



This short book portrays Israel's enemies as a plague of locusts invading and destroying the land. Joel tells of a day when all of Israel's enemies will be judged. Joel urges the people to turn from their sins so that they, too, won't be destroyed.

1 I am Joel the son of Pethuel.
And this is the message
the LORD gave to me.

Locusts Cover the Land

- 2** Listen, you leaders
and everyone else
in the land.
Has anything like this
ever happened before?
- 3** Tell our children!
Let it be told
to our grandchildren
and their children too.
- 4** Swarm after swarm of locusts
has attacked our crops,
eating everything in sight.
- 5** Sober up, you drunkards!
Cry long and loud;
your wine supply is gone.
- 6** A powerful nation
with countless troops
has invaded our land.
They have the teeth and jaws
of powerful lions.
- 7** Our grapevines and fig trees
are stripped bare;
only naked branches remain.
- 8** Grieve like a young woman
mourning for the man
she was to marry.

- 9** Offerings of grain and wine
are no longer brought
to the LORD's temple.
His servants, the priests,
are deep in sorrow.
- 10** Barren fields mourn;
grain, grapes, and olives
are scorched and shriveled.
- 11** Mourn for our farms
and our vineyards!
There's no wheat or barley
growing in our fields.
- 12** Grapevines have dried up
and so has every tree—
figs and pomegranates,
date palms and apples.
All happiness has faded away.

Return to God

- 13** Mourn, you priests who serve
at the altar of my God.
Spend your days and nights
wearing sackcloth.
Offerings of grain and wine
are no longer brought
to the LORD's temple.
- 14** Tell the leaders and people
to come together
at the temple.
Order them to go without eating
and to pray sincerely.

- 15 We are in for trouble!
 Soon the LORD All-Powerful
 will bring disaster.
- 16 Our food is already gone;
 there's no more celebrating
 at the temple of our God.
- 17 "Seeds dry up in the ground;¹
 no harvest is possible.
 Our barns are in bad shape,
 with no grain
 to store in them.
- 18 Our cattle wander aimlessly,
 moaning for lack of pasture,
 and 'sheep are suffering.'¹
- 19 I cry out to you, LORD.
 Grasslands and forests are eaten
 by the scorching heat.
- 20 Wild animals have no water
 because of you;
 rivers and streams are dry,
 and pastures are parched.

Locusts and an Enemy Army

- 2 Sound the trumpet on Zion,
 the LORD's sacred hill.
 Warn everyone to tremble!
 The judgment day of the LORD
 is coming soon.
- 2 It will be dark and gloomy
 with storm clouds overhead.
 Troops will cover the mountains
 like thunderclouds.
 No army this powerful
 has ever been gathered before
 or will ever be again.
- 3 Fiery flames surround them;
 no one escapes.
 Before they invaded,
 the land was like Eden;
 now only a desert remains.
- 4 They look like horses
 and charge like cavalry.
- 5 They roar over mountains
 like noisy chariots,
 or a mighty army
 ready for battle.
 They are a forest fire
 that feasts on straw.
- 6 The very sight of them
 is frightening.¹
- 7 They climb over walls
 like warriors;

- they march in columns
 and never turn aside.
- 8 They charge straight ahead,
 without pushing each other;
 even arrows and spears
 cannot make them retreat.
- 9 They swarm over city walls
 and enter our homes;
 they crawl in through windows,
 just like thieves.
- 10 They make the earth tremble
 and the heavens shake;
 the sun and moon turn dark,
 and stars stop shining.
- 11 The LORD God leads this army
 of countless troops,
 and they obey his commands.
 The day of his judgment
 is so terrible
 that no one can stand it.

The LORD's Invitation

- 12 The LORD said:
 It isn't too late.
 You can still return to me
 with all your heart.
 Start crying and mourning!
 Go without eating.
- 13 Don't rip your clothes
 to show your sorrow.
 Instead, turn back to me
 with broken hearts.
 I am merciful, kind, and caring.
 I don't easily lose my temper,
 and I don't like to punish.
- 14 I am the LORD your God.
 Perhaps I will change my mind
 and treat you with mercy.
 Then you will be blessed
 with enough grain and wine
 for offering sacrifices to me.
- 15 Sound the trumpet on Zion!
 Call the people together.
 Show your sorrow
 by going without food.
- 16 Make sure that everyone
 is fit to worship me.
 Bring adults, children, babies,
 and even bring newlyweds
 from their festivities.

17 Tell my servants, the priests,
to cry inside the temple
and to offer this prayer
near the altar:▷
"Save your people, LORD God!
Don't let foreign nations
make jokes about us.
Don't let them laugh and ask,
'Where is your God?'"

The LORD Will Bless the Land

18 The LORD was deeply concerned
about his land
and had pity on his people.
19 In answer to their prayers
he said,
"I will give you enough grain,
wine, and olive oil
to satisfy your needs.
No longer will I let you
be insulted by the nations.
20 An army attacked from the north,
but I will chase it
into a scorching desert.
There it will rot and stink
from the Dead Sea
to the Mediterranean."
The LORD works wonders
and does great things.
21 So tell the soil to celebrate
22 and wild animals
to stop being afraid.
Grasslands are green again;
fruit trees and fig trees
are loaded with fruit.
Grapevines are covered
with grapes.
23 People of Zion,
celebrate in honor
of the LORD your God!
He is generous and has sent
the autumn and spring rains
in the proper seasons.▷
24 Grain will cover
your threshing places;
jars will overflow
with wine and olive oil.

The LORD Will Rescue His People

25 I, the LORD your God,
will make up for the losses
caused by those swarms

and swarms of locusts▷
I sent to attack you.

26 My people, you will eat
until you are satisfied.
Then you will praise me
for the wonderful things
I have done.
Never again will you
be put to shame.

27 Israel, you will know
that I stand at your side.
I am the LORD your God—
there are no other gods.
Never again will you
be put to shame.

The LORD Will Work Wonders

The LORD said:

28 Later, I will give my Spirit
to everyone.
Your sons and daughters
will prophesy.
Your old men
will have dreams,
and your young men
will see visions.
29 In those days I will even give
my Spirit to my servants,
both men and women.
30 I will work wonders
in the sky above
and on the earth below.
There will be blood and fire
and clouds of smoke.
31 The sun will turn dark,
and the moon
will be as red as blood
before that great
and terrible day
when I appear.

32 Then the LORD will save everyone who faithfully worships him. He has promised there will be survivors on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and among them will be his chosen ones.

The LORD Will Judge the Nations

3 At that time I, the LORD, will make Judah and Jerusalem prosperous again. 2 Then in Judgment Valley▷ I will bring together the nations that scattered my people Israel everywhere in the world, and I will bring charges against those nations.

They divided up my land³ and gambled to see who would get my people; they sold boys and girls to pay for prostitutes and wine.

⁴You people of Tyre and Sidon and you Philistines, why are you doing this? Are you trying to get even with me? I'll strike back before you know what's happened.

⁵You've taken my prized possessions, including my silver and gold, and carried them off to your temples.▷

⁶You have dragged the people of Judah and Jerusalem from their land and sold them to the Greeks.

⁷But I'll make the people of Judah determined to come home, and what happened to them will happen to you. ⁸I'll hand over your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabceans, who live far away. I, the LORD, have spoken!

Judgment in Judgment Valley

⁹Say to the nations:

"Get ready for war!
Be eager to fight.
Line up for battle
and prepare to attack.
¹⁰Make swords out of plows
and spears out of garden tools.
Strengthen every weakling."

¹¹Hurry, all you nations!
Come quickly.

"Ask the LORD to bring
his warriors along."

¹²You must come now
to Judgment Valley,▷
where the LORD will judge
the surrounding nations.

¹³They are a field of ripe crops.
Bring in the harvest!
They are grapes piled high.
Start trampling them now!

If our enemy's sins were wine,
every jar would overflow.

¹⁴Crowds fill Decision Valley.

The judgment day of the LORD
will soon be here—

¹⁵no light from the sun or moon,
and stars no longer shine.

¹⁶From the heart of Jerusalem
the LORD roars like a lion,
shaking the earth and sky.

But the LORD is a fortress,
a place of safety
for his people Israel.

God Will Bless His People

¹⁷I am the LORD your God.

And you will know I live on Zion,
my sacred hill,
because Jerusalem will be sacred,
untouched by foreign troops.

¹⁸On that day, fruitful vineyards
will cover the mountains.

And your cattle and goats
that graze on the hills
will produce a lot of milk.

Streams in Judah
will never run dry;
a stream from my house
will flow in Acacia Valley.

¹⁹Egypt and Edom were cruel
and brutal to Judah,
without a reason.

Now their countries will become
a barren desert,
²⁰but Judah and Jerusalem
will always have people.

²¹I, the LORD, live on Mount Zion.
I will punish the guilty
and defend the innocent.¹

Notes

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (ˆ) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

▷ **1.4** *Swarm ... locusts*: The Hebrew text lists either four kinds of locusts or locusts in four stages of their development.

▷ **2.17** *inside ... altar*: The Hebrew text has "between the porch and the altar."

▷ **2.23** *in ... seasons*: Or "as he used to do."

▷ **2.25** *swarms ... locusts*: The Hebrew text lists either four kinds of locusts or locusts in four stages of their development.

▷ **3.2** *Judgment Valley*: The Hebrew text has "Jehoshaphat Valley."

▷ **3.5** *temples*: Or "palaces."

▷ **3.12** *Judgment Valley*: The Hebrew text has "Jehoshaphat Valley."