

# JOEL

**1**<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD which came to Joel son of Pethuel.

## The day of the LORD

<sup>2</sup>Listen, you elders;  
hear me, all you who live in the land:  
has the like of this happened in all your days  
or in your fathers' days?

<sup>3</sup>Tell it to your sons and they may tell theirs;  
let them pass it on from generation to generation.

<sup>4</sup>What the locust has left the swarm eats,  
what the swarm has left the hopper eats,  
and what the hopper has left the grub eats.

<sup>5</sup>Wake up, you drunkards, and lament your fate;  
mourn for the fresh wine, all you wine-drinkers,  
because it is lost to you.

<sup>6</sup>For a horde has overrun my land,  
mighty and past counting;  
their teeth are a lion's teeth,  
they have the fangs of a lioness.

<sup>7</sup>They have ruined my vines  
and left my fig-trees broken and leafless,  
they have plucked them bare  
and stripped them of their bark;  
they have left the branches white.

<sup>8</sup>Wail like a virgin wife in sackcloth,  
wailing over the bridegroom of her youth:

<sup>9</sup>the drink-offering and grain-offering are lost  
to the house of the LORD.

Mourn, you priests, ministers of the LORD,

<sup>10</sup>the fields are ruined, the parched earth mourns;  
for the corn is ruined, the new wine is desperate,  
the oil has failed.

<sup>11</sup>Despair, you husbandmen; you vinedressers, lament,  
because the wheat and the barley,  
the harvest of the field, is lost.

<sup>12</sup>The vintage is desperate, and the fig-tree has failed;  
pomegranate, palm, and apple,  
all the trees of the country-side are parched,  
and none make merry over harvest.

<sup>13</sup>Priests, put on sackcloth and beat your breasts;  
lament, you ministers of the altar;

come, lie in sackcloth all night long, you ministers of my God;  
for grain-offering and drink-offering  
are withheld from the house of your God.

<sup>14</sup>Proclaim a solemn fast, appoint a day of abstinence.  
You elders, summon all that live in the land  
to come together in the house of your God,  
and cry to the LORD.

<sup>15</sup>Alas! the day is near,  
the day of the LORD: it comes,  
a mighty destruction from the Almighty.

<sup>16</sup>Look! it stares us in the face;  
the house of our God has lost its food,  
lost all its joy and gladness.

<sup>17</sup>The soil is parched,  
the dykes are dry,  
the granaries are deserted,  
the barns ruinous;  
for the rains have failed.

<sup>18</sup>The cattle are exhausted,  
the herds of oxen distressed  
because they have no pasture;  
the flocks of sheep waste away.

<sup>19</sup>To thee I cry, O LORD;  
for fire has devoured the open pastures  
and the flames have burnt up all the trees of the country-side.

<sup>20</sup>The very cattle in the field look up to thee;  
for the water-channels are dried up,  
and fire has devoured the open pastures.

**2**<sup>1</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
sound the alarm upon my holy hill;  
let all that live in the land tremble,  
for the day of the LORD has come,  
<sup>2</sup>surely a day of darkness and gloom is upon us,  
a day of cloud and dense fog;  
like a blackness spread over the mountains  
a mighty, countless host appears;  
their like has never been known,  
nor ever shall be in ages to come;

<sup>3</sup>their vanguard a devouring fire,  
their rearguard leaping flame;  
before them the land is a garden of Eden,  
behind them a wasted wilderness;  
nothing survives their march.

<sup>4</sup>On they come, like squadrons of horse,  
like war-horses they charge;

<sup>5</sup>bounding over the peaks they advance with the rattle of chariots,  
like flames of fire burning up the stubble,  
like a countless host in battle array.

<sup>6</sup>Before them nations tremble,  
every face turns pale.

<sup>7</sup>Like warriors they charge,  
they mount the walls like men at arms,  
each marching in line,  
no confusion in the ranks,

<sup>8</sup>none jostling his neighbour,  
none breaking line.

They plunge through streams without halting their advance;  
<sup>9</sup>they burst into the city, leap on to the wall,  
climb into the houses,  
entering like thieves through the windows.

<sup>10</sup>Before them the earth shakes,  
the heavens shudder,  
sun and moon are darkened,  
and the stars forbear to shine.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD thunders before his host;  
his is a mighty army,  
countless are those who do his bidding.  
Great is the day of the LORD and terrible,  
who can endure it?

<sup>12</sup>And yet, the LORD says, even now  
turn back to me with your whole heart,  
fast, and weep, and beat your breasts.

<sup>13</sup>Rend your hearts and not your garments;  
turn back to the LORD your God;  
for he is gracious and compassionate,  
long-suffering and ever constant,  
always ready to repent of the threatened evil,

<sup>14</sup>It may be he will turn back and repent  
and leave a blessing behind him,  
blessing enough for grain-offering and drink-offering  
for the LORD your God.

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
proclaim a solemn fast, appoint a day of abstinence;

<sup>16</sup>gather the people together, proclaim a solemn assembly;  
summon the elders,  
gather the children, yes, babes at the breast;  
bid the bridegroom leave his chamber  
and the bride her bower.

<sup>17</sup>Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD,  
stand weeping between the porch and the altar  
and say, 'Spare thy people, O LORD, thy own people,  
expose them not to reproach,  
lest other nations make them a byword  
and everywhere men ask,  
"Where is their God?" '

## Israel forgiven and restored

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD's love burned with zeal for his land,  
and he was moved with compassion for his people.

<sup>19</sup>He answered their appeal and said,  
I will send you corn, and new wine, and oil,  
and you shall have your fill;  
I will expose you no longer  
to the reproach of other nations.

<sup>20</sup>I will remove the northern peril far away from you  
and banish them into a land parched and waste,  
their vanguard into the eastern sea  
and their rear into the western,  
and the stench shall rise from their rotting corpses  
because of their proud deeds!

<sup>21</sup>Earth, be not afraid, rejoice and be glad;  
for the LORD himself has done a proud deed.

<sup>22</sup>Be not afraid, you cattle in the field;  
for the pastures shall be green,  
the trees shall bear fruit,  
the fig and the vine yield their harvest.

<sup>23</sup>O people of Zion,  
rejoice and be glad in the LORD your God,  
who gives you good food in due measure [*Or gives you a sign pointing to prosperity*]  
and sends down rain [*prob. rdg, Heb adds spring rain and autumn rain*] as  
of old.

<sup>24</sup>The threshing-floors shall be heaped with grain,  
the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.

<sup>25</sup>So I will make good the years  
that the swarm has eaten,  
hopper and grub and locust,  
my great army which I sent against you;

<sup>26</sup>and you shall eat, you shall eat your fill  
and praise the name of the LORD your God  
who has done wonders for you [*prob. rdg, Heb adds and my people shall not again be brought to shame (cp v27)*],

<sup>27</sup>and you shall know that I am present in Israel,  
that I and no other am the LORD your God;  
and my people shall not again be brought to shame.

<sup>28</sup>Thereafter the day shall come  
when I will pour out my spirit on all mankind;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams  
and your young men see visions;

<sup>29</sup>I will pour out my spirit in those days  
even upon slaves and slave-girls.

<sup>30</sup>I will show portents in the sky and on earth,

blood and fire and columns of smoke;  
<sup>31</sup>the sun shall be turned into darkness  
and the moon into blood.  
before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.  
<sup>32</sup>Then everyone who invokes the LORD by name  
shall be saved;  
for when the LORD gives the word  
there shall yet be survivors on Mount Zion  
and in Jerusalem a remnant [*a remnant: prob. rdg, Heb among the  
remnant*]  
whom the LORD will call [*Or when the LORD calls*].

**3**<sup>1</sup>When that time comes, on that day  
when I reverse the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,  
<sup>2</sup>I will gather all the nations together  
and lead them down to the Valley of the LORD's Judgement  
and there bring them to judgement  
on behalf of Israel, my own possession;  
for they have scattered my people  
throughout their own countries,  
have taken each their portion of my land  
<sup>3</sup>and shared out my people by lot,  
bartered a boy for a whore,  
and sold a girl for wine and drunk it down.

<sup>4</sup>What are you to me, Tyre and Sidon and all the districts of Philistia? Can you pay me  
back for anything I have done? Is there anything that you can do to me? Swiftly and  
speedily I will make your deeds recoil upon your own heads; <sup>5</sup>for you have taken my  
silver and my gold and carried off my costly treasures into your temples; <sup>6</sup>you have sold  
the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, and removed them far beyond their  
own frontiers. <sup>7</sup>But I will rouse them to leave the places to which you have sold them. I  
will make your deeds recoil upon your own heads: <sup>8</sup>I will sell your sons and your  
daughters to the people of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabaeans, a nation far  
away. The LORD has spoken.

9-12[*The order of lines in vv9-12 has been re-arranged in several places*]**Proclaim this**  
amongst the nations:  
Declare a holy war, call your troops to arms!  
Beat your mattocks into swords  
and your pruning-hooks into spears [*Beat ... spears: cp Isa. 2.4; Mic. 4.3*].  
Rally to each other's help, all you nations round about.  
Let the weakling say, 'I am strong',  
and let the coward show himself brave [*and let ... brave: prob. rdg, Heb O  
LORD bring down thy warriors*].  
Let all the nations hear the call to arms  
and come to the Valley of the LORD's Judgement;  
let all the warriors come and draw near  
and muster there;  
for there I will take my seat

and judge all the nations round about.

<sup>13</sup>Ply the sickle, for the harvest is ripe;  
come, tread the grapes,  
for the press is full and the vats overflow;  
great is the wickedness of the nations.

<sup>14</sup>The roar of multitudes, multitudes, in the Valley of Decision!  
The day of the LORD is at hand  
in the Valley of Decision;

<sup>15</sup>sun and moon are darkened  
and the stars forbear to shine.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD roars from Zion  
and thunders from Jerusalem;  
heaven and earth shudder,  
but the LORD is a refuge for his people  
and the defence of Israel.

<sup>17</sup>Thus you shall know that I am the LORD your God,  
dwelling in Zion my holy mountain;  
Jerusalem shall be holy,  
and no one without the right shall pass through her again.

<sup>18</sup>When that day comes,  
the mountains shall run with fresh wine  
and the hills flow with milk.

All the streams of Judah shall be full of water,  
and a fountain shall spring from the LORD's house  
and water the gorge of Shittim,

<sup>19</sup>but Egypt shall become a desert  
and Edom a deserted waste,  
because of the violence done to Judah  
and the innocent blood shed in her land;

<sup>20-21</sup>and I will spill their blood,  
the blood I have not yet spilt.

Then there shall be people living in Judah for ever,  
in Jerusalem generation after generation;  
and the LORD will dwell in Zion.