

Sunday School Lesson
Joel 1:1-20
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Locusts Everywhere



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This study is the first of three from the prophet Joel whose writing contains three chapters. Note: the book is divided into four chapters in the Hebrew text and Greek text (LXX); the English Bible divisions are based on the Latin Vulgate. This ancient Israelite prophet is usually labeled one of the minor prophets. From a Christian perspective he is mostly known through several citations from passages in the book almost exclusively by Matthew and Luke in Acts. Outside of these two NT documents one reference each is found in Titus 3:6, Luke 21:25, and John 7:38. A total of seventeen verses are cited in these five NT documents (Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th rev. ed., page 800).



Thus, some value exists in giving attention to this ancient prophet, if for nothing else, than to become more familiar with him and his message. Matthew and Luke found value here, perhaps we can also.

I Context

Both the historical and literary aspects of the texts are crucial to correct interpretation. Attention needs to be given to both these dimensions, and the challenges that they create for accurate interpretation.

a Historical

External History. The compositional history of the book of Joel poses several problems. In regard to the identity of the prophet himself (the *'who'* reporter question), the introductory header in 1:1 provides the majority of our understanding: "The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel" (NRSV). Joel was the son of Pethuel, i.e., Joel ben Pethuel. But beyond that very little is known. The name 'Joel' was somewhat popular in the Bible ([24 instances](#) in the RSV) with about a dozen individuals in the OT hav-

ing this name. This prophet named Joel is only mentioned by name here and in Acts 2:16 where Peter calls him a prophet in the sermon at Pentecost. His father's name is only mentioned here in Joel 1:1.

With such a scarcity of information outside the document, one turns to signals of time and place (the *'when'* and *'where'* reporter questions) found inside the book as indications of identity. Here more difficulties arise. No clear indications surface inside the book that will provide relatively precise indica-

tion. Priests, sacrifices and other references suggest familiarity with the temple in Jerusalem. Jerusalem as Zion is mentioned often. Judah and Jerusalem in ruins is alluded to in 3:1 suggesting a time after the destruction of the southern kingdom. The accusation against Tyre and Sidon of having sold Israelites to the Greeks (3:6) suggests a late date for the writing. Although earlier OT scholarship tended to propose an early time of writing perhaps as far back as the ninth century B.C.E., most current OT scholars see many signs inside the book pointing to a late period during the Persian period (539-331 B.C.E.). Additional internal indicators point to a late period inside this framework, probably from 400 to 350 B.C.E. These will be discussed as they surface in the text of the prophecy.

The location of the book between Hosea and Amos is not intended as chronological. Rather it is based on thematic and verbal similarities, especially to Amos (for example, cf. Joel 3:16s to Amos 1:2a) as Gregory Mobley (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd ed., 1295) points out.

Thus, our working assumption is that Joel was a Hebrew prophet living in and around Jerusalem after the restoration from Babylonian exile. He found

in the classical Hebrew prophets inspiration for his warnings to the Jewish people living at that time.

Internal History. Inside chapter one, numerous time and place markers surface, but in a generalized manner. At the heart of these was an invasion of locusts (1:4): “What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten.” The land of Judah had undergone an experience

destruction from these critters on a scale never before experienced. If you have ever experienced a massive invasion of grasshoppers, you have some idea of what the prophet was alluding to.

Although this does not provide precise historical identification, it does signal an event not uncommon in the ancient world, and still found in certain ways in our world. Thus, connecting links between the ‘then’ and the ‘now’ of scripture texts should not be unduly difficult to understand.



b. Literary

Genre. The basic literary form of chapter one is prophetic oracle. Paul Achtemeir (*Harper's Bible Dictionary*, Logos Systems) provides helpful insight here:

One of the clearest marks of prophetic behavior was the stereotypical way in which the prophets constructed their oracles. Oracles often began with an account of the commissioning of the prophetic messenger, an account that was followed by an accusation against an individual who had violated Israel's covenant law. After the accusation, the prophets delivered an announcement of judgment directly to the accused. The announcement usually began with the ‘messenger formula’ (‘thus says the Lord’), which identified the sender of the message and gave the authority for the oracle of judgment (1 Sam. 2:27-36; 13:11-14; 15:10-31; 2 Sam. 12; 1 Kings 11:29-40; 13:1-3; 14:7-14; 17:1; 20:35-43; 21:17-22; 22:13-23; 2 Kings 1:3-4, 6; 20:14-19; 21:10-15; Jer. 20:1-6; 22:10-12, 13-19, 24-27; 28:12-16; 29:24-32; 36:29-30; 31:17). A variation on this speech pattern was used by prophets in Judah and Jerusalem, who sometimes began their oracles with the cry ‘alas,’ followed by one or more participles describing the addressee and indicating the crime. This introduction was followed by an announcement of judgment (Amos 5:18-20; 6:1-

7; Isa. 5:8-10, 11-14, 18-19, 20, 21, 22-24; 10:1-3; 28:1-4; 29:1-4, 15; 30:1-3; 31:1-4; Mic. 2:1-4).

Joel makes use of several of these patterns, but also follows his own distinctive pattern. A study of the contents of the books reveals that even though living long after the era of the classical Hebrew prophets, he was greatly influenced by them and their pattern of communicating God's message to his people.

The poetic structure of the oracles in Joel are effectively described by Elizabeth Achtemeir (“Joel,” *New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach):

Joel presents his message in a series of poetic oracles that are sometimes only one strophe or stanza in length (1:2-4; 1:19-20), but that may encompass two strophes (2:18-19, 20; 3:1-3, 4-8; 3:9-10, 11-12; 3:13-14, 15-17), sometimes three (1:5-7, 8-10, 11-12; 1:13, 14, 15-16; 2:12-14, 15-16, 17), or even four (2:1-2, 3-5, 6-9, 10-11). The division of strophes in Hebrew rhetoric can be made on the basis of initial imperative verbs, changes in subject matter, opening exclamations, inclusios, and other such rhetorical devices. Only two passages in the book are in prose (2:30-32; 3:4-8), indicating perhaps Joel's use of traditional prose material.

The prophet couches his message in a number of different forms or genres appropriate to their content. A didactic admonition opens the work (1:2-4), and there are also calls to lamentation (1:5-12; 1:13-16; 2:15-17), a prophetic cry of alarm from the watchmen (2:1-11), a call to repentance (2:12-14), oracles of salvation (2:18-27), oracles against the foreign nations (3:4-8), and apocalyptic fragments presenting signs of the approaching end of history (2:30-31). Such forms are employed with great flexibility, however, often being detached from their original life setting or being combined with other forms.



Commentary on Scripture, Logos Systems) provides this summary:

The book occupies second place in the collection of the twelve prophets. It falls into two parts: Joel 1:1—2:27 (Joel 1—2 LXX and Heb), the plague of the locusts; and Joel 2:28—3:21 (Joel 3—4 LXX and Heb), the day of Yahweh. (Chapter 3 of the book in the Septuagint and Hebrew comprises the last five verses of chapter 2 in the Vulgate, which modern English versions follow in their chapter divisions.)

Second, as Ferreiro outlines above, the contents of the book fall into two basic sections, as is generally understood by OT scholars: **1)** 1:2-2:27, the locust

One of the distinctives of Joel is going to be his incorporation of elements of Jewish apocalypticism into the contents of his writing as well. These tend to revolve around the topic “The Day of the Lord” and give Joel a tone similar to Daniel and a few other late OT documents.

Literary Setting. The structure of the contents of the book have two aspects. First, the different divisions of contents between the Hebrew text, the Greek text (LXX), and the Latin text (the Vulgate). A. Ferreiro (*The Twelve Prophets. Ancient Christian*

plague, and **2)** 2:28-3:21, the Day of the Lord. Our passage, 1:1-20, then is a part of the first section. Chapter two, which completes this first section, tends to fall into a cry of alarm (2:1-11), a call to repentance (2:12-17) and God’s promise of deliverance (2:18-27).

II. Message

Literary Structure. The internal literary structure of 1:1-20 revolves around the following pericopes. The header for the book is 1:1. This is followed by poetics contained in three strophes or stanzas: **1)** vv. 2-7, locusts; **2)** a call to lament, vv. 8-14; **3)** vv. 15-20, a lament expressed.

The header follows a typical prophetic pattern: “The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel” (דְבַר-יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל-יֹאֵל בֶּן-פֶּתוּאֵל). The first part is typical: “The word of the Lord that came to ...!” (some twelve _____ in the major prophets; four times in the minor prophets), but the family identification, “son of Pethuel,” is unusual. Identifying the prophet’s father is not normally a part of such a formulaic introduction. The reason for this in Joel is not clear.

Elizabeth Achtemeier (“Joel,” *New Interpreter’s Bible*, iPreach) provides very helpful reflections on this header:

Certainly, however, fresh words were given by God to Joel, as his book makes clear. And that is significant for our understanding of prophecy. Most commentators have written that the locust plague that ravaged Judah suggested Joel’s prophecy to him about the day of the Lord. But that turns the Bible’s understanding of prophecy upside down. The prophets did not interpret the Word of God on the basis of the events they witnessed. Rather, they interpreted the events on the basis of the word revealed to them from God.

The Word interpreted the events, not vice versa, and it was the function of the prophet to tell, on the basis of the Word of God, just where and when God was at work. For us that means that our times do not interpret the Bible. Rather, the Bible interprets our times.

Our task then is to see how the words of this ancient prophet interpret the world we live in.

Because of the poetic nature of our passage, a modified format for listing the scripture passage will be used. Instead of listing the verses in side-by-side columns, the columns will be vertical. This will help



preserve the poetic format of the verses. And this format should facilitate easier understanding of the content of the verses.

a Locusts, vv. 2-7

LXX

2 ἀκούσατε δὴ ταῦτα οἱ πρεσβύτεροι
καὶ ἐνωτίασθε πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν
εἰ γέγονεν τοιαῦτα ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν
ἢ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν
3 ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν διηγήσασθε
καὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῶν
καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν εἰς γενεὰν ἑτέραν

4 τὰ κατάλοιπα τῆς κάμπης κατέφαγεν
ἢ ἀκρίς καὶ τὰ κατάλοιπα τῆς ἀκρίδος κατέφαγεν
ὁ βροῦχος καὶ τὰ κατάλοιπα τοῦ βρούχου
κατέφαγεν ἡ ἔρυσίβη

5 ἐκινήσατε οἱ μεθύοντες ἐξ οἴνου αὐτῶν καὶ
κλαύσατε
θρηνήσατε πάντες οἱ πίνοντες οἶνον εἰς μέθην
ὅτι ἐξῆρται ἐκ στόματος ὑμῶν εὐφροσύνη καὶ χαρὰ
6 ὅτι ἔθνος ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν μου
ἰσχυρὸν καὶ ἀναρίθμητον
οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ ὀδόντες λέοντος
καὶ αἱ μύλαι αὐτοῦ σκύμνου
7 ἔθετο τὴν ἄμπελόν μου εἰς ἀφανισμόν
καὶ τὰς συκάς μου εἰς συγκλασμόν
ἐρευνῶν ἐξηρεύνησεν αὐτὴν
καὶ ἔρριψεν ἐλεύκανεν κλήματα αὐτῆς

NASB

2 Hear this, O elders,
And listen, all inhabitants of the land.
Has *anything like* this happened in your days
Or in your fathers' days?
3 Tell your sons about it,
And *let* your sons *tell* their sons,
And their sons the next generation.

4 What the gnawing locust has left,
the swarming locust has eaten;
And what the swarming locust has left,
the creeping locust has eaten;
And what the creeping locust has left,
the stripping locust has eaten.

5 Awake, drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you wine drinkers,
On account of the sweet wine
That is cut off from your mouth.
6 For a nation has invaded my land,
Mighty and without number;
Its teeth are the teeth of a lion,
And it has the fangs of a lioness.
7 It has made my vine a waste
And my fig tree splinters.
It has stripped them bare and cast *them* away;
Their branches have become white.

NRSV

2 Hear this, O elders,
give ear, all inhabitants of the land!
Has such a thing happened in your days,
or in the days of your ancestors?
3 Tell your children of it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children another generation.
4 What the cutting locust left,
the swarming locust has eaten.
What the swarming locust left,
the hopping locust has eaten,
and what the hopping locust left,
the destroying locust has eaten.

5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep;
and wail, all you wine-drinkers,
over the sweet wine,

NLT

2 Hear this, you leaders of the people!
Everyone listen!
In all your history,
has anything like this ever happened before?
3 Tell your children about it in the years to come.
Pass the awful story down from generation
to generation.

4 After the cutting locusts finished eating the crops,
the swarming locusts took what was left!
After them came the hopping locusts,
and then the stripping locusts, too!

5 Wake up, you drunkards,
and weep!
All the grapes are ruined,
and all your new wine is gone!

for it is cut off from your mouth.
 6 For a nation has invaded my land,
 powerful and innumerable;
 its teeth are lions' teeth,
 and it has the fangs of a lioness.
 7 It has laid waste my vines,
 and splintered my fig trees;
 it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down;
 their branches have turned white.

6 A vast army of locusts has invaded my land.
 It is a terrible army, too numerous to count!
 Its teeth are as sharp as the teeth of lions!
 7 They have destroyed my grapevines
 and fig trees,
 stripping their bark
 and leaving the branches white and bare.

Notes:

This first stanza largely revolves around two sets of admonitions addressed to

O elders
 all the inhabitants of the land

you drunkards
 all you wine-drinkers

The prophet is addressing his words to both leaders and the people in general. The first pair identifies them generally, while the second set characterizes them with strong negative words as out of touch with what is happening.

Or possibly the second set begins to identify the people in smaller subgroups, beginning first with drunkards / wine-drinkers. The difficulty with this view is that the other groups addressed directly are farmer / vinedressers (v. 11), and priests / ministers of the altar (v. 13). The first label, drunkards, seems pre-judicial while the others aren't.

The first set of admonitions is

hear this
 give ear

Then the second set is:

Wake up...and weep
 wail

The thought progression becomes clear. First the people need to realize something is happening; then they need to respond to it with proper expression to God. This progression will continue somewhat in the next stanza in vv. 8-14 as well.

What is it that the people and their leaders need to realize? Verses 2-4 depict a [locust storm](#) of gigantic proportions. Nothing like it has ever happened before in the

land (v. 2). It is so large that it will be remembered for generations to come (v. 3). Its destructive aspect will be total (v. 4). To be sure, swarms of locusts coming out of Africa into the Mediterranean world is a centuries old problem that continues to this very day. But the prophet here describes a swarm larger than ever before coming into Judah in southern Palestine -- even the plague on the Egyptians. It has already happened, but the people need to see something in it beyond the surface of a natural disaster.

The mentioning of four types of locusts in verse four is not clear whether this describes four varieties of ancient locusts or just four growth stages of locusts generally. Elizabeth Achtemeier (*NIB*, iPreach) appropriately observes:

Joel uses four words for locusts: "cutting locust" (גזם gazam), "swarming locust" (ארבה arbeh), "hopping locust" (ילק yaleq), and "destroying locust" (חסיל hasil), but despite the NRSV translation of these terms, their meaning is uncertain. 'Arbeh is the most frequently used term, referring to the fully developed, winged migrating insect of some six centimeters in length. All four terms used together may refer to four stages in the locust life cycle (pupa, adult, wingless larva, winged larva). At a minimum, Joel has piled up terms to emphasize the overwhelming nature of the catastrophe. The three parallel lines, with these four names, reinforce the sense of disaster. Judah has been subject to one swarming, chewing, cutting enemy after another.



Some interpretive approaches see the locusts as symbols of an invasion by human armies. While this can't be ruled out completely, particularly in light of the reference to "a nation" in v. 6, it doesn't seem to be the case here. The simpler understanding is that Joel is appealing to a natural disaster of huge proportions that had al-

ready taken place and was calling upon the people to see the deeper work of God and need of God in this.

The second section, vv. 5-7, describe the overwhelming destruction of the locusts upon the countryside. The locusts collectively have the strength of a lion and their teeth tear apart everything in sight. They arrived in a huge swarm just like a massive invading army. The two important sources of food and drink, the vine and fig tree, were stripped bare down to the core wood.

Is there a connection of these verses to us? Our scientific mind set resists seeing anything at work in such events beyond the forces of nature. Sensitive religious people are cautious about raising the question of whether God causes such events. Much mystery exists here. Joel didn't directly assert that God



caused the locusts to swarm Judah, although this was most likely in his mind. Instead, he focused on seeing the disaster as a time to reach out to God for help and insight about one's own commitment to God's ways.

In times of disaster most every culture goes through a resurgence of religious interest, although this is becoming less the case in American culture with the passing of time. After 9/11 and Katrina, people thought about God more than had been the case. But that interest was short-lived.

Only in isolated individual instances have these two huge disasters in our recent history brought people to repentance before God. Foxhole religion, as coined in WWII, has little value and lasting impact. But the prophet saw with this locust swarm the opportunity for the Israelites to reach out to God in authentic repentance. Similar disasters today present the same opportunity.

b. Call to Lament, vv. 8-14

LXX

- 8 θρήνησον πρὸς με ὑπὲρ νύμφην περιεζωσμένην
σάκκων
ἐπὶ τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς τὸν παρθενικόν
- 9 ἐξήρται θυσία καὶ σποινὴ
ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου
πενθεῖτε οἱ ἱερεῖς
οἱ λειτουργοῦντες θυσιαστηρίῳ
- 10 ὅτι τεταλαιπώρηκεν τὰ πεδία
πενθείτω ἡ γῆ
ὅτι τεταλαιπώρηκεν σῖτος
ἐξηράνθη οἶνος
ὀλιγόθη ἔλαιον
- 11 ἐξηράνθησαν οἱ γεωργοὶ
θρηνεῖτε κτήματα
ὑπὲρ πυροῦ καὶ κριθῆς
ὅτι ἀπόλωλεν τρυγητὸς ἐξ ἀγροῦ
- 12 ἡ ἄμπελος ἐξηράνθη
καὶ αἱ συκαὶ ὀλιγόθησαν
ῥόα καὶ φοῖνιξ
καὶ μήλον
καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐξηράνθησαν
ὅτι ἥσχυναν χαρὰν οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων
- 13 περιζώσαθε καὶ κόπτεσθε οἱ ἱερεῖς
θρηνεῖτε οἱ λειτουργοῦντες θυσιαστηρίῳ

NASB

- 8 Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For the bridegroom of her youth.
- 9 The grain offering and the drink offering
are cut off
From the house of the LORD.
The priests mourn,
The ministers of the LORD.
- 10 The field is ruined,
The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
The new wine dries up,
Fresh oil fails.
- 11 Be ashamed, O farmers,
Wail, O vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field is destroyed.
- 12 The vine dries up
And the fig tree fails;
The pomegranate, the palm also,
and the apple tree,
All the trees of the field dry up.
Indeed, rejoicing dries up
From the sons of men.
- 13 Gird yourselves *with sackcloth* and lament,

εἰσέλθατε ὑπνώσατε ἐν σάκκοις
λειτουργοῦντες θεῷ
ὅτι ἀπέσχηκεν ἐξ οἴκου θεοῦ ὑμῶν θυσία καὶ
σποιδή

- 14 ἀγιάσατε νηστείαν
κηρύξατε θεραπείαν
συναγάγετε πρεσβυτέρους
πάντας κατοικοῦντας γῆν
εἰς οἶκον θεοῦ ὑμῶν
καὶ κεκράξατε πρὸς κύριον ἐκτενῶς

O priests;

Wail, O ministers of the altar!
Come, spend the night in sackcloth
O ministers of my God,
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.

- 14 Consecrate a fast,
Proclaim a solemn assembly;
Gather the elders
And all the inhabitants of the land
To the house of the LORD your God,
And cry out to the LORD.

NRSV

- 8 Lament like a virgin dressed in sackcloth
for the husband of her youth.
9 The grain offering and the drink offering
are cut off from the house of the Lord.
The priests mourn,
the ministers of the Lord.
10 The fields are devastated,
the ground mourns;
for the grain is destroyed,
the wine dries up,
the oil fails.
11 Be dismayed, you farmers,
wail, you vinedressers,
over the wheat and the barley;
for the crops of the field are ruined.
12 The vine withers,
the fig tree droops.
Pomegranate, palm, and apple --
all the trees of the field are dried up;
surely, joy withers away
among the people.
13 Put on sackcloth and lament, you priests;
wail, you ministers of the altar.
Come, pass the night in sackcloth,
you ministers of my God!
Grain offering and drink offering
are withheld from the house of your God.
14 Sanctify a fast,
call a solemn assembly.
Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of the Lord your God,
and cry out to the Lord.

NLT

- 8 Weep with sorrow, as a virgin weeps
when her fiance has died.
9 There is no grain or wine
to offer at the Temple of the LORD.
The priests are mourning
because there are no offerings.
Listen to the weeping
of these ministers of the LORD!
10 The fields are ruined and empty of crops.
The grain, the wine, and the olive oil are gone.
11 Despair, all you farmers!
Wail, all you vine growers!
Weep, because the wheat and barley,
yes, all the field crops are ruined.
12 The grapevines
and the fig trees have all withered.
The pomegranate trees, palm trees,
and apple trees --
yes, all the fruit trees have dried up.
All joy has dried up with them.
13 Dress yourselves in sackcloth, you priests!
Wail, you who serve before the altar!
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
you ministers of my God!
There is no grain or wine
to offer at the Temple of your God.
14 Announce a time of fasting;
call the people together for a solemn meeting.
Bring the leaders
and all the people
into the Temple of the LORD your God,
and cry out to him there.

Notes:

The emphasis of the prophet continues with a focus on calling the people to a funeral type lament over the destruction caused by the locusts. The structure here can be seen in those being addressed:

General admonition (v. 8)

you farmers
you vinedressers

your priests
you ministers of the altar

General admonition (v. 14)

Verse 8 appeals to the young bride who has lost her husband. In that day the situation was of a young woman betrothed to a man who died before the wedding took place, thus she lost the opportunity of her husband to be. The young virgin is Jerusalem being cut off by the plague. The prophet moves to the impact of the devastation cutting off sources of offering in the house of God, and thus pulling the priests into the mourning along with the people. The fields and land become barren thus cutting off the grain, wine and oil.

The farmers and the vineyard owners are called to lament since they provide the food for the people. Wheat and barley were the basic cereal foodstuffs, wine was the basic drink. Figs, pomegranates, apples (perhaps better apricots) -- all were food producing sources that had stopped bearing fruit. The impact: "surely, joy withers away among the people" (v. 12b).



I well remember as a child growing up in west Texas when the droughts of the early 1950s came. No rain and thus no food for the cattle and other animals except what was bought. All over that part of the southwest one could barely find a bail of hay to buy for feeding the cattle. And when it was available it was too expensive to purchase. The creeks and tanks dried up so that there was little if any water for the livestock, unless one had a strong water well on his place. My father had to sell off almost all his herd of cows. Without rain there was also no planting any cash producing crops such as cotton. In order to avoid loosing our place daddy had to go to work at the airplane plant in Ft. Worth. He hated that hundred plus daily drive to and from work, but was willing to do it so that we could continue living on the home place that I had known since infancy. This was

not a time of joy for rural people all across the southwestern part of our country. People struggled to survive and keep their way of life going. I can well remember special prayer meetings in all the churches where people would gather to pray for rain. We all endured those hard times for several years before the drought broke and rain started to fall again.

In verse 13, Joel called upon the priests to join the lament of the people. Earlier he mentioned that they had been mourning (v. 9) but largely because the offerings were stopping. In the temple system, the left overs from the offerings became the main source of food for the priests. Now (v. 13) the prophet admonishes them to "put on sackcloth and lament...and wail" along with the people. Not only was there nothing for the people to use for offerings to God in the temple, their source of food was being cut off as well.

The climax of these verses, including vv. 2-7, comes at verse 14 with the call for a day of fasting and a solemn assembly at the temple:

Sanctify a fast,
call a solemn assembly.
Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of the Lord your God,
and cry out to the Lord.

As D.A. Carson (*New Bible Commentary*, Logos Systems) points out:

They [the priests] were to declare a public holiday for that purpose (*sacred assembly* is literally 'stoppage of work') and proclaim the rite of fasting that accompanied prayer and proved its sincerity (cf. Jdg. 20:26; Je. 14:1-2, 12). With the authority vested in them as priests, they are exhorted to *summon* to prayer both elders and those they represented. The reference to *elders* and *all who live in the land* recalls v 2 and reveals Joel's purpose in vs 2-13 to pave the way for this demand for a period of national prayer.

Elizabeth Achtemeier (*NIB*, iPreach) provides additional insight:

Such fasts were called in Israel whenever a national calamity struck—war, famine, pestilence, captivity, here a locust plague and drought (cf. Jdg 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6). Usually the fast lasted one day, when the people abstained from food and drink, from sexual relations, and from work and civil affairs, although continuing distress could be commemorated with a fast every year (cf. Zech 7:1-7). The ceremony was characterized by loud wailing and weeping, rending of clothes and striking oneself, falling to the ground, sprinkling oneself with dust and ashes, pouring out water to symbolize tears, and stretching out one's hands to heaven in prayer and supplication to God to forgive and to turn

aside the calamity (cf. 1 Sam 7:6; Jer 3:25; 4:8; 6:26; 31:19; Lam 2:10, 19). Always the cry to God accompanied the fast (Ezra 8:21, 23; Neh 9:1-4).

What can we learn from these verses? In addition to what has been mentioned at the end of the previous section, these verses remind us of the close relationship that religious leaders should have with the people they minister to. When one suffers, the other suffers. Any tendency for religious leaders to distance themselves from the people is wrong and will eventually lead to trouble. In the ancient Jewish temple structure, an interdependency between the priests and the people existed. The priests needed the people's offerings to have food to live; the people needed the priests to offer up their sacrifices to God in worship.

In this passage the leadership role of the priests during a time of national disaster comes to the forefront. The prophet Joel summons them to step forward and help the people cry out to God. Joel's stance here is somewhat different from the typical prophetic position in the Old Testament. Most of the classical Hebrew prophets were very suspicious of

the temple leaders and frequently condemned them as sources of perversion of the religious life of the people. This was the dominant pattern beginning with Amos until the close of the OT era. But Joel is different. He saw the priests in a positive role. This has led to him sometimes being labeled a 'cultic prophet,' i.e., a prophet sympathetic to the temple structure and functioning.

From Joel's words comes the affirmation that religious leaders do have a role to play in national disasters. Importantly, that role is not as pompous pronouncers of curse and blame. Rather, it is to call the people to sincere reaching out to God for help and strength. Joel does not call upon the priests to assess why the locust swarm took place. Rather, his call to them was to set up a vehicle for the people to find God's help and leadership through the plague that ensued from the locusts. Fasting and worship in God's house were to play the central role. For religious leaders of our day the challenge is to find appropriate ways for people to reach out to God in time of disaster. This much at least we can learn from Joel.

c. The Lament, vv. 15-20

LXX

- 15 οἴμμοι οἴμμοι οἴμμοι εἰς ἡμέραν
ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἡμέρα κυρίου
καὶ ὡς ταλαιπωρία ἐκ ταλαιπωρίας ἦξει
- 16 κατέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὑμῶν βρώματα
ἐξωλεθρεύθη
ἐξ οἴκου θεοῦ ὑμῶν εὐφροσύνη καὶ χαρά
- 17 ἐσκίρτησαν δαμάλεις ἐπὶ ταῖς φάτναις αὐτῶν
ἠφανίσθησαν θησαυροὶ
κατεσκάφησαν ληνοὶ
ὅτι ἐξηράνθη σίτος
- 18 τί ἀποθήσομεν ἑαυτοῖς ἔκλαυσαν
βουκόλια βοῶν
ὅτι οὐχ ὑπήρχεν νομὴ αὐτοῖς
καὶ τὰ ποιμνία τῶν προβάτων ἠφανίσθησαν
- 19 πρὸς σέ κύριε βοήσομαι
ὅτι πῦρ ἀνήλωσεν τὰ ὠραῖα τῆς ἐρήμου
καὶ φλόξ ἀνήψεν
πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ
- 20 καὶ τὰ κτήνη τοῦ πεδίου ἀνέβλειψαν πρὸς σέ
ὅτι ἐξηράνθησαν ἀφέσεις ὑδάτων
καὶ πῦρ κατέφαγεν τὰ ὠραῖα τῆς ἐρήμου

NASB

- 15 Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD is near,
And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.
- 16 Has not food been cut off before our eyes,
Gladness and joy from the house of our God?
- 17 The seeds shrivel under their clods;
The storehouses are desolate,
The barns are torn down,
For the grain is dried up.
- 18 How the beasts groan!
The herds of cattle wander aimlessly
Because there is no pasture for them;
Even the flocks of sheep suffer.
- 19 To You, O LORD, I cry;
For fire has devoured the pastures
of the wilderness
And the flame has burned up
all the trees of the field.
- 20 Even the beasts of the field pant for You;
For the water brooks are dried up
And fire has devoured the pastures
of the wilderness.

NRSV

- 15 Alas for the day!
For the day of the Lord is near,
and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.
- 16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes,
joy and gladness from the house of our God?
- 17 The seed shrivels under the clods,
the storehouses are desolate;
the granaries are ruined
because the grain has failed.
- 18 How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle wander about
because there is no pasture for them;
even the flocks of sheep are dazed.
- 19 To you, O Lord, I cry.
For fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness,
and flames have burned
all the trees of the field.
- 20 Even the wild animals cry to you
because the watercourses are dried up,
and fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness.

Notes:

This final section, vv. 15-20, provides the words of a prayer of lament for use in the solemn assembly at the temple.

Ritual use of prayer was an integral part of worship among the Israelites. The book of Psalms represents a collection of such prayers that were produced over a long period of time by various individuals. Their collection into a single document made them available for worship use, primarily in the temple toward the end of the OT era through the temple's destruction in AD 70. They served both Jews in synagogue worship and early Christians in their house church gatherings. Memorization of them during this time made them useful for individuals in personal worship of God.

That Joel would set forth a prayer of lamentation is not at all surprising. It outlined his concerns for reaching out to God by the leaders and the people.

What is unusual about this prayer is aspects of its content. The prayer combines the past reference to the locust plague with a future Day of the Lord. Here is where an apocalyptic aspect surfaces in the book. In a nutshell, the locust plague was but a precursor to the coming Day of the Lord. This theme

NLT

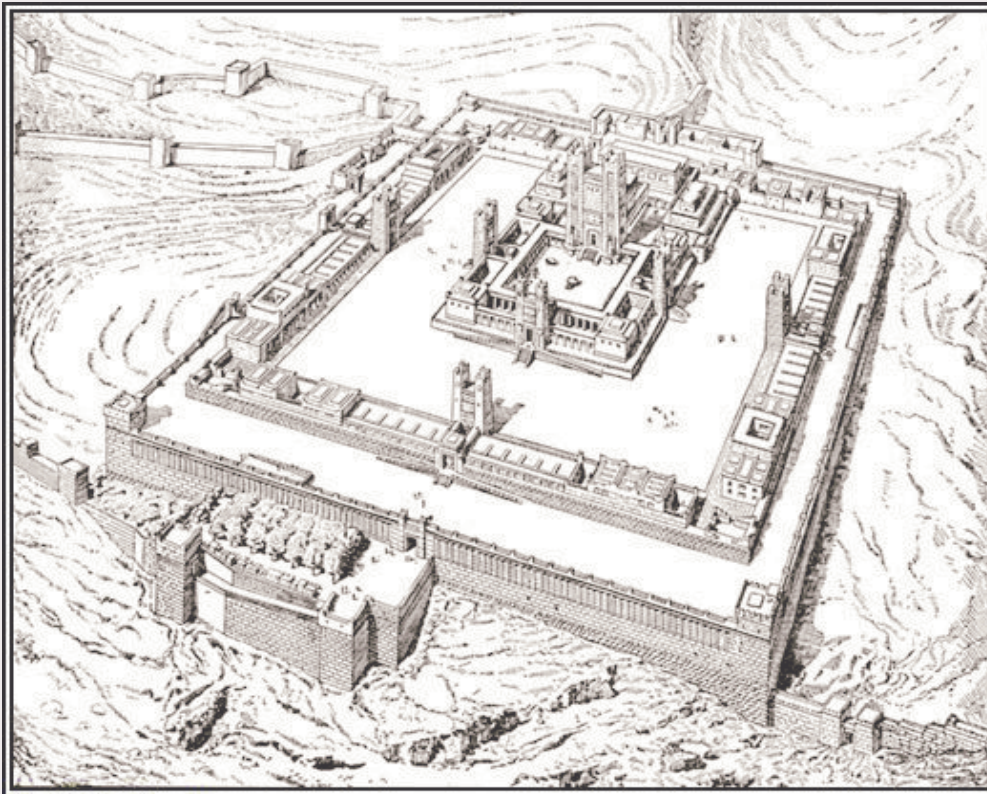
- 15 The day of the LORD is on the way,
the day when destruction comes
from the Almighty.
How terrible that day will be!
- 16 We watch as our food disappears
before our very eyes.
There are no joyful celebrations
in the house of our God.
- 17 The seeds die in the parched ground,
and the grain crops fail.
The barns and granaries stand empty
and abandoned.
- 18 How the animals moan with hunger!
The cattle wander about confused
because there is no pasture for them.
The sheep bleat in misery.
- 19 LORD, help us!
The fire has consumed the pastures
and burned up all the trees.
- 20 Even the wild animals cry out to you
because they have no water to drink.
The streams have dried up,
and fire has consumed the pastures.

will receive substantially greater discussion in chapter two of the book.

Again, we turn to the insights of Elizabeth Achtemeir (*NIB*, iPreach) for helpful observations about the concept Day of the Lord in the prophetic materials of the OT.

Joel then introduces the most ominous note: The day of the Lord is near (v. 16). The Judeans are suffering not only under the present judgment of locust plague and drought, but they also face a final judgment on the day of the Lord, when God will come to establish divine rule over all the earth.

Israel's belief in the day of the Lord has its roots in the ancient tribal wars against neighboring peoples who attacked Israel during the time of the judges (1220–1020 BCE) and reign of Saul (1020–1000 BCE). Some scholars⁶ term such battles “holy wars,” because they were conducted according to fixed ritual and cultic rules. But the principal antagonist in such wars was not Israel, but God, who fought with supernatural means at the head of the people (Josh 10:11; 24:7; Judg 5:4-5), inspiring terror and panic among the enemy (Exod 15:14-16; 23:27; Josh 2:9, 24; 5:1; 7:5). Israelites, therefore, believed that God would finally defeat all of their enemies (Deut 20:1-9) and that Israel would enjoy a blessed prosperity in a kingdom of righteous-



ness and peace, ruled by God (cf. Ps 46:4-11; Isa 17:12-14; 31:4-5; 33:17-22). Thus the day of the Lord was thought to be not one specific day, but a time that would include the defeat of all Israel's foes and its everlasting salvation (Isa 32:16-20).

Amos, in the eighth century BCE, was the first to upset this optimistic expectation, for he proclaimed that because of Israel's sins, the day of the Lord would not be a time of salvation for Israel, but of judgment (Amos 5:18-20). Amos was followed in this announcement by Zephaniah (chap. 1), Isaiah (2:6-22), Ezekiel (chap. 7), and Malachi (4:5; 3:1-5; cf. Lam 2:1, 21-22).

Here, Joel joins that prophetic company and proclaims that the day of the Lord has not yet come, but that it is near. Judah has already experienced a "typical" judgment by means of locusts and drought, but it now faces a final reckoning in the day of the Lord. The cessation of daily offerings in the Temple is a sign of the broken relationship. Surely the priests, who lead Judah's worship, can read the meaning of the sign!

The devastation from the locust plague prefigure that coming with the Day of the Lord. For the agricultural oriented Israelites even in postexilic Judah the destruction of farm land and pasture land sent shivers up their spines because it hit home like nothing else would. The level of desperation is heightened by the allusion to wild animals crying

out to God for help (v. 20).

Whereas the locus plague represented natural disaster with some tones of divine judgment, the coming Day would be an outpouring of divine wrath in massive judgment by God. It will be this aspect that early Christians will pick up on and project that Day to the second coming of Christ and the ushering in of the eternal order of things.

This pattern of a present reality pointing to a future reality, especially an eschatological one, is set by Joel and will help explain why and how the NT writers will often do

the very same thing. Even though confusing to us as we read the mixing of yesterday and tomorrow into one package, it seemed natural to ancient Jewish thinking. The inseparable connection to what happened and what will happen, particularly in what God does, pulls these two perspectives into one. Unpacking them into their appropriate tense frame is important for us, but not always easy to do neatly. But in our efforts to make sense out of this we dare not lose an important insight. God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. What He has done is vitally linked to what He will do. Never forget that!



LXX

Ἰλόγος κυρίου ὃς ἐγενήθη πρὸς Ἰωηλ τὸν τοῦ Βαθουηλ

ὅτι ἤσχυιαν χαρὰν οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων

2 ἀκούσατε δὴ ταῦτα οἱ πρεσβύτεροι
καὶ ἐνωτίσασθε πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν
εἰ γέγονεν τοιαῦτα ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν
ἢ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν

3 ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν διηγήσασθε
καὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῶν
καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν εἰς γενεὰν ἐτέραν

4 τὰ κατάλοιπα τῆς κάμπης κατέφαγεν
ἢ ἀκρίς καὶ τὰ κατάλοιπα τῆς ἀκρίδος κατέφαγεν
ὁ βροῦχος καὶ τὰ κατάλοιπα τοῦ βρούχου
κατέφαγεν ἢ ἐρυσίβη

5 ἐκινήσατε οἱ μεθύοντες ἐξ οἴνου αὐτῶν καὶ
κλαύσατε
θρηνήσατε πάντες οἱ πίνοντες οἶνον εἰς μέθην
ὅτι ἐξήρται ἐκ στόματος ὑμῶν εὐφροσύνη καὶ χαρὰ

6 ὅτι ἔθνος ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν μου
ἰσχυρὸν καὶ ἀναρίθμητον
οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ ὀδόντες λέοντος
καὶ αἱ μύλαι αὐτοῦ σκύμνου

7 ἔθετο τὴν ἄμπελόν μου εἰς ἀφανισμόν
καὶ τὰς συκᾶς μου εἰς συγκλασμόν
ἐρευνῶν ἐξηρεύνησεν αὐτήν
καὶ ἔρριψεν ἐλεούκαεν κλήματα αὐτῆς

8 θρήνησον πρὸς με ὑπὲρ νύμφην περιεζωσμένην
σάκκον
ἐπὶ τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς τὸν παρθενικόν

9 ἐξήρται θυσία καὶ σποινδὴ
ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου
πενθεῖτε οἱ ἱερεῖς
οἱ λειτουργοῦντες θυσιαστηρίῳ

10 ὅτι τεταλαιπώρηκεν τὰ πεδία
πενθείτω ἡ γῆ
ὅτι τεταλαιπώρηκεν σίτος
ἐξηράνθη οἶνος
ὠλιγώθη ἔλαιον

11 ἐξηράνθησαν οἱ γεωργοὶ
θρηνεῖτε κτήματα
ὑπὲρ πυροῦ καὶ κριθῆς
ὅτι ἀπόλωλεν τρυγητὸς ἐξ ἀγροῦ

12 ἡ ἄμπελος ἐξηράνθη
καὶ αἱ συκαὶ ὠλιγώθησαν
ρόα καὶ φοῖνιξ
καὶ μῆλον
καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐξηράνθησαν

13 περιζώσασθε καὶ κόπτεσθε οἱ ἱερεῖς
θρηνεῖτε οἱ λειτουργοῦντες θυσιαστηρίῳ
εἰσέλθατε ὑπνώσατε ἐν σάκκοις
λειτουργοῦντες θεῷ
ὅτι ἀπέσχηκεν ἐξ οἴκου θεοῦ ὑμῶν θυσία καὶ
σποινδὴ

14 ἀγιάσατε νηστεῖαν
κηρύξατε θεραπείαν
συναγάγετε πρεσβυτέρους
πάντας κατοικοῦντας γῆν
εἰς οἶκον θεοῦ ὑμῶν
καὶ κεκράξατε πρὸς κύριον ἐκτενωῶς

15 οἴμμοι οἴμμοι οἴμμοι εἰς ἡμέραν
ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἡμέρα κυρίου
καὶ ὡς ταλαιπωρία ἐκ ταλαιπωρίας ἦξει

16 κατέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὑμῶν βρώματα
ἐξῶλεθρεύθη
ἐξ οἴκου θεοῦ ὑμῶν εὐφροσύνη καὶ χαρὰ

17 ἐσκίρτησαν δαμάλεις ἐπὶ ταῖς φάτναις αὐτῶν
ἠφανίσθησαν θησαυροὶ
κατεσκάφησαν ληνοὶ
ὅτι ἐξηράνθη σίτος

18 τί ἀποθήσομεν ἑαυτοῖς ἔκλαυσαν
βουκόλια βοῶν
ὅτι οὐχ ὑπῆρχεν νομὴ αὐτοῖς
καὶ τὰ ποιμνία τῶν προβάτων ἠφανίσθησαν

19 πρὸς σέ κύριε βοήσομαι
ὅτι πῦρ ἀνήλωσεν τὰ ὠραῖα τῆς ἐρήμου
καὶ φλῶξ ἀνήψεν
πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ

20 καὶ τὰ κτήνη τοῦ πεδίου ἀνέβλεψαν πρὸς σέ
ὅτι ἐξηράνθησαν ἀφέσεις ὑδάτων
καὶ πῦρ κατέφαγεν τὰ ὠραῖα τῆς ἐρήμου

NASB

- 1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel,
the son of Pethuel:
The pomegranate, the palm also,
and the apple tree,
All the trees of the field dry up.
Indeed, rejoicing dries up
From the sons of men.
- 2 Hear this, O elders,
And listen, all inhabitants of the land.
Has *anything like* this happened in your days
Or in your fathers' days?
13 Gird yourselves *with sackcloth* and lament,
O priests;
Wail, O ministers of the altar!
Come, spend the night in sackcloth
O ministers of my God,
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.
- 3 Tell your sons about it,
And *let* your sons *tell* their sons,
And their sons the next generation.
- 4 What the gnawing locust has left,
the swarming locust has eaten;
And what the swarming locust has left,
the creeping locust has eaten;
And what the creeping locust has left,
the stripping locust has eaten.
- 5 Awake, drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you wine drinkers,
On account of the sweet wine
That is cut off from your mouth.
- 6 For a nation has invaded my land,
Mighty and without number;
Its teeth are the teeth of a lion,
And it has the fangs of a lioness.
- 7 It has made my vine a waste
And my fig tree splinters.
It has stripped them bare and cast *them* away;
Their branches have become white.
- 8 Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For the bridegroom of her youth.
- 9 The grain offering and the drink offering
are cut off
From the house of the LORD.
The priests mourn,
The ministers of the LORD.
- 10 The field is ruined,
The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
The new wine dries up,
Fresh oil fails.
- 11 Be ashamed, O farmers,
Wail, O vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field is destroyed.
- 12 The vine dries up
And the fig tree fails;
- 14 Consecrate a fast,
Proclaim a solemn assembly;
Gather the elders
And all the inhabitants of the land
To the house of the LORD your God,
And cry out to the LORD.
- 15 Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD is near,
And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.
- 16 Has not food been cut off before our eyes,
Gladness and joy from the house of our God?
- 17 The seeds shrivel under their clods;
The storehouses are desolate,
The barns are torn down,
For the grain is dried up.
- 18 How the beasts groan!
The herds of cattle wander aimlessly
Because there is no pasture for them;
Even the flocks of sheep suffer.
- 19 To You, O LORD, I cry;
For fire has devoured the pastures
of the wilderness
And the flame has burned up
all the trees of the field.
- 20 Even the beasts of the field pant for You;
For the water brooks are dried up
And fire has devoured the pastures
of the wilderness.

NRSV

- 1 The word of the Lord that came to Joel
son of Pethuel:
- 2 Hear this, O elders, give ear,
all inhabitants of the land!
Has such a thing happened in your days,
or in the days of your ancestors?
- 3 Tell your children of it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children another generation.
- 4 What the cutting locust left,
the swarming locust has eaten.
What the swarming locust left,
the hopping locust has eaten,
and what the hopping locust left,
the destroying locust has eaten.
- 5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep;
and wail, all you wine-drinkers,
over the sweet wine,
for it is cut off from your mouth.
- 6 For a nation has invaded my land,
powerful and innumerable;
its teeth are lions' teeth,
and it has the fangs of a lioness.
- 7 It has laid waste my vines,
and splintered my fig trees;
it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down;
their branches have turned white.
- 8 Lament like a virgin dressed in sackcloth
for the husband of her youth.
- 9 The grain offering and the drink offering
are cut off from the house of the Lord.
The priests mourn,
the ministers of the Lord.
- 10 The fields are devastated,
the ground mourns;
for the grain is destroyed,
the wine dries up,
the oil fails.
- 11 Be dismayed, you farmers,
wail, you vinedressers,
over the wheat and the barley;
for the crops of the field are ruined.
- 12 The vine withers,
the fig tree droops.
- Pomegranate, palm, and apple --
all the trees of the field are dried up;
surely, joy withers away
among the people.
- 13 Put on sackcloth and lament, you priests;
wail, you ministers of the altar.
Come, pass the night in sackcloth,
you ministers of my God!
Grain offering and drink offering
are withheld from the house of your God.
- 14 Sanctify a fast,
call a solemn assembly.
Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of the Lord your God,
and cry out to the Lord.
- 15 Alas for the day!
For the day of the Lord is near,
and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.
- 16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes,
joy and gladness from the house of our God?
- 17 The seed shrivels under the clods,
the storehouses are desolate;
the granaries are ruined
because the grain has failed.
- 18 How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle wander about
because there is no pasture for them;
even the flocks of sheep are dazed.
- 19 To you, O Lord, I cry.
For fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness,
and flames have burned
all the trees of the field.
- 20 Even the wild animals cry to you
because the watercourses are dried up,
and fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness.

NLT

- 1 The LORD gave this message to Joel
son of Pethuel.
- 2 Hear this, you leaders of the people!
Everyone listen!
In all your history,
has anything like this ever happened before?
- 3 Tell your children about it in the years to come.
Pass the awful story down from generation
to generation.
- 4 After the cutting locusts finished eating the crops,
the swarming locusts took what was left!
After them came the hopping locusts,
and then the stripping locusts, too!
- 5 Wake up, you drunkards,
and weep!
All the grapes are ruined,
and all your new wine is gone!
- 6 A vast army of locusts has invaded my land.
It is a terrible army, too numerous to count!
Its teeth are as sharp as the teeth of lions!
- 7 They have destroyed my grapevines
and fig trees,
stripping their bark
and leaving the branches white and bare.
- 8 Weep with sorrow, as a virgin weeps
when her fiance has died.
- 9 There is no grain or wine
to offer at the Temple of the LORD.
The priests are mourning
because there are no offerings.
Listen to the weeping
of these ministers of the LORD!
- 10 The fields are ruined and empty of crops.
The grain, the wine, and the olive oil are gone.
- 11 Despair, all you farmers!
Wail, all you vine growers!
Weep, because the wheat and barley,
yes, all the field crops are ruined.
- 12 The grapevines
and the fig trees have all withered.
The pomegranate trees, palm trees,
and apple trees --
yes, all the fruit trees have dried up.
All joy has dried up with them.
- 13 Dress yourselves in sackcloth, you priests!
Wail, you who serve before the altar!
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
you ministers of my God!
There is no grain or wine
to offer at the Temple of your God.
- 14 Announce a time of fasting;
call the people together for a solemn meeting.
Bring the leaders
and all the people
into the Temple of the LORD your God,
and cry out to him there.
- 15 The day of the LORD is on the way,
the day when destruction comes
from the Almighty.
How terrible that day will be!
- 16 We watch as our food disappears
before our very eyes.
There are no joyful celebrations
in the house of our God.
- 17 The seeds die in the parched ground,
and the grain crops fail.
The barns and granaries stand empty
and abandoned.
- 18 How the animals moan with hunger!
The cattle wander about confused
because there is no pasture for them.
The sheep bleat in misery.
- 19 LORD, help us!
The fire has consumed the pastures
and burned up all the trees.
- 20 Even the wild animals cry out to you
because they have no water to drink.
The streams have dried up,
and fire has consumed the pastures.

Joel 1:1^{WIT} דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יוֹאֵל בֶּן־פְּתוּאֵל²
 שָׁמְעוּ־זאת הַזְקֵנִים וְהַאֲזִינוּ כֹּל יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַהִיְתָה זֹאת
 בַּיָּמִיכֶם וְאִם בַּיָּמֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם
³עָלְיָה לְבַנְיֹכֶם סָפְרוּ וּבְנֵיכֶם לְבַנְיֵיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם לְדוֹר אַחֵר
⁴יִתֵּר הַגֹּזֵם אֲכַל הָאָרֶבֶה וַיִּתֵּר הָאָרֶבֶה אֲכַל הַיֶּלֶק וַיִּתֵּר
 הַיֶּלֶק אֲכַל הַחֲסִיל
⁵הִקְיִצוּ שְׂכֹרִים וּבָכּוּ וַהֲלִילוּ כֹּל־שְׁתֵי יַיִן עַל־עֵסִים כִּי
 נִכְרַת מִפִּיכֶם
⁶כִּי־גוֹי עָלָה עַל־אַרְצֵי עֲצוּם וְאִין מִסְפָּר שְׁנוֹי שְׁנַי אַרְיָה
 וּמִתְלַעוֹת לְבִיא לוֹ
⁷שֶׁם גִּפְנֵי לְשִׁמָּה וַתֵּאֲנֹתִי לְקַצֵּפָה חֲשָׁף חֲשֵׁפָה וַהֲשִׁלִּיד
 הַלְּבִינֹי שְׁרִינְיָה
⁸אֵלַי כִּבְתוּלָה חֲגַרְת־שֶׁק עַל־בַּעַל נְעוּרָיָה
⁹הַכֶּרֶת מִנְחָה וּנְסָד מִבַּיִת יְהוָה אֲבָלוּ הַכַּהֲנִים מִשְׁרַתִּי
 יִדְחָה
¹⁰שָׁדַד שָׁדָה אֲבָלָה אֲדַמָּה כִּי שָׁדַד הַגֹּן הוֹבִישׁ תִּירוֹשׁ
 אֲמַלֵּל יִצְהָר
¹¹הַבִּישׁוּ אֲפָרִים הִלְיִלוּ כְּרָמִים עַל־חֲטָה וְעַל־שְׁעֲרָה כִּי
 אֲבַד קִצִּיר שָׁדָה
¹²הַגִּפֶּן הוֹבִישָׁה וַהֲתֵאֲנָה אֲמַלֵּלָה רִמּוֹן גַּם־תִּמְרֹת וַתִּפּוּחַ
 כֹּל־עֲצֵי הַשָּׁדָה יִבְשׁוּ כִּי־הִבִּישׁ שִׁשׁוֹן מִן־רַבְּנֵי אָדָם ס
¹³חָגְרוּ וּסְפְדוּ הַכַּהֲנִים הִלְיִלוּ מִשְׁרַתִּי מִזִּבְחַ בָּאוּ לִינֹי
 בַּשִּׁקִּים מִשְׁרַתִּי אֱלֹהֵי כִּי נִמְנַע מִבַּיִת אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחָה וּנְסָד
¹⁴קִדְשׁו־עֲצוּם קִרְאוּ עֲצֹרָה אִסְפוּ זְקֵנִים כֹּל יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ
 בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְזַעְקוּ אֶל־יְהוָה
¹⁵אֵתָה לַיּוֹם כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה וְכֹשֶׁד מִשְׁדֵּי יָבֹא
¹⁶הֲלֹא נִגַּד עֵינֵינוּ אֲכַל נִכְרַת מִבַּיִת אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁמָחָה וְגִיל
¹⁷עֲבָשׁוּ פְרֹדוֹת תַּחַת מְגַרְפְּתֵיהֶם נִשְׁמוּ אֲצֻרוֹת נִהְרְסוּ
 מִמְּגֹרֹת כִּי הִבִּישׁ הַגֹּן

18 מֵהַנְּאֻמֹּתַי בְּהִמָּה נִכְּבוּ עֲדָרַי בְּקָר כִּי אֵין מִרְעָה לָהֶם

גַּם־עֲדָרַי הֵצֵאן נֶאֱשָׁמוּ

19 אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא כִּי אִשׁ אֶכְלֶה נְאוֹת מִדְּבַר וְלִהְבֵּה

לְהַטֶּה כָּל־עֵצֵי הַשָּׂדֶה

20 גַּם־בְּהֵמוֹת שָׂדֶה תַעְרוֹג אֵלֶיךָ כִּי יִבְשׁוּ אַפְיָקֵי מַיִם וְאִשׁ

אֶכְלֶה נְאוֹת הַמִּדְּבָר פ

