

## JOEL

### CHAPTER TWO

1. What is the first blast of the horn intended to communicate?

*“Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of Jehovah is coming, for it is at hand” (Joel 2:1). This trumpet blow was a warning to Judah that a day of judgment was near.*

2. How would this day of Jehovah look? How would it sound? How would it feel?

*The appearance was overcast, dark, gloomy: “A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains” (Joel 2:2) and “The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness” (Joel 2:10). Locust swarms can be so thick as to block the sun.*

*The sound was an awful din: “With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array” (Joel 2:5).*

*The feeling was rough: “The people writhe in pain” and “The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble” (Joel 2:10).*

3. Describe the land before and behind the locust invasion, respectively.

*“A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them” (Joel 2:6). Among the few mentions of “the Garden of Eden” in Scripture beyond the initial events about Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:15; 3:23-24), this one is the reverse*

of another in which desolate land is restored to be Eden-like (Ezekiel 36:35). It is a fitting description in view of what locusts can accomplish.

4. How extensive was this infestation?

*“They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down. They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief”* (Joel 2:7-9). While locusts want to be in the fields where the food is, this swarm came over the walls, entered the city, got through the windows and into the houses. There was no relief! It was like the plague in Egypt (Exodus 10:6).

5. How could they get Jehovah to “relent” from this calamity?

*“‘Now, therefore,’ says Jehovah, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning”* (Joel 2:12). As God had instructed Israel when first issuing the blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 30:1-10), He wanted them to turn to Him with their whole heart. When people turn away from evil and turn to God (Jonah 3:10), the Lord calls that repentance (Luke 11:32). Repentance remains essential for initial salvation (Acts 3:19) and for restoration after apostasy (Acts 8:22).

As fasting, weeping, and mourning imply, repentance is based on sorrow (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7:10). Sin is not trivial; it must be regretted seriously (James 4:7-10).

6. What did God expect them to “rend?”

*“So rend your heart, and not your garments”* (Joel 2:13). Tearing clothes was a traditional demonstration of grief in the ancient world (Genesis 37:29; Job 1:20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 1:11) as clothing was not so affordably acquired as it is today, so it destroyed something valuable to express mourning. While this expression of sorrow can be good, what really matters is the broken heart that comes to God (Psalms 34:18; 51:17).

7. What qualities of God move Him to “relent?”

*“For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm”* (Joel 2:13). These qualities which allow sinners to repent abide in God still (Romans 2:4; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9).

8. After the locust curse, what might God do in His relenting?

*“Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him — a grain offering and a drink offering for Jehovah your God?”* (Joel 2:13). They could reasonably anticipate blessings replacing the curse, as He had foretold (Deuteronomy 30:11-20).

9. What is the second blast of the horn intended to communicate?

*“Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room”* (Joel 2:15-16). This horn was to call the whole people together for a holy purpose.

10. What was expected of the priests?

*“Let the priests, who minister to Jehovah, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O Jehovah, and do not give Your heritage to reproach,*

*that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17).*

They were to:

- 1) Weep publicly
- 2) Pray, specifically, that Israel not become a reproach among the nations, causing blasphemy to God.

11. How would Jehovah's response to the people's repentance be characterized?

*"Then Jehovah will be zealous for His land, and pity His people" (Joel 2:18).*

12. What action would Jehovah take because of Judah's repentance?

*"Jehovah will answer and say to His people, 'Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.*

*But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea; his stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things.'*

*Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for Jehovah has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in Jehovah your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you — The former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

*The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.*

*‘So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of Jehovah your God, who has dealt wondrously with you’ (Joel 2:19-26).*

He would reverse the calamity which had befallen them:

- 1) Destruction by four types of locusts (1:4; 2:25),
- 2) Wine cut off (1:5; 2:22, 24),
- 3) Infestation (1:6; 2:20),
- 4) Destruction of vines, fig trees, grain, wine, and oil (1:7, 9-12, 16-17; 2:19, 22, 24, 26),
- 5) Shame (1:11; 2:26-27),
- 6) Destruction of pastures (1:18-20; 2:22),
- 7) Drought (1:20; 2:23).

13. What had already “come up” and what would yet “rise?”

At first, the locusts had “come up” as a nation against God’s land and they would “climb” into the city and into the houses (Joel 1:6; 2:7, 9). Later, the stink of the locusts’ decaying corpses would “rise” (Joel 2:20). That stench was, of course, unpleasant, but it indicated the threat was over.

14. With their restoration to God, what would Judah come to know?

*“Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am Jehovah your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame” (Joel 2:27).* The lesson they were to learn is a return to the most fundamental fact of all: the exclusive nature of the only God (Deuteronomy 4:39). Considering this is the reason idolatry is wrong (Deuteronomy 5:7), this may hint at what sin Judah had to repent of on this occasion.

If so, it is the only indication the Jews ever reverted to idol worship after the captivity. It is not a necessary conclusion, though. This statement may be presented to launch into the next point.

15. Identify the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning what would *“come to pass afterward.”*

What Joel foretold (Joel 2:28-32) is explicitly applied by Peter the apostle to the events of Pentecost Day when the church was established (Acts 2:1-21).

16. Upon whom would the Lord *“pour out [His] Spirit?”*

*“That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days”* (Joel 2:28-29). By *“all flesh,”* He was not speaking in the absolute sense. This does not apply to animals. Nor is it about every single human being, but all kinds of people: men and women – *“your sons and your daughters,”* young and old – *“your old men.. your young men.”* It almost certainly points to the inclusion of Gentiles along with Jews (Acts 10:44-48).

17. What would the outpouring of the Spirit enable?

*“Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions”* (Joel 2:28). Prophecy, visions, and dreams were all means through which God revealed His word to His servants.

18. What would precede the *“great and awesome day of Jehovah?”*

*“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of Jehovah” (Joel 2:30-31).*

19. How could salvation be obtained?

*“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of Jehovah shall be saved” (Joel 2:32).* This is quoted twice in the New Testament. First, Peter included a lengthy quotation from Joel in his Pentecost sermon, concluding with this text, which he used to launch into an introduction to Jesus for the Jews who had gathered from every country (Acts 2:21). Second, Paul quotes just this portion of Joel 2:32 in an explanation to the Romans of how salvation is received (Romans 10:13). The full explanation (Romans 10:9-17) is that salvation depends on confessing Christ, that is calling on His name, which depends on faith in the heart, which depends on hearing the word of God, which depends on preaching, which depends on preachers being sent. Of course, merely calling on His name without subsequent obedience to the rest of the gospel is inadequate (Matthew 7:21-23; Acts 22:16).

20. Where would deliverance come from?

*“For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as Jehovah has said, among the remnant whom Jehovah calls” (Joel 2:32).* The Old Testament prophets were clear that when salvation came it would start in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3; Obadiah 17; Zechariah 1:16; 8:3). Jesus instructed the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for their power from on high (Luke 24:49), and, once that power was received in the Holy Spirit, they were to begin preaching in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). So, the apostles were, in fact, in Jerusalem (Acts 1:12; 2:5), when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2:1-4) and they proclaimed the fulfillment of Joel’s words (Acts 2:17-21).