          2. Antithesis          3. Synthesis          4. Syncretism</p>	
<p>DEVOTIONAL STUDY          Prayer and Action          -Praise to God          -Confession of personal sin          -Confession of social sin          -Special requests          -Thanksgiving to God          Communication of truths of the passage          -three main truth statements          1.          2.          3.</p>	

**GENEVAN STUDY BIBLE**

**3:17** So shall ye know that I [am] the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass<sup>k</sup> through her any more.

(k) The strangers will no longer destroy his Church: and if they do, it is the fault of the people, who by their sins make the breach for the enemy.

**3:18** And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the mountains shall<sup>l</sup> drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

(l) He promises to his Church abundance of graces, See [Geneva](#), which would water and comfort the most barren places; ([Amos 9:13](#)).

**3:19** <sup>m</sup> Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence [against] the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

(m) The malicious enemies will have no part of these graces.

**3:21** For I will <sup>n</sup> cleanse their blood [that] I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

(n) He had allowed his Church before this to lie in their filthiness, but now he promises to cleanse them and to make them pure unto himself.

## MATTHEW HENRY

[Verses 18-21](#) These promises with which this prophecy concludes have their accomplishments in part in the kingdom of grace, and the comforts and graces of all the faithful subjects of that kingdom, but will have their full accomplishment in the kingdom of glory; for, as to the Jewish church, we know not of any event concerning that which answers to the extent of these promises, and what instances of peace and prosperity they were blessed with, which they may be supposed to be a hyperbolical description of, they were but figures of *better things reserved for us, that they* in their best estate *without us might not be made perfect*. I. It is promised that the enemies of the church shall be vanquished and brought down, v. 19. Egypt, that old enemy of Israel, and Edom, which had an inveterate enmity to Israel, derived from Esau, these *shall be a desolation, a desolate wilderness*, no more to be inhabited; they have become the *people of God's curse*; so the Idumeans were, Isa. 34:5. No strength nor wealth of a nation is a defence against the judgment of God. But what is the quarrel God has with these potent kingdoms? It is for their *violence against the children of Judah*, and the injuries they had done them; see Eze. 25:3, 8, 12, 15; 26:2. They had *shed the innocent blood* of the Jews that fled to them for shelter or were making their escape through their country. Note, The innocent blood of God's people is very precious to him, and not a drop of it shall be shed but it shall be reckoned for. In the last day this earth, which has been filled with violence against the people of God, shall be made a desolation, when it and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up. And, sooner or later, the oppressors and persecutors of God's Israel shall be brought down and laid in the dust, nay, they will at length be brought down and laid in the flames. II. It is promised that the church shall be very happy; and truly happy it is in spiritual privileges, even during its militant state, but much more when it comes to be triumphant. Three things are here promised it:— 1. Purity. This is put last here, as a reason for the rest (v. 21); but we may consider it first, as the ground and foundation of the rest: *I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed*, that is, their bloody heinous sins, especially shedding innocent blood; that filth and guilt they had contracted by sin, which rendered them unfit for communion with God, and made them odious to his holiness and obnoxious to his justice; this they shall be washed from in the *fountain opened*, Zec. 13:1. That shall be cleansed by the blood of Christ which could not be cleansed by the sacrifices and purifications of the ceremonial law. Or, if we apply it to the happiness of a future state, it intimates the cleansing of the saints from all these corruptions from which they were not cleansed either by ordinances or providences in the world; there shall not be the least remains of sin in them there. Here, though they are washing daily, there is still something that is not cleansed; but in heaven, even that also shall be done away. And the reason is because *the Lord dwells in Zion*, dwells with his church, and much more gloriously with that in heaven, and *holiness becomes his house for ever*, for which reason, where he dwells there must be, there shall be, a perfection of holiness. Note, Though the refining and reforming of the church is work that goes on slowly, and still there is something we complain of that is *not cleansed*, yet there is a day coming when every thing that is amiss shall be amended, and the church shall be all fair, and no spot, no stain in her; and we must wait for that day. 2. Plenty, v. 18. This is put first, because it is the reverse of the judgment threatened in the foregoing chapters. (1.) The streams of this plenty overflow the land and enrich it: *The mountains shall drop new wine and the hills shall flow with milk*, such great abundance shall they have of suitable provision, both for *babes* and for *strong men*. It intimates the abundance of vineyards, and all fruitful; and the abundance of cattle in the pastures that fill them with milk. And, to make the corn-land fruitful, the *rivers of Judah shall flow with water*, so that the country shall be like the garden of Eden, well-watered every where and greatly enriched, Ps. 65:9. But this seems to be meant spiritually; the graces and comforts of the new covenant are compared to *wine and milk* (Isa. 55:1), and the Spirit to *rivers of living water*, Jn. 7:38. And these gifts abound much more under the New Testament than they did under the Old; when believers receive *grace for grace* from Christ's fulness, when they are enriched with *everlasting consolations*, and *filled with joy and peace in believing*, then *the mountains drop new wine, and the hills flow with milk. Drink you, drink abundantly, O beloved!* When there is plentiful effusion of the Spirit of grace, then the *rivers of Judah flow with water*, and make glad, not only *the city of our God* (Ps. 46:4), but the whole land. (2.) The fountain of this plenty is in the *house of God*,

whence the streams take their rise, as those *waters of the sanctuary* (Eze. 47:1) from *under the threshold of the house*, and the river of life *out of the throne of God and the Lamb*, Rev. 22:1. The psalmist, speaking of Zion, says, *All my springs are in thee*, Ps. 87:7. Those that take temporal blessings to be meant in the former part of the verse, yet by this *fountain out of the house of the Lord* understand the grace of God, which, if we abound in temporal blessings, we have so much more need of, that we may not abuse them. Christ himself is the fountain; his merit and grace cleanse us, refresh us, and make us fruitful. This is said to water *the valley of Shittim*, which lay a great way off from the temple at Jerusalem, on the other side of Jordan, and was a dry and barren valley, which intimates that gospel-grace, flowing from Christ, shall reach far, even to the Gentile world, to the most remote regions of it, and shall make those to abound in the fruits of righteousness who had long lain as the barren wilderness. This grace is a fountain overflowing, ever-flowing, from which we may be continually drawing, and yet need not fear its being drawn dry. This fountain comes *out of the house of the Lord* above, from his temple in heaven, flows all that good which here we are daily tasting the streams of, but hope to be shortly, hope to be eternally, drinking at the fountain-head of. 3. Perpetuity. This crowns all the rest (v. 20): *Judah shall dwell for ever* (when Egypt and Edom are made a *desolation* ), and Jerusalem shall continue *from generation to generation*. This is a promise, and a precious promise it is, (1.) That the church of Christ shall continue in the world to the end of time. As one generation of professing Christians passes away, another shall come, in whom the *throne of Christ shall endure for ever*, and *the gates of hell shall not prevail* against it. (2.) That all the living members of that church (Judah and Jerusalem are put for the *inhabitants* of that city and country, Mt. 3:5) shall be established in their happiness to the utmost ages of eternity. This new Jerusalem shall be *from generation to generation*, for it is a city that has foundations, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.

#### REFLECTIONS

1. Who do the "aliens" refer to in vs. 3:17 and what significance does that have?
2. On what basis will Judah abide for ever (vs. 3:20-21)?
3. What importance does the final conclusion to the prophecy have (3:21b)?

## TEACHER'S MANUAL

### LESSON ONE

WORK SHEET. Explain to the student that he/she needs to take the work sheet home and in his own notebook jot down the answers. He can compare his notes with the author's note. The idea is NOT to COPY but to COMPARE. He is to come to the next class with his work sheet homework completed, along with his answers to the questions at the end of the lesson. Failing to come to class prepared with one's answers will result not only in the loss of points but a possible loss of salvation, depending on if your Arminian or Calvinists.

#### LESSON ONE (work sheet) 1:1-3

READING OF 1:1-3	Read the whole book in one setting and propose your own general outline.
INDUCTIVE STUDY of 1:1-3	<p>Explanation of important data (from your reading of the Study Bibles and Joel itself, please jot down what you know)</p> <p>Important words: Word, Joel, Pethuel, elders</p> <p>Grammatical annotations: introduction statement</p> <p>Translation method: KJV-literal, NIV-Dynamic equivalent and literal</p> <p>Literary genre: prophetic narrative</p> <p>Original author and hearers: 9<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the Assyrian invasion</p> <p>Cultural context: Due to mention of Judea and Jerusalem throughout prophecy, may be addressed to Judea</p> <p>Historical context: there was a locust plague (see Amos 7:1-7)</p> <p>Biblical context: Early Minor Prophet, one of the twelve.</p> <p>Proposed title for the passage: God speaks through the prophet Joel</p> <p>Major themes for the passage: God speaks to the covenant people about a locust plague</p>
VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITIONAL STUDY 1:1. Joel, the recipient of the Word	<p>Why is Joel a true prophet?</p> <p>Joel received and communicated God's Word and does not present his own word as the Word of God</p> <p>Why is Joel considered an historical figure?</p> <p>He is the son of Pethuel</p>
1.2. Leaders and future generations receive the prophecy	<p>Which leaders are called to listen?</p> <p>The elders</p> <p>How will this prophecy affect other people?</p> <p>It will be passed on from generation to generation.</p> <p>Study the following passages:</p> <p>Dt. 4:9.</p> <p>Dt. 6:7.</p> <p>Dt. 32:7.</p> <p>Ps. 78:1-8</p> <p>Mt. 28:19-20.</p> <p>Acts 2:39.</p>
LITERARY AND THEMATIC STUDY. The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament	<p>Ob. 15</p> <p>Joel 1:15.</p> <p>Joel 2:1.</p> <p>Joel 2:11.</p> <p>Joel 2:31.</p> <p>Joel 3:14.</p> <p>Amos 5:18.</p> <p>Amos 5:20.</p> <p>Is. 2:12.</p>

	Is. 13:6 Is. 13:9. Ez. 13:5. Ez. 30:3. Zech. 14:1. Mal. 4:5.
Study the Day of the Lord in the New Testament	Acts 2:16ff I Thes. 5:2. II Thes. 2:2. 2 Peter 3:10
Jot down notes from commentaries	
DIALECTICAL STUDY of 1:1-3	Thesis: Joel receives and communicates a true prophecy Antithesis: this is Joel's own interpretation Synthesis: The reader needs to consider that in light of what is happening they need to listen to God. Syncretism: God is not related to what is happening
DEVOTIONAL STUDY	Prayer and Action -Praise to God: Praise God that He speaks to His people through the prophets. -Confession of personal sin. I do not always listen to God's Word but trust in my own thoughts and words about God. -Confession of social sin. The Church does not always preach God's Word but the ideas of men and religion. -Special requests. Raise up true prophets today! -Thanksgiving to God. Thanksgiving that the Word of God will go from generation to generation. -Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. The Word of God comes through His prophets to His people (vs. 1) 2. The Word of God calls us to consider what is happening (vs. 2) 3. The Word of God is meant to be shared inter-generationally (vs. 3)

#### QUESTION AND ANSWERS

1. Do you notice any difference of interpretation between the author (Hegeman), the commentaries and yourself (from your inductive, expositional, thematic, analytical and devotional study)? (*give your own opinion*)
2. What is the difference between Joel receiving the Word of God and Joel formulating the Word of God? (*The true prophet receives the Word of God and proclaims it faithfully to the people of God or whoever the recipients are supposed to be. A false prophet does not receive or faithfully interpret the Word of God but gives his opinion or the opinion of others to the people.*)
3. What is the standard to determine true prophecy today? (*Prophecy has to be fulfilled and in accordance to the Bible.*)
4. Do you believe the "elders" in verse two refer to old men or to community officials? (*Both Wesley and JFB refer to old men. Hegeman is inclined to reason that the elders were officials, of elderly age, who had governing responsibilities. In verse 1:14 they are seen as officials as well.*)
5. Do you see a pattern in how God spoke to the people of God in the days of Joel and how God speaks to His church today? (*There is a pattern: God reveals His Word to a prophet who in turn summons the leader of God's people to assemble the people in order to explain that Word to them. In the New Testament, the preacher of the Word worked with the church rulers (presbyters) and gathered God's people on a weekly basis in order to hear the preaching and teaching of God's Word.*)

LESSON TWO

WORK SHEET (same instructions as for previous lesson, bring results to next class)

LESSON TWO (Work sheet) 1:4-12

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY of 1:4-12</p>	<p>Explanation of important data:            Important words in passage: chewing locust, swimming locust, crawling locust, consuming locust            Grammatical annotations: parallelism in vs. 4,5,6,7 comparing natural, moral, national and religious disasters            Translation method: literal            Literary genre: prophetic            Original author and hearers: same as vs. 1-3            Cultural context: middle of a locust plague            Historical context: 9<sup>th</sup> century, prior to Assyrian invasion            Biblical context: See Amos 7:1-6 for historical nature of locust plague            Title for the passage: Four Waves of Disaster            Theme of the passage: A description of the locust invasion and comparison to the moral, national and religious disasters among the people.</p>
<p>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY            Jer. 30:7.            Jer. 31:32            Is. 30:6.            Is. 32:10            Is. 33:4            Is. 38:19            Is. 54:5-8            Jer. 3:3,4.            Ez. 7:18.            Ez. 38:16            Amos 4:9            Amos 5:16            Amos 7:1            Amos 8:10.            Hosea 2:9.            Hosea 3:4.            Hosea 7:5.            Hosea 2:9            Hosea 9:2-4.            Hosea 13:8            Jonah 3:4-5.            Joel 1:13            Joel 2:2,11,25            Joel 3:3            Nahum 3:15            Mich 4:4            Hab. 3:17.            Zech. 3:10            Zech 7:3.            Haggai 2:19            Rev. 9:8</p>	<p>(Match the Bible reference with the verse it corresponds to in Joel)            Gen. 49:9            Ex. 9:31            Ex. 10:1-5, 15            Ex. 28:33.            Ex. 29:38-42            Dt. 28:38-39            Lev. 2:1-2            Lev. 23:13            Lev. 25:23            Jdg 20:26.            Num. 18:12            Num. 23:24            Num. 28:5-8            Num 36:2            2Sam. 12:16.            I King 4:25            Job 6:20            Ps. 78:4            Ps. 105:34            Prov. 2:17.            Prov. 30:25            Is. 5:6,11            Is. 15:6.            Is. 16:8,10            Is. 17:11            Is. 22:12            Is. 24:7,11            Is. 28:1.            Jer. 4:8            Jer. 12:11            Jer. 14:3,12</p>
<p>THEMATIC STUDY</p>	
<p>1:4-7 four fold description of disastrous woes</p>	<p>Vs. 4. What is the 4 fold natural disaster?            Four waves of locusts who devour everything            Vs. 5. What 4 observations are made in relationship to wine.            The drunkard has to awake, the drinkers need to wail, the supply</p>

	<p>of new wine has been cut off.</p> <p>Vs. 6. What are the 4 observations about these invaders? They are like a nation, strong, like a devouring lion and lioness.</p> <p>Vs. 7. What are the dimensions of this agro-religious disaster? The vines and trees belong to God! He is allowing them to be destroyed. There must be a reason.</p>
<p>1:8-12</p> <p>Five fold effects of the Woes</p>	<p>Vs. 8. How should the people mourn? As a betrothed virgin who loses her husband.</p> <p>Vs. 9. What happens to the temple duties? There are no offerings to be made since the supply has been cut off, the priest cannot minister but only mourn.</p> <p>vs. 10. What will happen to the fields? They will dry up and be destroyed.</p> <p>Vs. 11. How should the agriculturalist respond? Weep and wail.</p> <p>vs. 12. What happens to the fruit of the field as well as human emotions? The fruit dries up and the joy disappears.</p>
LITERARY STUDY.	Notice the parallelisms
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY</p> <p>1. Thesis</p> <p>2. Antithesis</p> <p>3. Synthesis</p> <p>4. Syncretism</p>	<p>Thesis: The fruit of the vine is to be used as an offering to God and for the joy of the people.</p> <p>Antithesis: man can use the fruit as they desire</p> <p>Synthesis. Mourn the broken relationship between God and man</p> <p>Syncretism: weep but no repentance</p>
DEVOTIONAL STUDY	<p>Prayer and Action</p> <p>-Praise to God: Thank you for putting our disasters into Your perspective.</p> <p>-Confession of personal sin. I have not responded to God's grace.</p> <p>-Confession of social sin. We are not grateful to God.</p> <p>-Special requests: Shows us how we can avoid disaster and repent</p> <p>-Thanksgiving to God</p> <p>Communication of truths of the passage</p> <p>-three main truth statements</p> <p>1. Our natural, moral, national and religious disasters are related.</p> <p>2. The essence of our disasters is our relationship to God.</p> <p>3. Our disasters is a call for us to repent before God.</p>

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. JFB (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown) writes: "The Hebrews make the first species (of locust) refer to Assyria and Babylon; the second species, to Medo-Persia; the third, to Greco-Macedonia and Antiochus Epiphanes; the fourth, to the Romans. Though the primary reference be to literal locusts, the Holy Spirit doubtless had in view the successive empires which assailed Judea, each worse than its predecessor, Rome being the climax." What do you think?  
*(One has to interpret the Scripture with Scripture. Unless the Bible makes clear that these four waves of locus are in reference to the coming nations, one has to be careful to say "the Holy Spirit doubtless had in view the successive empires.")*
2. What has been a recent natural disaster in your area of the world? What was the response of the Christian community in preparing for, sustaining and responding to the natural disaster? *(each student their own opinion)*
3. How do you see the relationship between natural disasters and God? *(This is a set up question....Joel 2 answers that question showing that the Lord is in control of the locust plague. It is "his army" and "his command." [2:11])*

LESSON THREE

WORK SHEET (same instructions as previous lesson, bring results to next class)

(work sheet) : 1:13-20

CROSS REFERENCE STUDY	Exodus 32:11-14 Num 10:3 Numb. 29:35 Lec. 23:36 Dt. 16:8 Jer. 42:1-4 Dan 9:1-19 Amos 7:7-6
INDUCTIVE STUDY	Explanation of important data: Important words in passage: priest, ministers, sackcloth, fast, assembly, elders, "Day of the Lord." Grammatical annotations: Translation method: literal Literary genre: prophecy Original author and hearers: same as vs. 1:1-3 Cultural context: Religious community in time of disaster Historical context: Response to locust plague Biblical context: Three mentions of the day of the Lord in the prophecy of Joel (temporal judgment, spiritual revival, judgment of enemies after repentance of covenant people) Title for the passage: Disaster Response Theme of the passage: Repentance is needed in midst of disaster
THEMATIC STUDY	
Thematic study of 1:13-18: THE CULTIC RESPONSE TO THE ALARMING AND SELF-EVIDENT WOES	
Vs. 13	How are the priest to respond? In the absence of substance for offering all that remains is despair.
Vs. 14	How is the religious community to respond? Listen, fast, congregate, call everyone together, cry to the Lord for mercy.
Vs. 15	What special event had arrived? The Day of the Lord, a time of judgment.
Vs. 16	What would be the result? Food disappears, celebration is gone from the temple.
Vs. 17	What happened to the plant world? Storage places broken down, grain is gone.
Vs. 18	What happened to the animal world? Animals suffered.
Thematic Study of 1:19-20 THE FINAL APPEAL	
Vs. 19	To whom does the prophet make his final appeal? To God.
Vs. 20	What was the prophet's own summary? He affirms the content of the prophecy and notes the final results.
DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS	
1. Thesis 2. Antithesis 3. Synthesis 4. Syncretism	1. Religious community must respond to national disaster 2. Natural disasters are not related to sins of the people. 3. God is willing to communicate His way of deliverance in the midst of disasters.

	4. Say that one repents but do not repent
DEVOTIONAL ANALYSIS	Prayer and Action -Praise to God: Praise that repentance is possible in the midst of disasters -Confession of personal sin. I confess that I do not turn to the Lord when I experience disasters. -Confession of social sin. The Church needs to turn to the Lord in the midst of natural, moral, national and religious disasters. -Special requests: That we may return to the Lord and not turn to our disastrous ways. -Thanksgiving to God: Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. The call to Church leadership to repent in response to disasters (vs. 13-14) 2. The announcement of the dreadful Day of the Lord (vs. 15) 3. The cry to God of the lonely prophet on behalf of the people (vs. 19)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### REFLECTIONS

1. JFB writes: “**20. beasts . . . cry . . . unto thee**--that is, look up to heaven with heads lifted up, as if their only expectation was from God ([Job 38:41](#), [Psalms 104:21](#), [145:15](#), [147:9](#); compare [Psalms 42:1](#)). They tacitly reprove the deadness of the Jews for not even now invoking God.” Please comment. *(It is ironic that at the end of chapter 1, only Joel and the beast are crying out to God! The priests were instructed to mourn for the loss of sacrifices. Apparently, they were not involved in praying for the people since they first had to pray for themselves and repent.)*
2. Why is intercessory prayer important? *(To be an intercessor is to mediate between two estranged parties. A holy God is estranged from His unholy people. The priests were not in a position to intercede since they too were living in sin. So Joel begins the intercession by calling out to the true God.)*
3. Are you aware of intercessory prayer ministries that are going on? *(If one is a member of a faithful Christian church, one should hear intercessory prayer for the Church, the needs of the members of the church, for the nation and its leaders. This is commonly known as the congregational prayer. There may also be special days of prayer for specific needs. There are also special prayer groups to pray for mission needs, such as prayers for unreached people groups. [For an example, see Patrick Johnson’s, Operation World]).*

LESSON FOUR (work sheet) 2:1-14

INDUCTIVE STUDY	<p>Explanation of important data:                  Important words in passage: trumpet, alarm, "like", Day of the Lord.                  Grammatical annotations:                  Translation method: literal, use of the metaphor.                  Literary genre: prophecy                  Original author and hearers. Same as 1:1-3                  Cultural context: Same as before                  Historical context: Same as before                  Biblical context: Same as before                  Title for the passage: The Lord's Locust Army (vs. 11)                  Theme of the passage: The Sovereign Lord directs the locust army</p>
CROSS REFERENCE STUDY	<p>What are some examples where the Lord led the opposing forces?                  Joel 2:25. army of locust                  Isaiah 10:5-7. Assyrians                  Isaiah 13:4. Assyrians                  Jeremiah 25:9. Babylonians                  Jeremiah 43:10. Babylonians                  Zeph. 1:18. Babylonians                  Mal. 4:1,5. Romans, succeeding world powers</p>
THEMATIC STUDY	
2:1 Sound of National Alarm	<p>How will be Day of the Lord be announced? Blowing of trumpet from the temple of Jerusalem. The works of God are announced by His messengers.</p>
2.2. Description of the Day of the Lord	<p>What is the Day of the Lord compared to?                  Darkness of cloud that covers the mountains.</p>
2.3.	<p>What are the result of the locust's march?                  Burned up the land, left it like a wilderness.</p>
2:4-9. Description of the invasion of locusts	<p>What metaphors are used to describe the invasion of the locusts?                  Use of the similes, "like." Like horses, chariots, noise of fire, strong people, mighty men, men of war.</p>
2:8-9	<p>How are the locusts like a human army?                  Their formation, marching, activities are like an army, yet they do not have a locust leader, rather God Himself.</p>
2:9	<p>What happens to the earth, sun, moon and stars?                  Earth trembles and light goes dark.</p>
2:10-11. The Leader of the army of locusts	<p>Who is the leader of the locust army?                  The Lord directs the locusts by His Word.</p>
2:12-13. The gracious heart of God	<p>How would you describe the heart of God from these texts?                  Because of his grace (giving that which we do not deserve), He is merciful (not giving what we deserve) and his mercy triumphs over judgement.</p>
LITERARY STUDY	<p>Do the metaphors and similes describe a human army or do they describe an army of locusts? They an army of locusts.</p>
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thesis</li> <li>2. Antithesis</li> <li>3. Synthesis</li>   <li>4. Syncretism</li> </ol>	<p>The Lord directs the plague of locusts                  God is not associated with natural disasters                  The commander of the destruction forces is approachable through faith and repentance                  To recognize God in the midst of our trouble and yet ignore His call to repentance</p>
DEVOTIONAL STUDY	Prayer and Action

	<p>-Praise to God: Praise God that He is Sovereign and in control, even of the “opposing forces.”</p> <p>-Confession of personal sin: I do not recognize God’s control.</p> <p>-Confession of social sin: As a people we need to call out to God for help for our church and society.</p> <p>-Special requests:</p> <p>-Thanksgiving to God:</p> <p>Communication of truths of the passage</p> <p>-three main truth statements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lord of locust army warns opposition (2:1)</li> <li>2. Lord of locust army acts (2:2-11)</li> <li>3. Lord of locust army is serious (vs. 11)</li> </ol>
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#### REFLECTIONS FOR LESSON 4

1. Jamiesen, Fausset, Brown (JFB) insist that: “the locusts are only the symbols of human foes. The immense Assyrian host of invaders under Sennacherib (compare [Isaiah 37:36](#)) destroyed by God ([Joel 2:18,20,21](#)), may be the primary objects of the prophecy; but ultimately the last antichristian confederacy, destroyed by special divine interposition, is meant. **there hath not been ever the like--** (Compare [Joel 1:2](#), [Exodus 10:14](#)).”

Unlike JFB, the author of this study (Hegeman) argues that the locust refer to a real plague of locust. Hegeman argues that the figures of speech in 2:1-11 use the symbolism of a human army to describe the locust’s army and not the other way around. However, if later prophecy wants to use the imagery of locust plague to speak about a human invasion, so be it, but the imagery of this particular prophecy cannot be reversed. What do you think? *(Each student gives their own response. The purpose of this question is three fold. 1) To have the student study the figures of speech in the text and really see what they refer to. For example: 2:4 “Their appearance is like the appearance of horses (they are like horses, they are not the horses of a human army)... 2:5, with a noise like chariots (they are not military chariots but LIKE the noise of chariots). 2) The students need to be critical of commentaries. Most of the heresies and confusion in the church comes through what is written underneath the Biblical text. 3) The students need to think for themselves and be faithful to what the Bible says.)*

2. Does the admission that the Lord is the commander of the locust army (2:11) make the Lord guilty of evil? *(Deist do not believe that God is directly involved with natural events. However, God in His sovereignty is involved in all things. God is able to use whatever means to accomplish His purpose. He can allow Satan to punish the wicked. Yet, because God is by nature holy, He cannot sin. His moral purpose is always pure. And because He is sovereign we know that “all things work together for the good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28). That is a source of hope, knowing that God knows and is working towards a perfect and glorious ending.)*

3. In an AOL poll conducted after the devastating 2005 hurricane Katrina in Florida and the Gulf coast, more than 50% of the contestants did not think that God uses hurricanes to punish people. What do you think? *(students own response)*.

4. How does verse 2:13 make you see the relationship between God’s justice and His mercy? *(Because God is gracious (giving us favor that we do not deserve) and He is merciful (not giving us what we do deserve). His mercy triumphs over judgment.)*

LESSON FIVE. (Work Sheet) 2:15-27

INDUCTIVE STUDY	<p>Explanation of important data:                  Important words in passage: return, rend, turn, inheritance, jealous, pity.                  Grammatical annotations:                  Translation method: same as before                  Literary genre: same as before                  Original author and hearers. Same as 1:1-3                  Cultural context: Same as before                  Historical context: Same as before                  Biblical context: Notice the progression                  Title for the passage: Restoration from woes is promised                  Theme of the passage:</p>			
CROSS REFERENCE STUDY	Match the woes with the restoration	<p>WOES</p> <p>1.4. Locust devour</p> <p>1.8 Fear, mourning</p> <p>1.7. Trees dry up</p> <p>1.7 Fig tree dries up</p> <p>1.7. Vine dries up</p> <p>1.10 Grain gone</p> <p>1.10 Wine dries up</p> <p>1.18 Oil dried up</p> <p>1.20/23 Cattle moan</p> <p>1.20 Drought</p> <p>1.27 Pastures burned</p> <p>1.11/28 Crying Hunger shame</p>	<p>RESTORATION</p> <p>Locust destroyed</p> <p>Faith, rejoicing</p> <p>Trees blossom</p> <p>Fig tree blossoms</p> <p>Wine</p> <p>Grain comes</p> <p>Wine comes</p> <p>Oil returns</p> <p>Wild animals</p> <p>Green pastures</p> <p>Green pastures</p> <p>Rejoicing</p> <p>Eating</p> <p>No shame</p>	<p>2.25</p> <p>2.21</p> <p>2.22</p> <p>2.22</p> <p>2.22</p> <p>2.24</p> <p>2.24</p> <p>2.24</p> <p>2.22</p> <p>2.22</p> <p>2.26.</p> <p>2.26</p> <p>2:27</p>
THEMATIC STUDY				
2:15-17. Call to the covenant people				
Vs. 2:15-16		Who should seek repentance? The people, elders, children, bridegroom, bride and priest.		
Vs. 2:17.		What should the priest do? Plead for mercy before the altar and appeal to the honor of God's name among the nations.		
Summary statement for 2:15-17				
2:18-27 Restoration for a repentant people				
2:18		Why will God's people be restored? Because of God's zeal for His land and pity for His people.		
2:19		Is the restoration only spiritual? No, it includes agriculture, national dignity.		
2:20		Where will the locust be sent? Into the sea and dessert.		
2:21-27		As you review the relationship between the woes and restoration, is there anything that strikes you? [own answer]		
Summary statement for 2:18-27				
DIALECTICAL STUDY				

1. Thesis 2. Antithesis 3. Synthesis 4. Syncretism	Restoration is implied with repentance Restoration does not require repentance Repentance and restoration are gifts of God's grace After repentance one returns to his sin
DEVOCIONAL STUDY	Prayer and Action -Praise to God: Praise God for His jealousy and mercy -Confession of personal sin. I want restoration without repentance. -Confession of social sin. We seek blessings without the gospel. -Special requests -Thanksgiving to God Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. Repentance is turning to God and God relenting judgment (2:12-17) 2. Restoration is given over former woes (2: 18-26) 3. Revival is promised for God's sake (2:27).

#### REFLECTIONS FOR LESSON 5

1. Revival was promised by the prophet Joel if the people had turned to the Lord, congregated as instructed, listened to the explanation of God's Word, seen their wicked ways, repented and pleaded for the mercy of God. Does that happen today as well? *(Yes, God continues to speak to His people by having His leaders call them together to listen to His Word so that they will recognize who God is, how we have sinned, that there is forgiveness through faith in Jesus and how we are revived to serve and worship Him. There are churches who capture such a sequence of God's relationship with His people in the liturgy of the church service.)*
2. Why is it significant that in revival, God's people are restored to their former relationship with God? *(There is a continuity in God's covenant relationship with His people. God does not abandon the covenant when we break it, rather, he lets us live in the consequences of covenant breaking and offers to renew the covenant).*
3. What is the goal of spiritual revival? *(vs. 2:27 show that God Himself is the goal of spiritual revival. People will know that "I am in the midst of Israel.")*

LESSON SIX (work sheet): 2:28-32

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY</p>	<p>Explanation of important data:                  Important words in passage: sons, daughter, old men, young men, my servants, both men and women, "those days", Spirit, pour.                  Grammatical annotations:                  Translation method: same as before                  Literary genre: prophecy                  Original author and hearers. Same as 1:1-3                  Cultural context:                  Historical context:                  Biblical context: look forward to coming of Messiah and Pentecost                  Title for the passage: Spiritual Day of the Lord                  Theme of the passage: In the midst of judgment God plans to send revival by His Spirit.</p>
<p>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY</p>	<p>Genesis 41:38                  Ex. 31:3                  Num. 11:17-29                  Num. 27:18                  Judg. 3:10; 4:4-7; 6:34; 13:5; 14:6,19; 15:14.                  Isaiah 11:2                  Isaiah 44:3                  Isaiah 59:21                  Isaiah 61:1-3                  Ez. 39:29                  Mt. 24:29-30                  Mt. 27:45                  Mark 13:25-26                  Acts 2:16-21, 39                  Acts 10:45                  Romans 10:13                  Galatians 3:28                  Rev. 6:12-14</p>
<p>THEMATIC STUDY</p>	
<p>2:28. Announcement of another type of Day of the Lord</p>	<p>Describe what kinds of "Days of the Lord" are found in Joel and the Bible.                  1. Joel 1:15; Zeph. 1:14. [temporal judgment]                  2. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:20 [spiritual outpouring]                  3. Joel 2:31; I Thes. 5:2 [final judgment]</p>
<p>2:28-29 Recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p>Who will receive the Holy Spirit and what will they do:                  Sons and daughters will prophecy                  old men dream and young men see visions,                  male and female servants will be anointed by Spirit.</p>
<p>2:30-31 Response of creation to the coming of the Lord</p>	<p>How will the creation respond to the coming of the Lord?                  Wonders in heavens; bloody, fire and pillars of smoke; sun turn into darkness and moon into blood.</p>
<p>2:32. .The announcement of the good news of salvation</p>	<p>What is so good about the announcement of salvation in 2:32.                  1) its for everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord;                  2) deliverance is promised                  3) the remnant will be preserved</p>
<p>Summary statement of 2:28-32</p>	
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY                  1. Thesis                  2. Antithesis                  3. Synthesis</p>	<p>There will be a special day of spiritual outpouring                  A spiritual outpouring is not needed                  The calling upon God is related to the spiritual outpouring</p>

4. Syncretism	Be religious and not depend on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit
DEVOTIONAL STUDY	Prayer and Action -Praise to God: Praise God for sending His Spirit in fullness. -Confession of personal sin. I do not depend on God's Spirit. -Confession of social sin. As church, do we pray for the outpouring of God's Spirit? -Special requests: that our hearts be prepared to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. -Thanksgiving to God Communication of truths of the passage -three main truth statements 1. Spiritual outpouring by God is promised 2. Spiritual outpouring will come upon all of God's servants 3. Spiritual outpouring will result in people calling on the name of the Lord for salvation.

## REFLECTIONS

1. What is the difference of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit prior to Pentecost as compared to during and after Pentecost? *(Before Pentecost the outpouring of the Spirit was more particular while during and after Pentecost it was "on all flesh" and ministry would be spread out among all the people of God (sons and daughter, old men, young men, maidservants and menservants).)*
2. What is the purpose of the "signs of the times?" (i.e. vs. 2:30-31). *(The "signs of the times" (vs. 30-31) accompany the outpouring of the Spirit (vs. 28-29) and the preaching of the gospel (vs. 32). The signs of the times are signs of God's impending wrath and judgment on sin, while the coming of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the gospel is the message of escape from God's impending wrath and judgment. In fact, the emphasis of the New Testament is that the gospel will be preached to all people and that also the signs of the times will accompany the preaching of the gospel. While Holy Spirit inspired gospel preaching is the Message in the end times, the wonders in heaven and in the earth are the Events for the end times. The two are related.)*
3. What is the relationship between the call of God and those who call on the name of the Lord? *(God calls His remnant and they in turn are identified as the ones calling on the name of the Lord and calling out to others to call on the name of the Lord.)*

LESSON SEVEN (Work sheet) 3:1-16

<p>INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>Explanation of important data:                  Important words in passage: those days, Valley of Jehoshaphath, judgment, Tyre, Sidon, Philistai, Judea, Jerusalem, Greeks.                  Grammatical annotations: increased use of future tense                  Translation method: same as before                  Literary genre: prophecy                  Original author and hearers. 1:1-3                  Cultural context: addressing the sins of surrounding nations who abused covenant people.                  Historical context: historical places are mentioned.                  Biblical context: A universal perspective where the nations are punished for their abuse of Israel. There are also end time implications.                  Title for the passage: Retributive Justice and Refuge in the Lord                  Theme of the passage: God's justice and grace is manifest.</p>
<p>CROSS REFERENCE STUDY. In today's study we will take an extensive look at the Bible references</p> <p>Is 60:14                  Jer. 30:16                  Vs. 9                  Is. 8:9                  Jer. 46:4                  Eze. 38-39                  Rev. 19                  Vs. 10                  Nu. 25:7                  Is. 2:4                  Zech 12:8                  Vs. 11                  Is 13:1-22                  Ez. 38:15-16                  Zeph. 3:8                  Vs. 12                  Ps. 82:1                  Ps. 96:3                  Is. 2:4                  Vs. 13                  Jer. 25:8-38                  Hos. 6:11                  Mt. 13:39                  Mark 4:29                  Rev. 14: 14-20                  Vs. 14                  Is. 2:4                  Is. 13:4                  Is. 22:1                  Is. 34:2-8                  Ez. 36:5                  Joel 1:15                  Zep. 1:7                  Vs. 15                  Job 9:7                  Ez. 32:7                  Vs. 16                  Jdg. 5:4-5</p>	<p>Vs. 1.                  Gen. 12:1-3                  Gen. 49:10-11                  Dt. 30:1-10                  Jer. 40:3                  Ez. 38:8                  Zeph. 3:20                  Acts 1:6-8                  Vs. 2.                  2 Cron. 20:1-30                  Isaiah 1:3,9                  Isaiah 13:9                  Isaiah 22:1,16                  Isaiah 66:18                  Jer. 2:35                  Jer. 25:31                  Jer. 29:14                  Ez. 36:5                  Ez. 38:22                  Vs. 3                  Ez. 24:6;                  Joel 1:15;                  Am. 2:6                  Vs. 4                  Mt. 11:21;                  Mt. 13: 39                  Mt. 24:31                  Mt. 25: 31-46                  Rev. 14:20                  Rev. 16:16                  Rev. 19:11-21                  Rev. 21:3                  Vs. 12                  Ps. 82:1                  Ps. 96:13                  Is. 2:4                  Vs. 5                  I Ki. 15:18                  2 Ch. 21:16-17                  Vs. 6                  Ez. 27:13</p>

<p>2Sam. 22:3 Ps. 46:1 Is. 14:16 Is. 25:4 Is. 42:13 Ez. 38:19 Jer. 16:19 Amos 1:2 Zech. 9:12 Zech. 12:8</p>	<p>Zech. 9:13 Vs. 7 Isaiah 43:5-6 Jer. 23:8 Vs. 8 Gen. 10:7 I Ki. 10:1-13 2Ch. 9:1 Is. 14:2 Is. 23:1</p>
THEMATIC STUDY	
<p>3:1-3 Announcement of God's International Judgment</p>	<p>3:1. When will the nations be judged? a. "those days" and "at that time". It relates both to Joel 2:28 as well as the restoration of the fortunes of Jerusalem. b. The question remains whether or not this refers to the judgment of the oppressors of Judea and Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity (see Jeremiah 25:8-38) or whether this includes that and also refers to the end times. The principle that God will judge the nations according to their crimes against God's people is true to Gen. 12:2-3. Such judgment occurs throughout history and will ultimately be expressed at the end of times.</p>
	<p>3:2. Where will the nations be judged? In the Valley of Jehoshaphat. See 2 Chron. 20 about Jeshosphat. It will be a time of judgment.</p>
	<p>3.3. Why will all the nations be judged? For the crimes they committed against God's people.</p>
<p>3:4-8. God's charge against the nation's crimes</p>	<p>3.4. Is the charge of against all nations in general or are some nations singled out? Several surrounding nations are singled out for their crimes. 3.4,7 What principle of judgment does God use? The crimes of the nations will be paid in kind. 3.5-6 What two crimes are specifically mentioned? Ransacking the temple and selling captives as slaves.</p>
<p>3:9-16 The battle plan of God is announced</p>	<p>3:9. What is Joel to announce to the nations. God summons the nations to war. 3.11 Who are "your warriors" in verse 11? The same language is used to describe the destruction of the Babylonians by the Persians and Medes, Isaiah 13.3. Read Isaiah 13 for a historical description of the destruction of Babylon. Read Rev. 14:14-20 for an apocalyptic view of end times. 3:16. What promise is given to God's people in light of His judgment? Revelation of His will, justice for sin, refuge and strength.</p>
DIALECTICAL STUDY	
<p>1. Thesis 2. Antithesis 3. Synthesis 4. Syncretism</p>	<p>The crimes of the nations against God's people will be punished The nations can do whatever they want There is refuge for those who believe in God To say that one is a covenant person and not believe or trust in God.</p>
DEVOTIONAL STUDY	
	<p>Prayer and Action -Praise to God. Praise God for His universal justice over nations. -Confession of personal sin. Are there sins I need to repent of? -Confession of social sin. Has our nation sinned against God? -Special requests. Repentance for abortion and ungodliness. -Thanksgiving to God: thanks for promise of refuge in the Lord. -three main truth statements 1. International judgment is promised (3:1) 2. Nations will be held accountable (3:2-15) 3. The Lord will be a refuge for His people (3:16)</p>

## REFLECTIONS FOR LESSON 7

1. In introducing (3:1) the most conflictive (as far as evangelical interpreters is concerned) part of the prophecy, Matthew Henry gives an overall summary:

“ We have often heard of the *year of the redeemed*, and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*; now here we have a description of the transactions of that year, and a prophecy of what shall be done when it comes, whenever it comes, for it comes often, and at the end of time it will come once for all. I. It shall be the *year of the redeemed*, for God will *bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*, v. 1. Though the bondage of God’s people may be grievous and very long, yet it shall not be everlasting. That in Egypt ended at length in their deliverance into the glorious liberty of the children of God. *Let my son go, the he may serve me*. That in Babylon shall likewise end well. And the Lord Jesus will provide for the effectual redemption of poor enslaved souls from under the dominion of sin and Satan, and will proclaim that *acceptable year*, the year of jubilee, the release of debts and servants, and the *opening of the prison to those that were bound*. There is a day, there is a time, fixed for the *bringing again of the captivity* of God’s children, for the redeeming of them *from the power of the grave*; and it shall be the *last day* and the end of all time.”

Do you see the relationship between the times of restoration (out of Egypt, out of Babylon, out of sin and out of the world?)

*(Matthew Henry places this part of the prophecy of Joel in the general context of Biblical prophecy. However, 3:1-8 are filled with historical detail. All the details of chapter three have to be carefully studied to see what historical era the prophecy is referring to. 3:1 starts out by referring to the return from captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. Specific sins committed by the captors of Judah during the capture and exile of Judah and Jerusalem are mentioned. There punishment is also given, along with historical detail. Along side of such historical judgment on the enemies of Judah, there are also warnings and prophecies related to the final judgment of the nations who will reject the Church.)*

2. The prophet condemns the sins of the nations against the people of Judah. What do these condemnations say about God’s nature and purpose? (Specifically, the sins are:  
Vs. 3:2, scattered the people of Judah among the nations and divided up God’s (My) land.  
Vs. 3:3. evidence of child trafficking, drunkness, prostitution  
Vs. 3:4. rebelled against God by rebelling against His people  
Vs. 3:5. ransacked the temple of its possessions  
Vs. 3:6 sold people of Judah into international slavery)  
The sins of the nations against the people, temple and land Judah and Jerusalem are spoken of in 3:1-8 as sins against God. God will punish them according to their crimes (vs. 7-8).
3. To what judgments and era do the verses 3:9-16 refer to: 1. judgment of nations who captured Judah; or 2) judgment of the nations before Jesus second coming? *(This may be the most difficult question to ask about the prophecy of Joel. Usually the answer depends on whether one believes there will be a millennium messianic reign before Jesus second coming. This is the position of JFB. The author prefers to interpret 3:9-17 in terms of apocalyptic prophetic principles. Such principles refer to an historical context and have implications for future judgments.)*

LESSON EIGHT (Work sheet) 3:17-21

<p>INDUCTIVE STUDY</p>	<p>Explanation of important data:                  Important words in passage: I, Lord, your God, Zion, holy hill, blood guilt, pardon, refuge.                  Grammatical annotations: same, use of future tense                  Translation method: same                  Literary genre: same                  Original author and hearers: same                  Cultural context: looking to future                  Historical context: historical places and their actions are described                  Biblical context: the retributive justice of God against the nations forshadows the final judgment of the nations at the end of time.                  Title for the passage:                  Theme of the passage</p>
<p>CROSS-REFERENCE STUDY</p>	<p>(Fill in your own cross references)</p>
<p>LITERARY STUDY                  How would you outline or diagram chapter 3?</p>	<p>3:1. Introduction to prophecy about return from Babylon                  3.2-6 Condemnation of sins of nations who abused people of Judah during exile                  3:7 -8 Parrallel judgment of the sins of nations                  3:9-16 Announcment to the nations that they will be judged                  3:17-20 Announcment of future reign of God                  3:20 Gospel conclusion</p>
<p>DIALECTICAL STUDY                  Thesis                  Antithesis                  Synthesis                  Syncretism</p>	<p>Final retribution is promised                  The sinners will win out                  God's reign is seen in his justice and grace                  Affirm God's reign without seeking pardon</p>
<p>DEVOTIONAL STUDY</p>	<p>Prayer and Action                  -Praise to God. Praise God that He knows the end already at the beginning.                  -Confession of personal sin. Do I realize that I am guilty?                  -Confession of social sin. Our churches and nation, when they reject God's will, heap judgment on themselves.                  -Special requests                  -Thanksgiving to God.                  Communication of truths of the passage                  -three main truth statements                  1. One day God will fully show Himself (3:17)                  2. God gives powerful promises for the future (3:18-20)                  3. Pardon is promised for blood guilty believers (3:21)</p>

## REFLECTIONS

1. Who do the “aliens” refer to in vs. 3:17 and what significance does that have? (In the New Jerusalem there were be no unbelievers, only the perfected saints).
2. On what basis will Judah abide for ever (vs. 3:20-21)? (*The people of God will continue forever, based on the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.*)
3. What importance does the final conclusion to the prophecy have (3:21b)? (*The final conclusion has been mentioned as conclusions at the end of significant parts of Joel's prophecy (vs. 1:16; 2:1; 2:15;2:27; 2:32; 3:5; 3:16,17 and finally 3:21 b). The end result is that God desires to live with His people and He has established the way to accomplish that, through the gracious provision of a blood (life) sacrifice of His Son! Now, that is what prophecy is all about!*)

Overall conclusion. The three manifestations of the Day of the Lord (His special intervention) is seen in the temporal judgment of the locust plague, the promise of spiritual revival as fulfilled at Pentecost and in the promise of retributive justice among the nations and grace for repentant sinners. It is important to note that at the end of these three manifestations, a powerful statement of the good news of salvation is given (2:27; 2:32; 3:16,21).

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## APPENDIX

### CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON JOEL<sup>18</sup>

#### CALVIN'S PREFACE TO JOEL

I proceed now to explain The Prophet Joel. The time in which he prophesied is uncertain. Some of the Jews imagine that he exercised his office in the time of Joram, king of Israel, because a dreadful famine then prevailed through the whole land, as it appears evident from sacred history; and as the Prophet record a famine, they suppose that his ministry must be referred to that time. Some think, that he taught under Manasseh, but they bring no reason for this opinion; it is, therefore, a mere conjecture. Others think that he performed his office as a teacher not only under one king, but that he taught, at the same time with Isaiah, under several kings.

But as there is no certainty, it is better to leave the time in which he taught undecided; and, as we shall see, this is of no great importance. Not to know the time of Hosea would be to readers a great loss for there are many parts which could not be explained without a knowledge of history; but as to Joel there is, as I have said, less need of this; for the import of his doctrine is evident, though his time be obscure and uncertain. But we may conclude that he taught at Jerusalem, or at least in the kingdom of Judah. As Hosea was appointed a Prophet to the kingdom of Israel, so Joel had another appointment; for he was to labor especially among the Jews and not among the Ten Tribes: this deserves to be particularly noticed.

Now the sum of the Book is this: At the beginning, he reproves the stupidity of the people, who, when severely smitten by God, did not feel their evils, but on the contrary grew hardened under them: this is one thing. Then he threatens far more grievous evils; as the people became so insensible under all their punishments, that they were not humbled, the Prophet declares that there were evils at hand much worse than those they had hitherto experienced: this is the second thing. Thirdly, he exhorts the people to repentance, and shows that there was required no common evidence of repentance; for they had not lightly offended God, but by their perverseness provoked him to bring on them utter ruin: since, then, their obstinacy had been so great, he bids them to come as suppliants with tears, with sackcloth, with mourning, with ashes, that they might obtain mercy; for they were unworthy of being regarded by the Lord, except they thus submissively humbled themselves: this is the third subject. The fourth part of the Book is taken up with promises; for he prophesies of the Kingdom of Christ, and shows, that though now all things seemed full of despair, yet God had not forgotten the covenant he made with the fathers; and that therefore Christ would come to gather the scattered remnants, yea, and to restore to life his people, though they were now lost and dead.

This is the sum and substance. But we shall see, as we proceed, that the chapters have been absurdly and foolishly divided. He thus begins --

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<sup>18</sup> [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org) (Calvin's Commentaries)

CHAPTER 1

LECTURE THIRTY-EIGHTH

JOEL 1:1-4	
1. The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.	1. Verbum Jehovae quod fuit ad Joel, filium Pethuel.
2. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?	2. Audite hoc senes, et auscultate omnes incolae terrae, an fuerit hoc diebus vestris, et si diebus patrum vestrorum.
3. Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.	3. Super hoc filiis vestris narrate, et filii vestri filiis suis, et filii ipsorum generationi posterae.
4. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath	4. Residuum locustae comedit (est alia species) bruchus (ita ponamus, quoniam non possumus certo scire quaenam fuerint istae species) et residuum bruchi comedit locusta et residuum locustae comedit eruca (alii primo loco ponunt Erucam, est proprie chenille, et puto potius esse hoc posterius. Picardi vocant casee, quasi lyox: verisimile est deductum fuisse nomen illud vulgare ab Hebraeis, quia est fere idem: sed tamen ego non anxie sudo in istis nominibus, quia de sensu Prophetae satis constabit. Nunc venio ad inscriptionem libri.)

*The word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.* He names here his father; it is hence probable that he was a man well known and of some celebrity. But who this Pethuel was, all now are ignorant. And what the Hebrews hold as a general rule, that a prophet is designated, whenever his father's name is added, appears to me frivolous; and we see how bold they are in devising such comments. When no reason for any thing appears to them, they invent some fable, and allege it as a divine truth. When, therefore, they are wont thus to trifle, I have no regard for what is held by them as a rule. But yet it is probable, that when the Prophets are mentioned as having sprung from this or that father, their fathers were men of some note.

Now what he declared by saying, that he delivered the word of the Lord, is worthy of being observed; for he shows that he claimed nothing for himself, as an individual, as though he wished to rule by his own judgment, and to subject others to his own fancies; but that he relates only what he had received from the Lord. And since the Prophets claimed no authority for themselves, except as far as they faithfully executed the office divinely committed to them, and delivered, as it were from hand to hand, what the Lord commanded, we may hence feel assured that no human doctrines ought to be admitted into the Church. Why? Because as much as men trust in themselves, so much they take away from the authority of God. This preface then ought to be noticed, which almost all the Prophets use, namely, that they brought nothing of their own or according to their own judgment, but that they were faithful dispensers of the truth intrusted to them by God.

And the word is said to have been to Joel; not that God intended that he alone should be his disciple, but because he deposited this treasure with him, that he might be his minister to the whole people.

Paul also says the same thing, -- that to the ministers of the Gospel was committed a message for Christ, or in Christ's name, to reconcile men to God, (2 Corinthians 5:20;) and in another place he says, 'He has deposited with us this treasure as in earthen vessels,' (2 Corinthians 4:7.) We now understand why Joel says, that the word of the Lord was delivered to him, it was not that he might be the only disciple; but as some teacher was necessary, Joel was chosen to whom the Lord committed this office. Then the word of God belongs indeed indiscriminately to all; and yet it is committed to Prophets and other teachers; for they are, so to speak, as it were trustees (*depositarii* -- depositories.)

As to the verb *hyh eie*, there is no need of philosophizing so acutely as Jerome does: "How was the word of the Lord made?" For he feared lest Christ should be said to be made, as he is the word of the Lord. These are trifles, the most puerile. He could not, however, in any other way get rid of the difficulty but by saying that the word is said to be made with respect to man whom God addresses, and not with respect to God himself. All this, as ye must see, is childish; for the Prophet says here only, that the word of the Lord was sent to him, that is, that the Lord employed him as his messenger to the whole people. But after having shown that he was a fit minister of God, being furnished with his word, he speaks authoritatively, for he represented the person of God.

We now see what is the lawful authority which ought to be in force in the Church, and which we ought to obey without dispute, and to which all ought to submit. It is then only that this authority exists, when God himself speaks by men, and the Holy Spirit employs them as his instruments. For the Prophet brings not forward any empty title; he does not say that he is a high priest of the tribe of Levi, or of the first order, or of the family of Aaron. He alleges no such thing, but says that the word of God was deposited with him. Whosoever then demands to be heard in the Church, must of necessity really prove that he is a preacher of God's word; and he must not bring his own devices, nor blend with the word any thing that proceeds from the judgment of his own flesh.

But first the Prophet reproves the Jews for being so stupid as not to consider that they were chastised by the hand of God, though this was quite evident. Hence they pervert, in my judgment, the meaning of the Prophet, who think that punishments are here denounced which were as yet suspended; for they transfer all these things to a future time. But I distinguish between this reproof and the denunciations which afterwards follow. Here then the Prophet reproaches the Jews, that having been so severely smitten, they did not gain wisdom; and yet even fools, when the rod is applied to their backs, know that they are punished. Since then the Jews were so stupid, that when even chastised they did not understand that they had to do with God, the Prophet justly reproves this madness. "*Hear*", he says, "*ye old men; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land, and declare this to your children*". But the consideration of this passage I shall put off till tomorrow.

#### **PRAYER.**

Grant, Almighty God that as almost the whole world give such loose reins to their licentiousness, that they hesitate not either to despise or to regard as of no value thy sacred word -- Grant, O Lord that we may always retain such reverence as is justly due to it and to thy holy oracles and be so moved whenever thou deignest to address us that being truly humbled, we may be raised up by faith to heaven, and by hope gradually attain that glory which is as yet hid from us. And may we at the same time so submissively restrain ourselves, as to make it our whole wisdom to obey thee and to do thee service, until thou gatherest us into thy kingdom, where we shall be partakers of thy glory, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## LECTURE THIRTY-NINTH.

*Hear this, ye old men; and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land: has this been in your days, and in the days of your fathers? This declare to your children and your children to their children, and their children to the next generation: the residue of the locust has the chafer eaten, and the residue of the chafer has the cankerworm eaten, and the residue of the cankerworm has the caterpillar eaten* <sup>1</sup>. I have in the last Lecture already mentioned what I think of this passage of the Prophet. Some think that a future punishment is denounced; but the context sufficiently proves that they mistake and pervert the real meaning of the Prophet; for, on the contrary, he reproves here the hardness of the people, -- that they fell not their plagues. And as men are not easily moved by God's judgments, the Prophet here declares that God had executed such a vengeance as could not be regarded otherwise than miraculous; as though he said, "God often punishes men, and it behaves them to be attentive as soon as he raises up his finger. But common punishments are wont to be unheeded; men soon forget those punishments to which they have been accustomed. God has, however, treated you in an unusual manner, having openly as it were put forth his hand from heaven, and brought on you punishments nothing less than miraculous. Ye must then be more than stupid, if ye perceive not that you are smitten by God's hand." This is the true meaning of the Prophet, and may be easily gathered from the words.

*Hear, ye old men*, he says. He expressly addresses the old, because experience teaches men much; and the old, when they see any thing new or unusual, must know, that it is not according to the ordinary course of things. He who has past his fiftieth or sixtieth year, and sees something new happening which he had never thought of, doubtless acknowledges it as the unusual work of God. This is the reason why the Prophet directs here his discourse to the old; as though he said, "I will not terrify you about nothing; but let the old hear, who have been accustomed for many years to many revolutions; let them now answer me, whether in their whole life, which has been an age on the earth, have they seen any such thing." We now perceive the design of the Prophet; for he intended to awaken the Jews that they might understand that God had put forth his hand from heaven, and that it was impossible to ascribe what they had seen with their eyes to chance or to earthly causes, but that it was a miracle. And his object was to make the Jews at length ashamed of their folly in not having hitherto been attentive to God's punishments, and in having always flattered themselves, as though God slept in heaven, when yet he so violently thundered against them, and intended by an extraordinary course to move them, that they might at last perceive that they were summoned to judgment.

He afterwards adds, *And all ye inhabitants of the land*. Had the Prophet addressed only the old, some might seize on some pretext for their ignorance; hence he addressed and from the least to the greatest; and this he did, that the young might not exempt themselves from blame in proceeding in their obstinacy and in thus mocking God, when he called them to repentance. *Hear*, he says, *all ye inhabitants of the land; has this been in your days or in the days of your fathers?* He says first, has such a thing been in your days, for doubtless what happens rarely deserves a greater consideration. It is indeed true that foolish men are blind to the daily works of God; as the favor of God in making his sun to rise daily is but little thought of by us. This happens through our ingratitude; but our ingratitude is doubled, and is much more base and less excusable, when the Lord works in an unwonted manner, and we yet with closed eyes overlook what ought to be deemed a miracle. This dullness the Prophet now reproves, Has such a thing, he says, "happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Ye can recall to mind what your fathers have told you. It is certain that for two ages no such thing has happened. Your torpidity then is extreme, since ye neglect this judgment of God, which from its very rareness ought to have awakened your minds."

He then adds, *Tell it to your children, your children to their children, their children to the next generation*. In this verse the Prophet shows that the matter deserved to be remembered, and was not to be despised by posterity, even for many generations. It appears now quite clear that the Prophet threatens not what

was to be, as some interpreters think; it would have been puerile: but, on the contrary, he expostulates here with the Jews, because they were so slothful and tardy in considering God's judgments; and especially as it was a remarkable instance, when God employed not usual means, but roused, and, as it were, terrified men by prodigies. *Of this then tell:* for hyle *olie* means no other thing than 'tell or declare this thing to your children;' and further, *your children to their children*. When any thing new happens, it may be, that we are at first moved with some wonder; but our feeling soon vanishes with the novelty, and we disregard what at first caused great astonishment. But the Prophet here showed, that such was the judgment of God of which he speaks, that it ought not to have been overlooked, no, not even by posterity. *Let your children,* he says, *declare it* to those after them, and their children to the fourth generation: it was to be always remembered.

He adds what that judgment was, -- that the hope of food had for many years disappointed them. It often happened, we know, that locusts devoured the standing corn; and then the chafers and the palmer worms did the same: these were ordinary events. But when one devastation happened, and another followed, and there was no end; when there had been four barren years, suddenly produced by insects, which devoured the growth of the earth; -- this was certainly unusual. Hence the Prophet says, that this could not have been chance; for God intended to show to the Jews some extraordinary portent, that even against their will they might observe his hand. When any thing trifling happens, if it be rare, it will strike the attention of men; for we often see that the world makes a great noise about frivolous things. But this wonder, says the Prophet, "ought to have produced effect on you. What then will ye do, since ye are starving, and the causes are evident; for God has cursed your land, and brought these insects, which have consumed your food before your eyes. Since it is so, it is surely the time for you to repent; and you have been hitherto very regardless having overlooked God's judgments, which have been so remarkable and so memorable." Let us now proceed.

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<sup>1</sup> All these are different kinds of locusts. There are in Hebrew *ten* names for them, designative probably of so many kinds. There are four here: Mzg , *gizam*, the young locust; hbra , *arebe*, so called from their number, one on the wing; qly , *ilak*, one of the hairy bristly kind; and lysj , *chesil*, one unfledged. Following the probable ideal meaning of the words, we may give them these names, --the *cutter*, the *multiplier*, the *licker*, and the *devourer*.--Ed.

## CHAPTER 2

### LECTURE FORTY-FIRST

<b>JOEL 2:1-11</b>	
<b>1.</b> Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;	<b>1.</b> Clangite tuba in Sion, et clamate (alii vertunt, tantarizate: sed est generale verbum: clamate igitur, vel, clamorem odite) in monte sancto meo: contremiscant omnes incolae terrae, quia venit dies Jehovae, quia propinquus est.
<b>2.</b> A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever	<b>2.</b> Dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nubis et obscuritatis, sicut aurora expanditur super montes, populus magnus et robustus (vel, terribilis;) similis ei non fuit a seculo, et post eum, non addet (hoc est, non erit amplius) ad annos

the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.	generationis et generationis (ego cogor uno contextu legere haec omnia; dicam postea suo loco rationem.)
3. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.	3. Coram facie ejus (coram ipso) devorans ignis, et post eum exuret flamma: sicut hortus Eden terra coram ipso (ante faciem ejus ad verbum;) et post eum desertum solitudinis (vel, vastitatis;) adeoque evasio non erit ei.
4. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.	4. Quasi aspectus equorum aspectus ejus, et tanquam equites current.
5. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.	5. Sicut vocem quadrigarum (sic twbkrm interpretes vertunt: postea dicam de hoc verbo,) super cacumina montium saltabunt, secundum vocem flammae ignis vorantis stipulam, quasi populus robustus (vel, terribilis) paratus ad proelium.
6. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.	6. A facie ejus pavebunt populi, omnes facies colligent nigredinem.
7. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:	7. Quasi gigantes (vel, fortes) discurrent, sicut viri proelii ascendent murum, et vir (hoc est, quisque in viis suis ambulabit, et non tardabunt gressus suos (alii, non inquirent de viis suis.)
8. Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.	8. Vir fratrem suum (hoc est, quisque socium suum) non premet, quisque in viis suis ambulabit: usque in gladium cadent (hoc est, super gladium cadent) non vulnerabuntur (alii, non concupiscent.)
9. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.	9. Per urbem gradientur, per murum discurrent, in domos ascendent, usque ad fenestras intrabunt tanquam fur.
10. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:	10. Coram eo contremiscet terra, et angentur coeli; sol et luna nigrescent, et stellae retrahent splendorem suum.
11. And 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	11. Et Jehova edet vocem suam coram exercitu suo, quia magna valde castra ejus: quia robustus qui facit (vel, exequitur) verbum ejus; quia magnus dies Jehovae, et terribilis valde, et quis sustinebit eum?

This chapter contains serious exhortations, mixed with threatening; but the Prophet threatens for the purpose of correcting the indifference of the people, whom we have seen to have been very tardy to consider God's judgments. Now the reason why I wished to join together these eleven verses was, because the design of the Prophet in them is no other than to stir up by fear the minds of the people. The object of the narrative then is, to make the people sensible, that it was now no time for taking rest; for the Lord, having long tolerated their wickedness, was now resolved to pour upon them in full torrent his whole fiery. This is the sum of the whole. Let us now come to the words.

*Sound the trumpet, he says, in Zion; cry out in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the earth tremble.* The Prophet begins with an exhortation. We know, indeed that he alludes to the usual custom sanctioned by the law; for as on festivals trumpets were sounded to call the people, so also it was done when anything extraordinary happened. Hence the Prophet addresses not each individually; but as all had done wickedly, from the least to the greatest, he bids the whole assembly to be called, that they might in common own themselves to be guilty before God, and deprecate his vengeance. It is the same as though the Prophet had said that there was no one among the people who could exempt himself from blame, for iniquity had prevailed through the whole body. But this passage shows that when any judgment of God is impending, and tokens of it appear, this remedy ought to be used, namely, that all must publicly assemble and confess themselves worthy of punishments and at the same time flee to the mercy of God. This, we know, was, as I have already said, formerly enjoined on the people; and this practice has not been abolished by the gospel. And it hence appears how much we have departed from the right and lawful order of things; for at this day it would be new and unusual to proclaim a fast. How so? Because the greater part are become hardened; and as they know not commonly what repentance is, so they understand not what the profession of repentance means; for they understand not what sin is, what the wrath of God is, what grace is. It is then no wonder that they are so secure, and that when praying for pardon is mentioned, it is a thing wholly unknown at this day. But though people in general are thus stupid, it is yet our duty to learn from the Prophets what has always been the actual mode of proceeding among the people of God, and to labor as much as we can, that this may be known, so that when there shall come an occasion for a public repentance, even the most ignorant may understand that this practice has ever prevailed in the Church of God, and that it did not prevail through inconsiderate zeal of men, but through the will of God himself.

But he bids *the inhabitants of the land to tremble*. By these words he intimates, that we are not to trifle with God by vain ceremonies but to deal with him in earnest. When therefore, the trumpets sound, our hearts ought to tremble; and thus the reality is to be connected with the outward signs. And this ought to be carefully noticed; for the world is ever disposed to have an eye to some outward service, and thinks that a satisfaction is given to God, when some external rite is observed. But we do nothing but mock God, when we present him with ceremonies, while there is no corresponding sincere feeling in the heart; and this is what we shall find handled in another place.

The Prophet now adds threatening, that he might stir up the minds of the people: *For coming, he says, is the day of Jehovah for nigh it is*. By these words he first intimates that we are not to wait until God strikes us, but that as soon as he shows signs of his wrath, we ought to anticipate his judgment. When God then warns us of his displeasure, we ought instantly to solicit pardon: *nigh, he says, is the day of Jehovah*. What follows has a regard to the end which we have mentioned; for the Prophet paints the terrible judgment of God with the view of rousing minds wholly stupid and indifferent.

And then he says, *A day of darkness and of thick darkness, a day of clouds and of obscurity, as the dawn which expands over the mountains.* By calling it a dark and gloomy day, he wished to show that there would be no hope of deliverance; for, according to the common usage of Scripture, we know that by light is designated a cheerful and happy state, or the hope of deliverance from any affliction: but the Prophet now extinguishes, as it were, every hope in this world, when he declares that the day of Jehovah would be dark, that is, without hope of restoration. This is his meaning. When he says afterwards, *As the dawn which expands, etc.,* he mentions this to signify the celerity with which it would come; for we know how sudden is the rising of the dawn on the mountains: the dawn spreads in a moment on the mountains, where darkness was before. For the light penetrates not immediately either into valleys or even into plains; but if any one looks at the summits of mountains, he will see that the dawn rises quickly. It is then the settle as though the Prophet said, "The day of the Lord is nigh, for the Lord can suddenly stretch forth his hand, as the dawn spreads over the mountains."

He then mentions its character, *A people great and strong to whom there has not been the like from the beginning, or from ages and after whom there will be no more the like, to the years of a generation and a generation.* Here the Prophet specifies the kind of judgment that would be, of which he had generally spoken before; and he shows that what he had hitherto recorded of God's vengeance ought not to be so understood as that God would descend openly and visibly from heaven, but that the Assyrians would be the ministers and executioners of his vengeance. In short, the Prophet shows here that the coming of that people ought to have been as much dreaded as if God had put forth his hand and executed on his people the vengeance deserved by their sins. And by these words he teaches us, that men gain nothing by being blind to the judgments of God; for God will notwithstanding execute his works and use the instrumentality of men; for men are the scourges by which he chastises his own people. The Chaldeans and the Assyrians were unbelievers; yet God used them for the purpose of correcting the Jews. this the Prophet now shows, that is, that God was the avenger in these very Assyrians, for he employed them as the ministers and executioners of his judgment. We see at the same time that the Prophet describes here the terrible wrath of God to shake off from the Jews their tardiness; for he saw that they were not moved by all his threatening, and ever laid hold on some new flattering pretenses. This is the reason why he gives such a long description.

*Before them, he says, the fire will devour, and after them the flame will burn.* He means that the vengeance of God would be such as would consume the whole people: for God has in various ways begun to chastise the people, but, as we have seen, without any advantage. The Prophet then says here that the last stroke remained, and that the Lord would wholly destroy men so refractory, and whom he could not hitherto restore to a sound mind by moderate punishments. For he had in a measure spared them, though he had treated them sharply and severely, and given them time to repent. Hence, when the Prophet saw that they were wholly irreclaimable, he says, that it now only remained that the Lord should at once utterly consume them.

He adds, *As the garden of Eden the land is before them, and after them it is the land of solitude; and so (and also) there will be no escape from them.* Here the Prophet warns the Jews, that though they inhabited a most pleasant country and one especially fruitful, there was no reason for them to flatter themselves, for God could convert the fairest lands into a waste. He therefore compares Judea to the garden of Eden or to Paradise. But such also was the state of Sodom, as Moses shows. What did it avail the Sodomites that they dwelt as in Paradise, that they inhabited a rich and fertile land, and thought themselves to be nourished as in the bosom of God? So also now the Prophet says, "Though the land is like Paradise, yet when the enemy shall march through it, a universal waste shall follow, a scattering shall everywhere follow, there shall be no cultivation, no pleasantness, no appearance of inhabited land, for the enemy will destroy every thing." His purpose was to prevent the Jews, by confiding in God's blessing, which they had hitherto experienced, from heedlessly disregarding in future his vengeance; for his wrath

would in a moment consume and devour whatever fruitfulness the land had hitherto possessed. This is the meaning. He therefore concludes that there would be no escape from these enemies, the Assyrians, because they would come armed with a command to reduce to nothing the whole land.

He afterwards adds many similitudes, which any one of himself can sufficiently understand: I shall not therefore be long in explaining them, and many words would be superfluous. *As the appearance of horses their appearance, and as horsemen, so will they run.* This verse sets forth again the suddenness of vengeance, as though the Prophet had said, that long distance would be no obstacle, for the Assyrians would quickly move and occupy Judea; for distance deceived the Jews, and they thought that there would be a long respite to them. Hence the Prophet here removes this vain confidence, when he says that they would be like horses and horsemen. He then adds, *Like the sound of chariots.* They expound *twbkrm merecabut*, chariots, though the Hebrews rather think them to be harnesses or saddles as we call them; but yet I prefer to view them as chariots; for what the Prophet says, that they *shall leap on the tops of mountains* like the sound of chariots, would not be suitably applied to the trappings of horses. They then shall leap on tops of mountains -- but how? as chariots, that is, they shall come with great force, or make a great and terrible noise. And he speaks of the tops of mountains for there we know the noise is greater when there is any commotion. The Prophet, therefore, does in every way amplify God's vengeance, that he might awaken the Jews, who by their indifference had too long provoked the Lord's wrath.

*Like the sound, he says, of the flame of fire, or of a fiery flame, devouring the stubble.* He compares the Assyrians to a flame, which consumes all things; and he compares the Jews to stubble, though they thought themselves fortified by many forces and strongholds.

At length he adds, *As a strong people, prepared for battle; their face the people will dread, and all faces shall gather blackness.* By these words the Prophet intimates that the Assyrians at their coming would be supplied with such power as would, by report only, lay prostrate all people. But if the Assyrians should be so formidable to all people, what could the Jews do? In short, the Prophet here shows that the Jews would by no means be able to resist enemies so powerful; for they would by their fame alone so lay prostrate all people, that none would dare to rise up against them. He then compares them to giants. *As giants, he says, they will run here and there; as men of war they will climb the wall, and man (that is, every one) in his ways shall walk.* The Prophet heaps together these various expressions, that the Jews might know that they had to do with the irresistible hand of God, and that they would in vain implore assistance here and there; for they could find no relief in the whole world, when God executed his vengeance in so formidable a manner. He says further, *they shall not stop their goings*, though some render the words, "They shall not inquire respecting their ways;" for he had said before, "They shall proceed in their ways:" then the meaning is, They shall not come like strangers, who, when they journey through unknown regions, make anxious inquiries, whether any be lying in wait, whether there be any turnings in the road, whether the ways be difficult and perplexed: *They shall not inquire*, he says; they shall securely proceed, as though the road was open to them, as though the whole country was known to them. This part also serves to show celerity, that the Jews might dread the vengeance of God the same as if it was quite nigh them.

He then adds, *A man shall not push his brother.* By this mode of speaking the Prophet means that they would come in perfect order, so that the multitude would create no confusion, as it is mostly the case: for it is very difficult for an army to march in regular order without tumult, like two or three men walking together. For when a hundred horsemen march together some commonly hinder others. When therefore so large a number assemble together, it can hardly be possible for them not to retard and impede one another. But the Prophet declares that this would not be the case with the Assyrians, for the Lord would direct their goings. Though then the Lord would bring so large a multitude, it would

yet be so well arranged and in such order, that no one would push his companion, or be any hindrance to him. *A man*, he says, shall in his way proceed, even without any impediment.

*And on swords they shall fall, and shall not be wounded:* that is, they shall not only be strong men of war, so that they shall intrepidly face every kind of danger; but they shall also escape unhurt from all weapons; though they may rush on swords like madmen and show no care for themselves, they shall not yet be wounded. But this may be taken in a still simpler way, "They shall not be wounded" that is, as if they could not be wounded. And it seems to me to be the genuine sense of the Prophet, that they would not entertain any fear of death, so as cautiously to attack their enemies, but would with impunity provoke death itself by casting themselves on the very swords: they would not then fear any wound, but dare to face swords as if they were wholly harmless to them. Some render the word, "they shall not covet;" and then the word means as if the Prophet had said, that they would not be covetous of money. But this meaning can hardly suit this place; and we see that the best sense seems to be, that they would heedlessly rush on swords, as though they could not be wounded.

It afterwards follows, *Through the city shall they march; over the wall shall they run here and there; into houses shall they climb; through the windows shall they enter like a thief.* The Prophet here shows that the Jews in vain trusted in their fortified cities, for the enemies would easily penetrate into them. They shall march, he says, through the city, that is, as though there were no gates to it. The meaning then is, that though Judea abounded in cities, which seemed impregnable and appeared sufficient to arrest the course of enemies, as it had happened almost always, so that great armies were forced to desist when any strong fortified city stood in their way; yet the Prophet says that cities would be no impediment to the Assyrians at their coming to Judea, for they would march through the city, as along a plain road, where no gates are closed against them. They shall then march through the midst of cities as through a plain or open fields. To the same purpose is what follows, *They shall run here and there over the wall*, he says. These are indeed hyperbolical words; yet, when we consider how slow men are to fear punishment, we must allow that the Prophet in these expressions does not exceed moderation. They shall then run up and down through the city; that is, "In vain you expect that there will be to you any rest or quietness, for ye think that you sill be able for a time to sustain the onsets of your enemies: This," he says, "will by no means be the case, for they shall run here and there over the wall, as though it were a plain. Besides, *they shall climb into the houses, and enter in through the windows, and do this as a thief;* that is, though there should be no hostile attack, yet they shall stealthily and secretly penetrate into your houses: when there will be a great tumult, when the whole regions shall meet in arms, and when ye will think yourselves able to resist, they will then as thieves quietly enter into your houses and come in through the windows, and ye shall not be able to close up the passage against them."

Then he adds, *Before their face shall the earth tremble, and in anguish shall be the heavens; the sun and the moon shall become dark, and the stars shall withdraw their brightness.* The Prophet speaks here more hyperbolically; but we must ever remember that he addressed men extremely stupid: it then behaved him to speak in an unusual manner, that he might touch their feelings; for it avails nothing to speak in all ordinary way to perverse men, especially to those who have divested themselves of all shame, and whom Satan has fascinated, so that they fear nothing and grieve at nothing. When therefore each stupidity lays hold on the minds of men, God must thunder that his word may be heard. As then the listlessness of the people was monstrous, so it was necessary, so to speak, for the Prophet to utter monstrous words. This is the reason why he now says, *Before their face* (namely, that of the enemies) *shall the land tremble;* and then he adds, *The heavens also shall be in anguish;* not that the heavens would fear the Assyrians; but the Prophet intimates that such would be the vengeance, that it would terrify the whole world; and this he intimates, that the Jews might cease to expect any subterfuges, for they flattered themselves, as though they could fly on the clouds, or could find for themselves some hiding-places or some corners at a distance. The Prophet gives them to understand that the whole world

would be full of horror, when the Lord would come furnished with his army. He speaks also of *the sun and the moon*; as though he said, "There will be no more any hope of aid from created things; for the vital light itself shall fail, when the Lord shall pour forth the flood of his fury: *The sun and the moon*, he says, *shall become dark; and the stars shall withhold their brightness*. Though then ye lift up your eyes, not even a spark of light will there be to comfort you, for darkness on every side will cover you; and ye shall know by heaven as well as by earth that God is angry with you. Here, in short, he shuts up against the Jews every avenue to hope; for not only the Assyrian will rage on earth, but God will also give signs of vengeance from heaven, so that the sun will be constrained to show such a sign, as well as the moon and all the stars.

He at last adds, *And Jehovah will utter his voice before his army*. The Prophet seems in this verse to anticipate whatever objection men might adduce. "O! thou denounces on us great terrors, and as if the Assyrians were not to be counted as men, as if no other people were in the world, as if there was no other army, as if there were no other forces, as if none else had courage; but if the Assyrians are at this day formidable, they have yet neighbors who can gather a force sufficient easily to oppose them." And Egypt was then a populous country, and well fortified; and who would not have said that the Egyptians were equal to the Assyrians? and the Jews also thought themselves safe through a treaty with them. And then there was Syria; and there were many kingdoms, with which the Jews might have boasted that they were surrounded, so that no access to them was open to the Assyrians; for however insufficient were the people of Moab or the people of Amman, yet they were all joined together, even Edom, and Ammon, and Moab: and then Tyrus and Sidon, and the many neighboring kingdoms, might certainly have been sufficient to resist the Assyrians. Now, that no one might object all this, the Prophet shortly anticipates it by saying, that God would be the leader of his army; as though he had said, "I have already declared this to be the hand of God: for the Assyrians will not come here of their own accord; that is, without being stirred up by God: but as this truth has not as yet sufficiently moved your feelings, know that God will be the leader of this army: *God will send forth his voice before his army*." Here he distinctly calls the Assyrians the attendants of God; they shall not then come as soldiers hired by their own king, they shall not come as carrying on war for an earthly king, but the Lord himself shall guide them, and by his voice encourage them. By this expression the Prophet shows that the Jews would not have a contest with one nation only, but also with God himself and with all his celestial power.

He therefore says, *God will utter his voice before his army; for leery great will be his camp*. He again repeats that the multitude which was to execute the biddings of God would be so great, that the Jews would seek forces in vain to resist it. *Strong*, he says, *is he who executes his word*. He expresses more clearly what I have stated already, that though cupidity impelled the Assyrians, that though they were intent on rapine and plunder, yet they would not come merely through an impulse of their own, but that the Lord would prepare them and use them as his instruments: "*Powerful*, then, *is he who does the word of God*; that is, who executes his command; not that the Assyrians designed to show regard to God or to offer to him their service, as the faithful do, who willingly devote themselves to Him; but that the Lord by his secret providence guided them and employed them to punish his own people.

He afterwards adds in the last place, *For great will be the day of Jehovah and terrible, and who will endure it?* In this clause he shows that the vengeance would be such as would reduce the Jews to nothing, and that it was now time to repent, and that if they still turned a deaf ear to what the Prophet denounces, God would punish their perverseness.

Now with regard to what he says, that *strong* is he who does the word of God, we have elsewhere reminded you that men serve God in two ways, -- they either execute his commands willingly, or are led to do so by a blind impulse. The angels and the faithful perform God's commands, because they are guided by the spirit of obedience; but the wicked also, and the devil who is their head, fulfill God's

biddings; this, however, is not to be imputed to them as obedience, for they are only led by their own wicked purposes, and seek to destroy, as far as they can, the whole government of God; but they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey God, not of their own accord or willingly, as I have said, but the Lord turns all their efforts to answer the end which he has decreed. Whatever, then, Satan and the wicked attempt to do, they at the same time serve God and obey his commands; and though they rage against God, he yet holds them in by his bridle, and also so guides their attempts and their purposes as to answer his own ends. In this sense, then, it is, that Joel says, that the Assyrians would do the word of God; not that it was their purpose to obey God, not that God had commanded them anything, but he puts the word of the Lord here for his secret purpose. As, then, the wicked perform no voluntary obedience to God, but constrained, when they execute God's commands; so there is a twofold command or word of God: there is the command by which he teaches his own children and leads them to obey him; and there is another, a hidden command, when he deigns not to address men, and shows not what pleases him or what he means to do, but suffers them to be led by their own sinful desires; in the meantime, he has his own secret purpose, which by them he executes though without their intention.

**PRAYER.**

Grant, almighty God, that as thou invites us daily with so much kindness and love, and makes known to us thy paternal goodwill, which thou didst once show to us in Christ thy Son, -- O grant, that, being allured by thy goodness, we may surrender ourselves wholly to thee, and become so teachable and submissive, that wherever thou guidest us by thy Spirit thou mayest follow us with every blessing: let us not, in the meantime, be deaf to thy warnings; and whenever we deviate from the right way, grant that we may immediately awake when thou warnest us, and return to the right path, and deign thou also to embrace us and reconcile us to thyself through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**CHAPTER 3**

<b>JOEL 3:1-3</b>	
<b>1.</b> For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,	<b>1.</b> Quia ecce, diebus illis et tempore illo, quo convertam captivitatem Jehudah et Jerusalem;
<b>2</b> I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.	<b>2</b> Et congregabo (tunc congregabo) omnes gentes, et descendere faciam in vallem Jesephat, et disceptabo illic cum ipsis super populo meo et super haereditate mea Israel, quia disperserunt inter gentes et partiti sunt terram meam (addemus et hunc etiam versum.)
<b>3</b> And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.	<b>3</b> Et super populo meo jecerunt sortem et posuerunt, puerum pro scorto (hoc est, addixerunt pro scorto) et pullam vendiderunt pro vino ut biberunt.

The Prophet confirms in these words what he had before taught respecting the restoration of the Church; for it was a thing difficult to be believed: when the body of the people was so mutilated, when their name was obliterated, when all power was abolished, when the worship of God also, together with the temple, was subverted, when there was no more any form of a kingdom, or even of any civil

government, who could have thought that God had any concern for a people in such a wretched condition? It is then no wonder that the Prophet speaks so much at large of the restoration of the Church; he did so, that he might more fully confirm what would have otherwise been incredible.

He therefore says, *Behold, in those days, and at that time, in which I shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I shall then make all Gentiles to come down into the valley of Jehoshaphat.* And the Prophet says this, because the Jews were then hated by all people, and were the execration and the dregs of the whole world. As many nations as were under heaven, so many were the enemies of the Jews. A fall then into despair was easy, when they saw the whole world incensed against them: "Though God may wish to redeem us, there are yet so many obstacles, that we must necessarily perish; not only the Assyrians are enraged against us, but we have found even greater hatred in our own neighbors." We, indeed, know that the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Syrians, the Sidonians, the Idumeans, the Philistines, and, in short, all in the surrounding countries, were very hostile to the Jews. Seeing then every access to their land was closed up to the Jews, it was difficult to entertain any hope of deliverance, though God encouraged them. For this reason the Prophet now says, that God would be the judge of the whole world, and that it was in his purpose and power to call together all the Gentiles, as though he said, "Let not the number and variety of enemies frighten you: the Assyrians alone, I know, are not your enemies, but also all your neighbors; but when I undertake the defense of your cause, I shall be alone sufficient to protect you; and however much all people may oppose, they shall not prevail. Then believe that I shall be a sufficient defender, and shall deliver you from the hand of all the nations." We now perceive the Prophet's design when he declares, that God would come to *the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there call together all nations.*

But the Prophet says, *In those days, and at that time, when the Lord shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,* etc. This time the Jews limit to their return: they therefore think, that when liberty to return was granted them by Cyrus and Darius, what the Prophet declares here was then fulfilled; Christian doctors apply this prediction to the coming of Christ; but both interpret the words of the Prophet otherwise than the drift of the passage requires. The Prophet, no doubt, speaks here of the deliverance we have just noticed, and at the same time includes the kingdom of Christ; and this, as we have seen in other parts, is very commonly done. While then the prophets testify that God would be the redeemer of his people, and promise deliverance from Babylonian exile, they lead the faithful, as it were, by a continuous train or course, to the kingdom of Christ. For what else was the Jewish restoration, but a prelude of that true and real redemptions afterwards effected by Christ? The Prophet then does not speak only of the coming of Christ, or of the return of the Jews, but includes the whole of redemption, which was only begun when the Lord restored his people from the Babylonian exile; it will then go on from the first coming of Christ to the last day; as though he said, "When God will redeem his people, it will not be a short or momentary benefit, but he will continue his favor until he shall visit with punishment all the enemies of his Church." In a word, the Prophet here shows, that God will not be a half Redeemer, but will continue to work until he completes everything necessary for the happy state of his Church, and makes it in every respect perfect. This is the import of the whole.

We also see that the Prophet Haggai speaks in the same manner of the second temple, -- that the glory of the second temple shall be greater than that of the first, ([Haggai 2](#)) He, however referred, no doubts to the prophecy of Ezekiel; and Ezekiel speaks of the second temple, which was to be built after the return of the people from exile. Be it so, yet Ezekiel did not confine to four or five ages what he said of the second temple: on the contrary he meant that the favor of God would be continued to the coming of Christ: so also Joel means here, when he says, *When God shall restore the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, he will then call together all the nations;* as though he said, "God will pour out not a small portion of grace, but will become the complete Redeemer of his people; and when the whole world shall rise against him, he will yet prevail; he will undertake the cause of his Church, and will secure the salvation of his

people. Whosoever then will attempt to delay or hinder the restoration of the Church, shall by no means succeed; for the Lord, the defender of his people, will judge all nations."

Let us now see why the Prophet particularly mentions the *valley of Jehoshaphat*. Many think that valley to be intended, which was called the Valley of Blessing, where Jehoshaphat obtained a signal and a memorable victory, when yet he was not provided with large forces, and when many nations conspired against him. Though Jehoshaphat fought against a large army with a few people, he yet wonderfully succeeded; and the people there presented thanks to God, and gave a name to the place. Hence, many think that this valley is mentioned, that the Prophet might remind the Jews how wonderfully they were saved; for their enemies had come for the very purpose of destroying the whole of God's people, and thought that this was wholly in their power. The memory then of this history must have animated the minds of the godly with a good hope; for God then undertook the cause of a small number against a vast multitude; yea, against many and powerful nations. And this view seems to me probable. Some place this valley of Jehoshaphat half way between the Mount of Olives and the city; but how probable their conjecture is I know not.

Unquestionably, with regard to this passage, their opinion, in my judgment, is the most correct, who think that there is here a recalling to mind of God's favor, which may in all ages encourage the faithful to entertain hope of their salvation. Some, however, prefer to take the word as an appellative; and no doubt jpswhy *ieushaphath* means the judgment of God; and so they render it, "The valley of the judgment of God." If this is approved I do not oppose. And, doubtless, though it be a proper name, and the Prophet speak here of that holy King, to encourage the Jews to follow his example, he yet alludes, no doubt, to the judgment of God, or to the contest which he would undertake for the sake of his people: for it immediately follows Ms Mme ytjps kw *uneshaphaththi omem shim*, "And I will contend with them there:" and this verb is derived from jps *shephath*. Hence also, if it be the proper name of a place, and taken from that of the King, the Prophet here meant, that its etymology should be considered; as though he said, "God will call all nations to judgment, and for this end, that he may dwell in the midst of his people, and really testify and prove this."

Some apply this passage to the last judgment, but in too strained a manner. Hence also has arisen the figment, that the whole world shall be assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat: but the world, we know, became infected with such delirious things, when the light of sound doctrine was extinguished; and no wonder, that the world should be fascinated with such gross comments, after it had so profaned the worship of God. <sup>1</sup>

But with respect to the intention of the Prophets he, no doubt, mentions here the valley of Jehoshaphat, that the Jews might entertain the hope that God would be the guardian of their safety; for he says everywhere that he would dwell among them, as we have also seen in the last chapter, "And God will dwell in the midst of you." So also now he means the same, *I will assemble all nations, and make them to come down to the valley of Jehoshaphat*; that is, though the land shall for a time be uncultivated and waste, yet the Lord will gather his people, and show that he is the judge of the whole world; he will raise a trophy in the land of Judah, which will be nobler than if the people had ever been safe and entire: for how much soever all nations may strive to destroy the remnant, as we know they did, though few remained; yet God will sit in the valley of Jehoshaphat, he will have there his own tribunal, that he may keep his people, and defend them from all injuries. At the same time, what I have before noticed must be borne in mind; for he names here the valley of Jehoshaphat rather than Jerusalem, because of the memorable deliverance they had there, when God discomfited so many people, when great armies were in an instant destroyed and without the aid of men. Since God then delivered his people at that time in an especial manner through his incredible power, it is no wonder that he records here the name of the valley of Jehoshaphat.

*I will contend, he says, with them there for my people, and for my heritage, Israel.* By these words the Prophet shows how precious to God is the salvation of his chosen people; for it is no ordinary thing for God to condescend to undertake their cause, as though he himself were offended and wronged; and God contends, because he would have all things in common with us. We now then, see the reason of this contention, -- even because God so regards the salvation of his people, that he deems himself wronged in their person; as it is said in another place, "He who toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye". And to confirm his doctrine still more, the Prophet adds, *For mine heritage, Israel.* God calls Israel here his heritage, to strengthen distressed minds, and also to comfort them; for if the Jews had only fixed their minds on their own state, they could not but think themselves unworthy of being regarded by God; for they were deemed abominable by all nations; and we also know that they were severely chastised for having departed from all godliness and for having, as it were, wholly alienated themselves from God. Since, then, they were like a corrupted body, they could not but despond in their adversity: but the Prophet here comes to their assistance, and brings forward the word heritage, as though he said, "God will execute judgment for you, not that ye are worthy, but because he has chosen you: for he will never forget the covenant which he made with your father Abraham." We see, then, the reason he mentions heritage: it was, that the Jews might not despair on account of their sins; and at the same time he commends, as before, the gratuitous mercy of God, as though he had said, "The reason for your redemption is no other, but that God has allotted to himself the posterity of Abraham and designed them to be his peculiar people." What remains we must defer until to-morrow.

#### PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou not only invites us continually by the voice of thy Gospel to seek thee, but also offerest to us thy Son as our Mediator, through whom an access to thee is open, that we may find thee a propitious Father, -- O grant, that relying on thy kind invitation, we may through life exercise ourselves in prayer: and as so many evils disturb us on all sides, and so many wants distress and oppress us, may we be led more earnestly to call on thee, and, in the meantime, be never wearied in this exercise of prayer; that, being through life heard by thee, we may at length be gathered to thy eternal kingdom, where we shall enjoy that salvation Which thou hast promised to us, and of which also thou daily testifiest to us by thy Gospel, and be for ever united to thy only begotten Son, of whom we are now members; that we may be partakers of all the blessings, which he has obtained for us by his death. Amen.

#### LECTURE FORTY-SEVENTH.

We said in our yesterday's Lecture, that God proves the singular love he has to his Church by condescending to undertake her cause, and contend as a worldly man would do for his paternal inheritance. He says, that *his heritage, Israel, had been dispersed among the nations;* as though he said, that it was an intolerable thing that enemies should, like robbers, thus divide his heritage. He speaks first of the people, then of the land; for God, as it is well known, consecrated the land to himself, and he would not have it occupied by profane nations. There was then a twofold sacrilege, -- the people were carried away into distant lands, and others were sent to inhabit and possess their land, which God had destined for his children and elect people.

There follows now another indignity still greater; for they cast lot on God's people, -- *On my people they have cast lot, and prostituted a boy for a harlot, and a girl have they sold for wine, that they might drink.* By these words the Prophet enhances the injury done them; for the Jews had been reproachfully treated. Some measure of humanity is mostly shown when men are sold; but the Prophet here complains in the person of God, that the Jews had been exposed to sale, as though they were the off scourings of mankind, and of no account. They have cast lots he says; and this was to show contempt; and the Prophet expresses more clearly what he meant, and says, that a *boy had been given for a harlot, and a girl*

*for wine.* Some consider the Prophet as saying, that boys were prostituted to base and scandalous purposes; but I prefer another view, -- that the enemies sold them for a mean price to gratify their gluttony, or their lust; as though the Prophet had said, that the Jews had to endure a grievous reproach by being set to sale, as they say, and that at the lowest price. He farther adds another kind of contempt; for whatever price the enemies procured by selling, they spent it either on harlot or on feasting. We hence see that a twofold injury is here mentioned, -- the Jews had been so despised as not to be regarded as men, and had been sold not for the usual prices, but had been disposed of in contempt by their enemies almost for nothing; -- and the other reproach was, that the price obtained for them was afterwards spent on gluttony and whoredom: yet this people was sacred to God. Now this contumelious treatment, the Prophet says, God would not endure, but would avenge such a wrong as if done to himself. This is then the meaning.

But the reason which induces me thus to interpret the Prophet is because he says that a girl was sold for wine, as the boy for a harlot; and the construction of the Prophet's words is the same. It is indeed certain that in the latter clause the Prophet meant nothing else but that the price was wickedly spent for vile and shameful purposes; then the former clause must be understood in the same way. Let us proceed --

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## REVIEW OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

3/13/05

Jared Reed

► Notes from *The God Who Keeps Promises* (Paul House: IVP, 1998)

### I. Introduction

- A. The English Bible considers the Minor Prophets as 12 separate books
- B. The Hebrew Bible sees them as one prophetic work—the Book of the Twelve
- C. They were placed together because as a group they display many of the same literary and theological features as the prophetic books in front of them
- D. Together they provide as comprehensive a prophetic theology as any of the three previous prophetic books
- E. Over a span of 300 years the Book of the Twelve provides a full portrait of the God who keeps promises
- F. The time span allows the text to include the fulfillment of pledges made decades earlier
- G. The historical setting, structural details, and thematic emphases of each individual book within the Twelve is important because it helps the reader understand how the individual books supplement the earlier prophecies and one another

### II. Structure

- A. The Fundamental Sin of Covenant Breaking. (Hosea-Micah)
  - 1. The God who expresses covenant love Hosea
    - a. The God who loves adulterous Israel Hosea 1-3  
\*Section on Gomer
    - b. The God who contends with Israel Hosea 4-14
      - (1) Summarized in 4:1-3: <sup>1</sup> *Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you*

*who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land.<sup>2</sup> There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.<sup>3</sup> Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying.*

(2) The book ends with a portrait of a nation bent on sinning and impervious to repentance

2. The God who rejects apathy. Joel

\*Joel urges repentance but makes it clear that a decision for or against God is demanded

a. The God who causes mourning Joel 1:1-2:17

\*The locust plague announces the coming Day of the Lord which will be a time of judgment

b. The God who restores the penitent Joel 2:18-3:21

(1) And yet God will not give up on his people (2:18: *Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.*)

(2) He will send His Spirit who will usher in repentance (2:28ff)

3. The God who roars against sin. Amos

\*Amos becomes more specific about Israel's sin

a. The God who roars against sin Amos 1-2

(1) The specific sins of Judah, Israel, and six surrounding nations are discussed

(2) Sin is worldwide

b. The God who demands to be heard Amos 3-6

(1) He demands that people listen (3:1, 4:1, 5:1: *Hear this word...*)

(2) God states that it is his right to give light or darkness to people

c. The God who rises against Israel. Amos 7:1-9:10

- (1) Five visions clarify Israel's determination to sin and thus receive their due penalty
  - (a) Locusts
  - (b) Fire
  - (c) A plumb line
  - (d) A basket of summer fruit
  - (e) The Lord beside the altar
- (2) The emphasis is made on God's word—it must be heeded if there would be healing
- d. The God who restores David's fallen tent. Amos 9:11-15
  - (1) The book ends on a positive note
  - (2) Because of the sin of the people God will act directly to redeem the people through the Davidic king
  
- 4. The God who judges pride. Obadiah
  - a. Earlier, both in the narrative sections of the canon, and in the prophetic books that preceded this one, the character and fall of Edom has been mentioned
  - b. Obadiah furthers the emphasis on the Gentiles' sin, God's right to judge the earth, and the necessity of his intervention for salvation
  
- 5. The God who sends prophets to the Gentiles. Jonah
  - \*Lest anyone think God does not care about Gentiles
  - a. The God who calls the prophet. Jonah 1:1-16
    - \*The narrative shows that already in the way the sailors have responded that dividends are already being paid for the Gentiles
  - b. The God who delivers the prophet. Jonah 1:17-2:10
    - \*God is shown to be the creator of the universe, over all creation, and therefore the only god who actually exists (as opposed to the gods of Nineveh)
  - c. The God who forgives the penitent. Jonah 3:1-10

\*The Gentiles respond in a way that even the Jews themselves had not to this point done

d. The God who is gracious and compassionate. Jonah 4:1-11

\*God's concern covers every nation, even the wicked

6. The God who testifies against sin. Micah

\*Micah summarizes and expands the description of sin already discussed in the first five books

\*Punishment could have been missed if the people had responded as the Ninevites in Jonah

\*Micah begins to emphasize more the bright future for the remnant

a. The God who denounces present sins. Micah 1-3

(1) Micah catalogs contemporary sins

(2) Soon the people will look to God and find no answer

b. The God who will exalt the remnant. Micah 4-5

(1) The concepts of sacred place (Zion), sacred people (remnant), and sacred time (Day of the Lord) will be fulfilled

(2) The remnant will suffer and then be redeemed

c. The God who removes sin for Abraham's sake. Micah 6-7

(1) Micah rehearses the past and present and says that even though covenant breaking has characterized Israel, the removal of sin is still possible

(2) He does this through a reference to the promises to Abraham

Summary:

\*With the end of Micah the complete history has been set from Abraham to the future

\*The promises of woe and renewal have been foreshadowed but not yet fulfilled

\*Since there has been no positive audience response, judgment must fall

\*The next section focuses on this

B. Specific Promises about the Approaching Day of the Lord. (Nahum-Zephaniah)

1. The God who destroys Assyria. Nahum
  - \*The time for its destruction has finally come
  - a. The God who is patient and jealous. Nahum 1:1-15
    - (1) God's rationale for his actions
    - (2) Though God has been patient, Assyria has grown more and more proud
    - (3) God now will reward their idolatry with the coming destruction
  - b. The God who opposes Nineveh. Nahum 2:1-13
    - \*This destruction becomes a sign that all evil will ultimately be conquered
  - c. The God who humiliates the arrogant. Nahum 3:1-19
    - \*Their pride will be eradicated
  
2. The God who inspires faith in crises. Habakkuk
  - \*Attention will now turn to Babylon
  - \*Though they too will be destroyed, they will be for a time God's instrument
  - a. The God who reveals the future. Habakkuk 1:2-11
    - \*Babylon will be used by God to carry out his plans
  - b. The God who inspires faith in crises. Habakkuk 1:12-2:11
    - (1) God's judgment of the wicked will come, however slowly it seems
    - (2) The proper response from the people of God is faith
  - c. The God who crushes idolaters. Habakkuk 2:12-20
    - \*Three woes about Babylon because of their idolatry
  - d. The God who in wrath remembers mercy. Habakkuk 3:1-19
    - (1) Ends with a psalm of trust
    - (2) Becomes a mini-psalter on how the people of God respond during difficult times
  
3. The God who punishes to create a remnant. Zephaniah
  - \*Focus remains on God's just anger against sin
  - \*Yet the fact that this wrath falls in order to forge a multinational remnant begins

to receive attention

- a. The God who sweeps away sin. Zephaniah 1:2-17a  
\*By verbally recalling creation and reversing it, Zephaniah points to the total destruction of evildoers
- b. The God who consumes the nations. Zephaniah 1:17b-3:5
  - (1) This destruction will include every nation
  - (2) But the “humble of the land” will emerge from this devastation
- c. The god who creates the remnant. Zephaniah 3:6-20
  - 1) This remnant will be purified and will consist of people from every nation
  - 2) To them will be the blessings of God

Summary:

\*With Zephaniah the destruction mentioned in Nahum is emphasized

\*But so is the fact that renewal is after the destruction

\*The last three books turn their attention to this hope and how it will unfold

C. God’s Eventual Transformation of Judgment to Glory. (Haggai-Malachi)

1. The God who renews the temple. Haggai  
\*With the people back in the land, the temple in place, and the Davidic covenant reaffirmed, Haggai declares that full renewal is not only feasible but already under way
  - a. The God who deserves honor. Haggai 1:1-15
    - (1) The people are struggling because they have not honored God
    - (2) The leaders respond
  - b. The God who promises greater glory. Haggai 2:1-23  
\*Three promises are offered that point out that this new temple will be greater in glory than the first:
    - (1) God’s promise to be with Israel like he was in the exodus
    - (2) God’s spirit will be with them

(3) God will fill the temple with the treasure of the nations

2. The God who renews Jerusalem as Zion. Zechariah

\*His concern moves beyond the temple to all of Jerusalem

a. The God who deals justly with Israel. Zechariah 1:1-6

(1) His reference to earlier prophets means his text must be read in light of them

(2) God's anger sent them into exile because of their unwillingness to repent

(3) But now repentance has come

b. The God who is jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. Zechariah 1:7-6:15

(1) With this repentance God gives eight visions to symbolize the renewal of blessing

(2) Emphasis is on the Davidic branch (mentioned in earlier books) who will be both priest and king

c. The God who forgives and blesses. Zechariah 7-8

(1) The past, present, and future are merged to show that God's jealousy will result in forgiveness and blessing

(2) God's purposes in Israel will be fulfilled

(3) Negative history will be reversed

(4) The Abrahamic promise (all nations will be blessed through you) still stands

d. The God who is Israel's shepherd and protector. Zechariah 9-11

\*Further description of the Shepherd

e. The God who dwells in Zion. Zechariah 12-14

\*Above all this, God will dwell in Zion

3. The God who restores the people. Malachi

\*Malachi contends that postexilic Israel will flourish only when the people are renewed by a fresh vision of Yahweh's love for them and a recommitment of their willingness to love, honor, and serve their Lord

- a. The God who loves Israel. Malachi 1:1-15  
\*Election was based on love
- b. The God who corrects priests. Malachi 1:6-2:9
  - (1) Now moves to specific issues
  - (2) For this renewal, the priests need to be re-invigorated
- c. The God who denounces infidelity. Malachi 2:10-16  
\*The result has been spiritual and familial infidelity
- d. The God who establishes justice. Malachi 2:17-3:5  
\*God's justice will be seen through the appearance of his messenger
- e. The God who never changes. Malachi 3:6-12  
\*They must realize God is sovereign and that they must return
- f. The God who exposes arrogance. Malachi 3:13-15  
\*All of Israel's claims against God amount to an arrogant refusal to recognize their sinfulness and God's holiness
- g. The God who creates the remnant. Malachi 3:16-4:6
  - (1) Once again, a positive response
  - (2) Their names are written in God's book
  - (3) There will be final healing
  - (4) The process will be carried out through both the canonical word (Law of Moses in their hearts) and the prophet who will come (prophetic preaching)

### III. Conclusion

- A. Malachi brings the Twelve and the Prophets to a close
- B. Malachi completes the charting of Israel's and the nations' sin from Assyria's defeat of Samaria through Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem to Persia's dominance
- C. The Twelve covers three centuries of decline, defeat, and initial recovery
- D. So Malachi caps the Twelve's depiction of the God who keeps promises
- E. The prophetic literature builds upon the theological foundation of the Pentateuch
- F. The activities of the nations in the lifetimes of the prophets are judged by this standard
- G. The prophets live in the past (the covenant at Sinai), the present (the present nation), and the future (the coming Day of the Lord)

- H. Primarily, all of the prophetic texts focus on God who allows no rivals, because to do so would allow people to believe and live a lie
- I. The prophets confirm that as long as the current generation lives like their predecessors there will be no spiritual, military, or economic glory
- J. As for the distant future, the promise to David acts as the major catalyst for positive change and punitive judgment.
- K. The Day of Lord, then, includes the defeats under Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, but ultimately points to the final Day in which God will judge the peoples of the world
- L. In the end, only the remnant will survive, a collection of people from all the nations of the world who have been created by the direct action of God's Spirit upon the hearts of those who constitute this new people
- M. This faithful remnant will enjoy the fruits of the kingdom of peace initiated by the Davidic heir