

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

Joel

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Joel

1 I am Joel son of Pethuel. This is a message that Yahweh
gave to me.

[2] You leaders *of Israel*, and everyone else who lives in
this country, listen *to this message*!
Nothing like this has ever happened during
the time that we have lived
or during the time when our ancestors lived.
[3] Tell your children about it,
and tell your children to tell it to their children,
and tell your grandchildren to tell it to their children.
[4] Tell them this:
The first swarm of locusts came and cut many
of the leaves of the crops;
then another swarm came and ate the rest of the leaves,
then hopping locusts came and ate what
they had left,
and finally, another swarm came
and they destroyed everything else.
[5] You people who are drunk, wake up and cry!
Cry loudly, all of you who drink wine,
because all the grapes are ruined,
and so there will be no new wine!
[6] Huge swarms of locusts have entered our country.
They are like a powerful army
that has very many soldiers;
no one can count them.
The locusts have teeth that are as sharp as
the teeth of lions!
[7] They have destroyed our grapevines and our fig trees
by stripping off and eating all the bark,
with the result that the branches are white and bare.
[8] Cry and wail as a young woman does
when the young man to whom she was
engaged has died.
[9] There is no more flour or wine for us to offer as
sacrifices at Yahweh's temple,
so the priests who serve Yahweh are mourning.
[10] The locusts have ruined the *crops in the* fields.
It is as though the ground itself is mourning
because the grain is gone;
there will be no *grapes to make* wine,
and there is no more *olive* oil.
[11] You farmers, despair!
You who take care of grapevines, cry loudly,
because the crops in the field are gone;
there is no wheat or barley growing any more.
[12] The grapevines and the fig trees have withered,
and the pomegranate trees, palm trees, and
apricot trees have also dried up.
The people are no longer joyful.
[13] You priests, put on *rough sack* clothes and wail.
You who serve my God *by offering sacrifices*
on the altar,
wear those sack clothes all night *to show
that you are mourning*,
because there is no flour or wine to be offered
at the temple of your God.
[14] Set apart a day for when the people should
go without food.
Tell the leaders and the other people to
gather at the temple
and to cry out to Yahweh *there*.
[15] It will soon be the time when Yahweh, *who is* the
Almighty God, will punish us,
when he will cause us to experience more disasters.
That will be a terrible time!
[16] Our crops are already gone,
and no *one is* rejoicing at all at the temple of our God.
[17] When we plant seeds, *they do not grow;*
they dry up in the ground,
so there are no crops to harvest.
Our barns are empty;
there is no grain *to store in them*.
[18] Our cattle groan, searching for a pasture with some
grass to eat but not finding any.
The sheep also *bleat because they* are suffering.
[19] Yahweh, I cry out to you,
because *it is as though* a fire has completely
burned our pastures and our forests.
[20] The wild animals also are desperate for
you to help them,
because all the streams have dried up.
The dryness is like a fire burning up the
wilderness pastures.

2 Blow horns on Mount Zion,
God's sacred hill *in Jerusalem*!
Shout to the people of Judah that they should
be afraid and tremble,
because it will soon be the time for Yahweh
to punish us *further*.
[2] That will be a very dark and gloomy day;
A huge swarm of locusts forms a black cloud,
making it very dark.
The swarm spreads over the mountains like
the light of dawn;
they are like a mighty army.
Nothing like this has ever happened before,
and nothing like this will ever happen again.
[3] *It is as though* the locusts set everything on
fire wherever they go.
In front of them, the land was *as beautiful* as
the garden of Eden,
but behind them *the land is like* a desert,
and nothing is able to withstand them.
[4] The locusts resemble horses
and they run like war horses.
[5] Leaping over the mountaintops,
they make a noise like rumbling chariots,
like a mighty army that is preparing for a battle,
or like the roar of a fire that burns up
stubble *in a field*.
[6] When people see them coming,
they become very pale and frightened.
[7] The locusts run and climb over walls like soldiers do;
each one continues on its way
and never turns aside from its course.
[8] They rush straight ahead
without pushing each other.
People try to fight against them,

but that does not cause them to stop.
9 They swarm over the city walls and enter our houses;
they enter through our windows as thieves do.
10 *It is as though* they cause the earth to shake and
the sky to tremble as they come.
The sun and the moon become dark,
and the stars do not shine
because there are so many locusts in the sky.
11 Yahweh commands this army *of countless locusts*,
and they obey him powerfully.
This time during which Yahweh is judging and
punishing us is very terrible,
with the result that it seems that no one can survive it.

12 But Yahweh says,

"In spite of these disasters that you have experienced,
you can still reconcile yourselves to me
in your inner being.
Weep, and mourn, and fast *to show that you are
sorry that you have abandoned me*."
13 Do not tear *only* your clothes
to show that you are sorry;
more importantly, show in your inner being
that you are truly sorry
and *in that way* reconcile yourselves to
Yahweh your God.
Do this because Yahweh is merciful and kind;
he does not quickly become angry;
instead, he greatly and faithfully loves us,
and he does not like to punish us.
14 It is possible that he will change his mind
about punishing *you*
and, instead, act mercifully *toward you*.
If he does that, he will bless you
by giving you plenty of grain and wine
so that you can offer *some of* those things for
sacrifices to our God, Yahweh.
15 Blow the *signal* horns on Mount Zion!
Gather the people together!
Set apart time to fast*, to show that you are
sorry for your sins*.
16 Gather everyone together and prepare them for
a special meeting for Yahweh.
Bring everyone—
the old people and the children, even the babies;
yes, even summon bridegrooms and brides
from their rooms.
17 Tell the priests who serve Yahweh to cry all the way
from the entrance of the temple to the altar
and to pray this:
"Yahweh, be merciful to us, your people;
do not allow people from other nations to despise us;
do not allow them to rule over us and say
among themselves,
'Their God has abandoned them!'"
18 Then Yahweh showed that he cared deeply
about his people
and that he would act mercifully toward them.

19 When the people prayed,

Yahweh answered and said,
"I will give you plenty of grain and wine and olive oil,
and you will be satisfied.
I will no longer allow other nations to insult you.
20 When an army from the north comes *to attack you*,
I will force them to continue *past Jerusalem*
into the desert.
Some will go into the *Dead* Sea in the east,
and some will go into the *Mediterranean*
Sea in the west.
There they will all die, and their bodies will
stink powerfully,
because they were powerful in what they did."
21 Do not be afraid, people, for what might
happen to the land.
You can rejoice, because Yahweh will be
powerful in what he does! 22 And the wild
animals should not be afraid,
because the meadows will soon become green again;
the fig trees and other trees will be full of fruit,
and the grapevines will be covered with grapes.
23 You people of Jerusalem,
rejoice about what Yahweh, your God,
will do *for you*.
He will send rain to deliver you at the right time—
before planting and before harvesting,
as he did previously.
24 The ground where you thresh the grain will
be covered with grain,
and your vats where you store the fresh grape
juice and olive oil will be full.
25 Yahweh said, "I will repay you for everything that
those great swarms of locusts destroyed,
that enormous army that I sent to attack you.
26 Then you will eat until your stomachs are full.
Then you will praise me, Yahweh, your God,
for the wonderful things that I have done for you,
and never again will I let others shame you, my people.
27 When that happens, you will know that I am
always among you,
that I am Yahweh, your God,
and that there is no other *God*.
Never again will I let others shame you."
28 "Some time later, I will give my Spirit to many people.
You sons and daughters will proclaim messages
that come directly from me.
Your old men will have dreams that come from me,
and your young men will have visions
that come from me.
29 At that time, I will generously give my Spirit even
to servants, both men and women.
30 I will do unusual things on the earth and in the sky.
On the earth, there will be much bloodshed,
and there will be very large fires and smoke
that resembles huge clouds.
31 In the sky, the sun will become dark, and the moon
will become *as red as* blood.
Those things will happen before that great and terrible
day when I, Yahweh, come *to judge all people*.
32 And I will do this: I will save everyone
who worships me.
As I have said before, 'On Mount Zion in Jerusalem
I will make a way for them to escape;
those whom I have chosen will survive.'"

3 Yahweh says this:

"At that time, I will bring back the people whom
their enemies took away from Jerusalem
and from *other places in* Judah.
2 Then in the Valley of Jehoshaphat I will gather
together *the people of* all of the other nations;
there I will judge *and punish* them
because they scattered my Israelite people
and forced them to go to other countries,
and because they divided up my land
among themselves.
3 *I will judge them* also *because* they played games
of chance to determine who would
get *each of* my people.
They traded *some of the* Israelite boys for prostitutes,
and they sold *some of the* Israelite girls to get *money
to buy* wine, and they drank *it*.

4 You people of the cities of Tyre and Sidon, and you
people of Philistia—you have no reason to be angry with me.
You are behaving as if you are trying to avenge yourselves
on me for something. If that is what you are doing, I will
very quickly do the same thing to you. 5 You took the silver
and gold and other valuable things from my temple and put
them into your own temples. 6 You dragged away the people
of Jerusalem and *other places in* Judah, and you took them
far away from their homes and sold them to Greek traders.
7 But I will make it possible for my people to return from
the places to which you sold them, and I will do to you what
you did to them. 8 Then I will cause people to take *some of*
your sons and your daughters and sell them to the people of
Judah! And then they will sell *some of* them to the Sabean
people, who live far away. *That will certainly happen* because
I, Yahweh, have said it."

9 Proclaim to *the people of* all nations,
"Prepare for a war!
Summon your soldiers;
tell them to stand in their battle positions.
10 Take your plows and make swords from them;
take your pruning knives and make
spears from them.
Even the weak *people* must *also* act like *they
are* strong *soldiers*.
11 All of *you people from* the nations that are near Judah
must come quickly and gather there."
But Yahweh, *when that happens,* send your army
of angels to attack them!
12 Yahweh says, "The *people in the* nations near
Judah must get ready and come to
the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
There I will sit as a judge, and I will punish them.
13 *They are like* crops that are ready for farmers
to harvest them;
so *strike them as a farmer* swings his sickle
to cut the grain.
They are like large piles of grapes in the pits
where farmers will press them;
so crush them as a farmer tramples on the grapes.
Punish them severely because they are very wicked.
*If all of the wicked things that they have done became
grape juice,* they are so wicked that the
juice would make the vats overflow."
14 There will be huge crowds of people in that
Valley of Judgment.
It will soon be the time that Yahweh will punish
them in that Valley of Judgment.
15 At that time there will be no light from the sun or moon,
and the stars will not shine.
16 From Mount Zion in Jerusalem, Yahweh will
speak forcefully;
his voice will be like thunder,
and his voice will cause the sky and the
earth to shake.
But Yahweh will protect his people;
he will be like a strong wall around the
people of Israel.
17 Yahweh says, "At that time, you *Israelite people* will
know that I am Yahweh, your God.
I live on Zion, my holy hill.
Jerusalem will be a holy city,
and soldiers from other countries will never
conquer it again.
18 At that time, there will be vineyards bearing
sweet grapes on the mountains,
and your cattle and goats on those hills will
produce plenty of milk.
The streams in Judah will have abundant water,
and a stream will flow from my temple into the Valley
of Shittim *northeast of the Salt Sea*.
19 *The armies of* Egypt and Edom attacked the
people of Judah
and killed many people there who had not
done anything that was wrong.
As a result, those countries will become wastelands,
with no one living there any longer.
20 But there will always be people living throughout Judea
and in Jerusalem, forever. 21 I, Yahweh, live on
Mount Zion *in Jerusalem*,
and I will not punish people *further* for killing
my people, for which I *previously*
punished them."