

## I Will Pour Out My Spirit Joel 1:1-3:21

- If you can find the book of Joel; go there.
- We're looking at some rarely studied books of the Bible in this series.
- (But we wouldn't want to meet Joel in heaven and have to confess we never studied his book, would we?!)

### The prophet Joel appears out of nowhere!

- Verse 1 tells us **nothing but his father's name!**
- We don't know if he had a wife, kids... who the king was ... his trade?
- **If he liked avocado on his toast; if he preferred Quinoa to rice; if he liked Tzatziki on his shawarma; if he enjoyed reggae music...?**
- **We have a couple of Joel's at IDC — But he wouldn't have had a British accent; perhaps he would have had a beard like Joel Cade!**

We have to play **detective** to get to know something of his time.

- The fact that he addresses the priests and the temple, and he mentions Jerusalem and Judah multiple times probably means that he was probably from Judah and his targeting was Judah.
- Dates range anywhere from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup>. century B.C.

But the book is **not about Joel. It's about Joel's Lord.**

**It's about the Lord's judgment and salvation.**

- Joel is simply a **faithful messenger**, and because we don't have a lot of historical details, it is easy to apply his timeless message to our lives.
- His name means "Yahweh is God."

Joel's **reoccurring phrase** in Joel: **"The Day of the Lord."**

- It appears in **1:15, 2:1-2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18** (that Day)
- (It also appears in other minor prophets, like Amos, Zeph and Malachi).

The Day of the Lord is a day of *judgment and/or salvation*. In Joel it refers to:

- **A particular invasion of locusts, as a form of judgment on Israel (chapter 1)**
- **The defeat and destruction of Israel by invading army (2:1, 11)**
- **The final defeat of God's enemies (3:14ff)**
- **The final vindication of God and his people (2:31; 3:18-21)**

In Joel's day this concept was rooted in the Mid-east idea that **a great commander could defeat his enemy in a single day**. So, for the prophets, when **the Lord steps in, it's over**.

- In the NBA, teams are making major moves. They think of they can get the right superstar, he will make all the difference. **"The Day of Anthony Davis," The Day of Kwai Leonard.** Just step on the court, it's over.
- **"The Day of the Lord is any day that God steps into history to do a special work, whether for judgment or deliverance." (Prior)**

In the NT, this idea is viewed **Christologically**, as Paul calls final judgment: “The Day of Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 1:8; Phil 1:6)

So Joel’s prophesy has like **three** sequences of judgment: **immediate**, **imminent**, and **ultimate**. **It is hard to tell sometimes which of these the prophet has in mind.** Here’s what I think:

- **Immediate** judgment: locust plague [*primarily*] (ch. 1)
- **Imminent** judgment: an army invasion [*primarily*] (ch. 2)
- **Ultimate** judgment: on God’s enemies and salvation of his people [*primarily*] (ch. 3)

Joel uses the invasion of **locusts** as **a prelude to further judgment**, a worse judgment.

- An **army** coming, but there’s something even worse than the army: **Final judgment.**
- **So the locusts and the army invasion communicated this: “You ain’t seen nothing yet.”**
- So the **urgency** of Joel: “Hear this” (1:2); “Awake” (1:5); “Blow a trumpet” (2:1)
- With the warning of judgment, there is the call **repent (2:12-13).**
- Grace/blessing is promised to those that will (2:13ff).

And **three phases** salvation in Joel:

- Salvation in **“those days,”** (restoration of God’s people/land in this historic period (2:18ff)
- Salvation in **“the last days”** (2:28ff; Acts 2:17ff)
- Salvation in **“that day”** (3:18ff).

You may recall that I used the **Sibbes** quote to summarize Hosea last week

- “There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us”

I would like to use another quote that unites my material on Joel today from Keller:

**“We’re far worse than we ever imagined, and far more loved than we could ever dream.”**

I would like to play off that quote to share **this 2-part** outline. Joel wants us to know that...

- 1. Judgment is far worse than we’ve ever imagined (1:1-2:17; 3:1-16)**
- 2. Salvation is far greater than we’ve ever dreamed. 2:18-32; 3:17-21)**

**Regardless of how you interpret details in Joel (the locusts/army) these 2 truths are clear**

### **#1: Judgment Is Far Worse Than We’ve Ever Imagined (1:2-2:17; 3:1-16)**

Not many people are putting these verses on a calendar or putting them on a blanket!

#### **A. Immediate Judgment: Locust Invasion (1:2-20)**

There is debate about chapter 1 and 2 in this regard.

- Is Joel using a **locust** invasion to be **symbolic** of an army invasion?
- Is the **army** invasion (in ch 2) an **illustration** of the locusts, or an actual army invasion? Or is it **symbolic** of the **final day** of the Lord? Or some **combination**?
- For various reasons, I **take them as real events: a real locust invasion that occurred, and then the threat of an enemy army.**

**The point of both the locusts and the army is that they are previews of a more dreadful day to come, the ultimate day of the Lord.**

- Prophets: Mount ranges – see it all at one time.

**What is a locust?** It is a kind of **grasshopper**.

- In certain conditions, they can **travel in large swarms and devastate plant life**.
- This is not the first time in the Bible that locusts are used in judgment.
- Recall **Exodus 10**, the **eighth** plague: Locusts.
- **John the Baptist ate them! He was sort of a “Whole Foods prophet!” Or old Cajun.**

Modern Day Stories (Nit an episode of Stranger Things)

- **[pic 1]**, Argentina, 2016 in *Time Magazine*.
- **[Pic 2]**, “Madagascar needs more than \$22 million of emergency funding by June to start fighting a severe locust plague... (in FAO’s website, 2013)
- **[Pic 3]**: Middle Eastern Man in a locust invasion
- **[Pic 4]**: **In 2004 in West Africa a swarm moved to West Africa to Egypt up to Jordan and Israel. One swarm in Morocco was almost two football fields across, and over 140 miles long. Estimated 69 billion locusts. (KD)**
- **“What they don’t eat, they cut off for entertainment.”** (agricultural official)
- **“They ate everything but the mortgage”** (a farmer)
- They also have a **horrible sound**, when they are together in a swarm, being likened to a jet engine.
- What Joel describes is like something out of a **Spielberg movie**.

Joel describes it (2-12), and then tells of the necessary response (v. 13ff).

**2-3:** Nothing like this has happened before!

- **“You remember the blizzard of 85; there was nothing like it.”** It was that sort of thing.

**4:** Cutting... swarming...hopping... destroying...

- This describes the **successive storms** that destroy everything (see **2:25**, “years”)

**5:** Joel tries to **wake people** up!

- **Drunkards are often asleep and drinkers are often happy, but Joel says this situation changes everything.**

**6-7:** The locusts are referred to as an **army**.... Later an army is compared to locusts.

**8-9:** People are called to do **the opposite of what they normally do**:

- Grieve **like a betrothed whose promised husband dies before the wedding** (v. 8)
- **Priests mourn** because they can’t offer sacrifices due to the locust invasion on the land (an awful picture of the failure to worship and have God’s presence) (v. 9)

**10:** **Life’s basic necessities have failed.**

- **Grain for bread; wine to drink; oil for all sorts of things** (cooking, cleaning, soothing)

- For the Brits it would be “**no butter, bread and tea**”
- Theologically, for the Israelite these three provisions were considered **gifts of God** (Ps 104:15); and remember this same trio is mentioned in **Hosea**, where the Lord rebukes them for not recognizing that he gave his people these blessings, not Baal (**Hos 2:8**).
- So the picture is of a **curse**, a judgment.

**11:** Again, a picture of **reversal**. **Farmers are usually very zealous and determined workers, but they are told to be ashamed.**

**12:** “**Gladness**” has “dried up.” It’s a summary of the mood.

- It’s all mourning, sorrow, toil
- “Vine dries up...”

**Four sources of joy in this chapter: (1) food and drink (v. 5; 1:12); (2) a wedding/marriage (v. 8); (3) harvest (v. 10-11); and (4) worship (v. 9, 13-16)**

- All were gifts of God for which we should give God thanks.
- But due to this locust invasion, they’re taken away. It’s dark.

**The Solution: Cry out to the Lord (1:13-20)**

**13:** Specific command to priests: **Lament**.

**14:** More commands to the priests: **call a fast. Seek God’s help.**

**15:** The day of the Lord – a day of judgment, and a warning of future judgment.

**16-17.** Joy is dried up.

**18: The reaction of animals: they groan.** They are desperate.

- **This is the part of the movie where my wife would stop watching!**
- Creation suffering for humanity’s guilt. It too longs for redemption (Rom 8:18ff)

**19:** The Lord is their only hope for escaping this time. (**2:32**)

- Fire is also an expression of judgment.

**Application: Disaster’s and Our Response**

In a time of disaster like this, what should our response be?

**#1: We should seek the Lord first.**

- In our day, we are so quick to go to science for an explanation, and so slow to go to the Bible and to prayer.
- I don’t mean we listen to every kook, who says “this is God’s judgment.” We have to be careful. We **don’t** have inspired prophets like Joel.
- But we do know that God is control of this world. (Ps 104).
- We should seek him in **humility**, in **repentance**, and we should seek his **help**.

**#2: We should see them as a warning of greater disaster to come and as an invitation to turn to the Lord for salvation.**

- The message of chapter 1 is “**the worst is yet to come.**”
- As bad as this locust invasion is, it pales in comparison to final judgment.
- **There is coming a day to make Katrina look like a drizzle; to make an earthquake like the rumble of a truck driving by.**
- Therefore, we should be wise and **trust in Jesus.**
- **This Jesus who took judgment on himself; he took the wrath of God in place of us, so that we don't have to fear judgment.**
- There is a way of escape and **it is in Christ.**
- **Disasters are preaching a sermon: turn turn to Christ (Luke 13:1-5)**
- In 2000, I packed up... many differences; accents; food; and hurricanes! Didn't have those in KY. So we would evacuate... But then the mother of all storms, Katrina came through and **many people didn't heed the warnings...**
- **We often hear of Tsunami's, Cyclones... what makes them worse is the warning system and means of communication...**
- **If you knew that a deadly, severe storm was coming, would you leave? Would you take necessary steps... Would you flee for refuge?**
- The day of the Lord, **great storm of God's wrath is coming....**
- **“Blessed are those who take refuge in Christ.”**

## **B. Imminent Judgment: Army Invasion (2:1-17)**

Like in chapter 1, there is a description of an invasion (1-11), this time a warning about probably Assyria or Babylon, and then the call to repent and seek the Lord (12-17) in order to avoid the coming destruction.

**1-2:** Get the tornado sirens going. The Day of the Lord is near. This a day of a powerful army.

**3:** The army is associated with fire (a picture of judgment).

- **It is so terrible that it is likened to the fall in Genesis 2-3.**

**4-5:** Pictures of power. Like Lord of the Rings. It feels like the army of Mordor.

**6:** Imagery of fear and dread.

**7-9:** They are unstoppable. They execute their actions masterfully.

**10:** Creation is impacted by this judgment.

**11:** The most shocking detail: **“his great army”**

- This army is sent by God.
- This is not surprising; the Lord often used other nations to execute judgment on Israel.
- We are not told in Joel what prompts this judgment, but from the rest of the OT, we know that it is *idolatry* that brings it over and over again.

**11b:** “The day of the Lord is great and very awesome” – this real army (perhaps Assyria or Babylon) is a preview of that great and awesome day.

## Who can “endure” this day? What should they do?

### 1. Return to the Lord! (2:12-14)

12: “Yet even now” – there is time. Heed the warning!

13: The Lord wants our **hearts**, not just external actions of repentance.

- Returning to the Lord is more than simply “crying out to the Lord.”
- It means returning to him with all our hearts.
- **It is something we do in a decisive way, taking Christ as our Savior.**
- **It is something we do in a daily way, living a life of repentance.**

13b: The **character of God** who provides renewal and blessing.

14: “**Who knows**” – The Lord is sovereign; and he acts in accordance with his own plan, but he **has relented from disaster in the past** (Jonah 3:9; 4:2; Ex 34:5-7).

- “in your wrath, remember mercy” (Hab. 3:2)

### 2. Return to the Lord **Together** (2:15-17)

15-16: The congregation is summoned together.

- It’s urgent – “**gather the children, nursing infants, postpone the wedding...**”

17: Cry out to the Lord together; and ask for the Lord to bless and glorify his name.

- **Joel urges the priests to lead the people in public prayer, throwing themselves on the mercy of God, appealing for God to glorify his name.**
- The appeal is not just for individuals to pray; for the people to pray.

## C. Ultimate Judgment: The Lord’s Judgment on the Nations (3:1-16)

These two invasions are just previews of the ultimate judgment to come. Let’s just read it.

- It includes ***oppressors in Israel’s history and a judgment on all nations to come.***

1-8: Reasons for Judgment

For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. (refers to a **place of judgment** rather than a known **geographical location**. Jehoshaphat means, “**God judges**”). And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, <sup>3</sup> and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

<sup>4</sup> “What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily. <sup>5</sup> For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. <sup>6</sup> You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks

in order to remove them far from their own border. <sup>7</sup> Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head. <sup>8</sup> I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for the LORD has spoken.”

### 9-16: A Description of the Day of the Lord on the Nations

- <sup>9</sup> Proclaim this among the nations:  
Consecrate for war;  
stir up the mighty men.  
Let all the men of war draw near;  
let them come up.
- <sup>10</sup> Beat your plowshares into swords,  
and your pruning hooks into spears;  
let the weak say, “I am a warrior.” **(this is the reverse of Micah 4:3, where it’s peace)**
- <sup>11</sup> Hasten and come,  
all you surrounding nations,  
and gather yourselves there.  
Bring down your warriors, O LORD.
- <sup>12</sup> Let the nations stir themselves up  
and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;  
for there I will sit to judge  
all the surrounding nations. **(There’s really no war! It’s a judgment. He’s sitting!)**
- <sup>13</sup> Put in the sickle,  
for the harvest is ripe.  
Go in, tread,  
for the winepress is full.  
The vats overflow,  
for their evil is great.
- <sup>14</sup> Multitudes, multitudes, **(a picture of all the people of the world in judgment)**  
in the valley of decision! **(“valley of verdict,” where the Lord will be the judge. Only the Lord makes decisions here. “Verdict Valley”)**  
For the day of the LORD is near  
in the valley of decision.
- <sup>15</sup> The sun and the moon are darkened,  
and the stars withdraw their shining.
- <sup>16</sup> The LORD roars from Zion,  
and utters his voice from Jerusalem,  
and the heavens and the earth quake.  
But the LORD is a refuge to his people,  
a stronghold to the people of Israel.

That last verse is important:

- The Lord can be a lion to fear in judgment;
- Or the Lord can be a quiet refuge for you in salvation.
- Be wise. Be ready. Judgment is far worse than we've ever imagined.
- Find refuge in Christ Jesus.

## #2: Salvation Is Far Greater Than We've Ever Dreamed (2:18-32; 17-21)

- A. Salvation in Those Days: Restoration of God's People (2:18-27)
- B. Salvation in the Last Days: God's Spirit Poured Out on God's People (2:28-32)
- C. Salvation in That Day: God Dwelling with His People (3:17-21)

### A. Salvation in Those Days: Restoration of God's People (2:18-27)

18: A shift in tense now.

The rest of the book is looking into the future and is filled with promises.

- First is the blessing of Joel's day... a time of rejoicing is coming.
- The invasions will be put behind them.

The Lord in his mercy ("pity") promises restoration.

- The Lord also acts out of divine "jealousy"

19: The Lord answers their prayer! He will send blessing!

20: This is every Southerner's favorite verse! "will remove the Northerner far from you"

- This refers to the locust invasion, to the invading army, or an end time enemy.
- I take it as an invading army. (Assyria or Babylon). Invaders often came from the North.
- The Lord intervenes and saves. All that is left is the smell of corpses (20b).

21-22: "Fear not" (twice) things will be restored, including the land.

23: Joy is restored. "Poured down abundant rain" – keep that in mind.

24: Life's necessities are back: grain, wine, and oil.

Verses 21-24: The land's restoration in this day is a preview of new creation. (3:18)

- Old Testament land description is like getting a whiff of dinner before dinner.
- Are those beef tips?
- All the promises of the OT find there Amen in Christ!

25: What a word here (cf., 1:4). You might put this verse on a calendar!

- It is an anticipation of the gospel.
- It is a vivid picture of human pain and despair; and picture of divine grace and hope.
- The people of Joel's day lived in despair because of the plague.
- But look at the promise: "restore" means "repay" or "payback" or "make up for"
- He does not owe us repayment. But he is gracious.



- We won't experience that fully in this life (though he may do this in certain ways), but because of Christ we know God will restore all things in new creation.
- God will reverse the curse in this world. All things will be made new.

**26:** The Lord acted wondrously; a picture of worship, praise, honor.

**27:** This was the refrain in the Exodus plagues: Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

- **The Lord is glorified in salvation.**

## **B. Salvation in the Last Days: God's Spirit Poured Out On God's People (2:28-32)**

Here is one of the most important OT promises about the Holy Spirit! (cf., Ezek 36:24-27) Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost begins with Peter's exposition of this great text!

**28-32:** Joel says "Afterword..."

- Peter says, "And in the last days it shall be, God declares.." then he goes on to quote the passage. (**Acts 2:16-21**)
- **We have been, and are in the last days.**
- **They began at Pentecost and continue until Christ's return.**

Peter goes on to preach:

<sup>32</sup> This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. (**Acts 2:32-33**)

**The final chapter of the history of the world took place with the work of Christ and outpouring of the Spirit.**

**28-29:** Look at at how great our salvation is, or all who call upon Jesus for salvation.

### *The Picture of the Spirit: The Spirit is "Poured Out" (v. 28-29)*

- It recalls the rain in verse 23, "pour out abundant rain"
- The picture here is that **our souls are thirsty without God's Spirit.**
- The Spirit **causes us to bear fruit.** This is result of God's blessing and grace.

### *The People Who Have the Spirit: All Believers (28b-29).*

- "all flesh, sons daughters, old men, young men.. meal and female servants..."
- All believers – **regardless of gender, age, or class.**
- Remember **Moses**? I wish all God's people had God's Spirit (Num 11)
- **It would be a time of greater spiritual activity (dreams and visions, Num 12:6)**
- **Moses desired it; Joel foretold it; Peter declared it. We live in it.**

**30-31** – He inserts an end time **judgment scene** (Peter also includes it in his sermon though it had yet to arrive).

- These are **cosmic wonders, unnatural events, and war like activities ...**

- Blood fire and smoke – like during the Exodus
- **Jesus also spoke of similar things with the coming of the Son of Man (Mt 24:27-31).**
- **Darkness also covered the land at the crucifixion, Matt 27:45.**
- **During significant moments in redemptive history, dramatic wonders take place.**

**32a:** Peter **finishes his quote here:** “...everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” and later makes clear that the “Lord” you must call on is the Lord Jesus Christ (**Acts 2:36**)

- Paul quotes this text in **Romans 10:13** to describe the necessity of faith.

**32b:** Peter does not include the next sentence: “**For in Mount Zion....**” even though Peter is preaching in Jerusalem.

- **He leaves it broad enough for the whole world.**
- “everyone” and later in the sermon “all who are far off” (**Acts 2:39**) which includes the whole world.

**Joel 2:32b:** Those whom the Lord saves are called here “**survivors.**”

- They were saved by grace through faith.

## **Application**

**What a privilege to live in this day of the Holy Spirit!**

- The Spirit has given us the Scriptures.
- The Spirit indwells us.
- The Spirit illuminates our minds.
- The Spirit fills us.
- The Spirit gifts us.
- The Spirit empowers us.
- The Spirit unites us.
- The Spirit magnifies Jesus Christ.
- The Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

**This is so different than just being “religious.”**

**Salvation is far greater than you’ve dreamed because Spirit of God comes to dwell inside of us to work that which is pleasing in God’s sight!**

## **C. Salvation in That Day: God Dwelling with His People (3:17-21)**

The book ends with the certainty of God dwelling with his people – his (1) holy people, (2) his satisfied people, and his (3) different people.

### **1. God Holy people (3:17)**

**17a:** Salvation coming *from* Zion and Salvation present *in* Zion stems from the Davidic promise in 2 Samuel 7.

- God promised to establish his kingdom forever.
- Such a promise never happened in David’s day nor during the days of the Kings.
- But in Jesus, we have a new David and a new Zion.

- **Jesus will bring a new creation, a new Eden, and we will dwell with him.**
- “B.C. Zion was a foretaste of A.D. Zion” (Heb 12:18-29)
- The land promise to Abraham involved “inheriting the world” (Rom 4:13)

“**Strangers will not enter**” – that is, those who do not belong to the Lord.

- Strangers were always welcomed in Israel and the people were to treat them with grace and hospitality.
- Strangers here are those who are strangers to God’s salvation.
- It will be too late to enter in.

“nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev 21:23)

**17b:** Jerusalem being holy is a result of God dwelling there with his people.

- It began with the coming of Christ, who died to purify a people for himself, and will one day be holy as new creation dawns.
- **It is a remarkable thought: A world without sin; only holiness.**

## 2. God’s Satisfied People (18)

**18:** This New Jerusalem and new creation is pictured as a return to Eden.

- It’s a glorious picture of the messianic kingdom.
- Wine is sweet not bitter; it will ooze out of the grapes; milk flows; the water rushes down the river beds.
- This exceeds the picture of restoration that followed the locust plague.
- Nothing we’ve ever experienced comes close to what the prophet is trying to convey.
- The curse will be lifted; and paradise will be restored.
- **Lewis quote: “I was made for another world”**

**18b:** The source of this blessing? It is a supernatural provision.

- It extends to arid places like the Valley of Shittim.

## 3. God’s Different People (3:19-21)

**19:** God’s people will be different from everyone else, typified here by Egypt and Edom.

- **Egypt** represents worldly power.
- **Edom** represents hostility toward God’s people. (book of Obadiah)
- **It is striking that the fertile Nile River will be desolate.**

**20:** Judah will be inhabited forever (v. 20).

**21:** There will be total peace as the enemies are defeated and “**the Lord dwells in Zion**”  
**That is, those who gather around the new and greater temple,**  
**God in Flesh, Jesus Christ.”**

- This theme of judgment on the nations is picked up in Amos.

## **The Lord will have the last word on injustice.**

- All things will be set right.
- **He will vindicate himself and his people.**
- No one “gets away” with anything.
- So let us trust in the Lord wholeheartedly.

**So we end with a picture of an everlasting kingdom consisting of true believers from the nations. God will have a people for himself.**

- In Revelation 21-22, we find that glorious picture of God dwelling with his people forever apart from tears, pain, locusts, wars, and tears. (**Rev 21:1-4**)

**For the Christian, for those who have fled to Christ for refuge, the best is yet to come!**

**For those in Christ, “Fear not.” He is coming soon.**

- Our holiness will be deepened and renewed.
- Our souls forever satisfied,
- We will see him as he is, and will be transformed into his likeness.

**For those outside of Christ, call upon his name and be saved.**

- He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, not willing that you perish but come have everlasting life.