

# Joel

The Day of the LORD:  
Plague & Promise

# Introduction

- Joel: יְהוָה, ‘YHWH is God’ (*unknown*)
- Date: Unknown
- Setting: Post-exilic likely (cf. “scattered,” 3:2-3)
- Theme: Day of the LORD: Plague & Promise
- Message: *God’s people must repent to escape coming judgment & participate in future restoration*

# Current Catastrophe (1)

- Call to Alarm: 'Hear this, you elders' (1-12)  
*Israel had just experienced a plague of epic proportion, wave after wave of locust, leaving the land bare of crops. Lament like bride bereaved, be distressed because of distress*
- Call to Repent: 'Put on sackcloth' (13-20)  
*Joel calls priests & people to cry out in repentance. Locust merely foreshadow coming judgment (cf. Deut. 28) Amidst all emptiness, prophet cries out to YHWH for help!*

# Coming Calamity (2:1-17)

- Call to Alarm: 'Blow a trumpet in Zion' (1-11)  
*Israel would soon experience even darker judgment (1-2), with YHWH's army shaking earth, darkening skies (10-11). It devours everything in its path, like fire & locust (3-9)*
- Call to Repent: 'Rend your hearts. . .' (12-17)  
*Joel calls for genuine repentance, with a reminder of God's mercy yet without presumption. He calls for full assembly (none exempt) to plead for mercy, appeal to God's renown*

# Restoration of Ruined (2:18-32)

- Promise of Plenty: 'I will restore to you' (18-27)  
*After (unmentioned) repentance, YHWH promised to reverse their plight: restore agricultural prosperity, remove the nation's reproach, route their enemy (implicitly conditional)*
- Promise to Pour: 'I'll pour out my Spirit' (28-32)  
*God promised a future outpouring of His Spirit on entire covenant community, w/ cosmic signs of coming judgment. Partly fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2)*

# Retribution on Rivals (3:1-21)

- Promise to Pay: 'I'll gather all nations' (1-16)  
*YHWH promised to repay the surrounding nations for their mistreatment of Judah during its fall (Jehoshaphat, 'YHWH judges'). As they did, so it will be done to them (near). Yet, the cosmic language suggests (far) eschatological judgment.*
- Promise to Protect: 'YHWH is stronghold' (16-21)  
*YHWH promised to protect His people/city from invaders, and prosper their land, even the most arid terrain (acacia)*

# Summary

In the wake of an epic locust plague, Joel calls on the people to repent because this event was merely a foreshadowing of coming calamity. Only repentance could avert this judgment. Upon repentance, God promises to reverse their plight, pour out His Spirit upon the community, protect them and punish their enemies.