

## Joel (“Yahweh is God”)

**Introduction:** thanks again to David Dorsey’s resource on the OT. Joel is often understood to be an earlier prophet, but a time after the return from the Exile and the rebuilding of the temple seems more likely.

Remember the picture from Israel of this key passage.

### 1) Overview

- a) devastating locust invasion (1:2–14)
  - i) suffering of all creatures from the locust plague (1:15–20)
    - (1) Yahweh himself brings the locust army against Judah (2:1–11)
      - (a) **FOCUS: call to repentance** (2:12–17)
- b) promise that devastation of locust invasion will be reversed (2:18–27)
  - i) Judah will experience Yahweh’s spiritual blessings (2:28–32)
    - (1) Yahweh will bring the nations against Judah, but he will destroy them and restore Judah (3:1–21)

### 2) Zoom in on the call to repentance—2:12-17

- With all hope of avoiding the disaster dispelled, the audience is now ready to hear what they need to do, which the fourth, central unit provides. Judah must “return” (*šûb*) to Yahweh with the hope that God may “turn” (*šûb*) and bless Judah. The beginning of the unit is marked by an expression that often introduces new units: “and so now” (*wě ... ‘attâ*), followed by “says Yahweh” (*ně’um-yhwh*), a divine speech formula occurring nowhere else in Joel (thus highlighting this unit). (Dorsey)
  - Tied together by the repetition of masculine plural imperatives calling for repentance (return, rend, return, blow, consecrate, call, assemble, consecrate, gather, assemble), this unit alternates between exhortations to repent (2:12–13; 2:15–17c) and rhetorical questions providing the rationale for repentance (“who knows? he may relent” [2:14]; “why should they say ...?” [2:17d]). The unit offers no hope of avoiding the locust plague; rather, it promises that if Judah repents and appeals to Yahweh, he may be merciful and help them in the plague’s aftermath. (Dorsey)
- a) The initial commands—2:12-14
    - i) Return (even this late)—2:12
      - (1) How?
        - (a) With all your heart and its accompanying outward expressions (with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning)
    - ii) Rend your heart (genuine sorrow) and return—2:13
      - (1) Internal spiritual brokenness is more important than the outward act of tearing one’s clothes, which was a sign of mourning. (Faithlife)
      - (2) Why? (cf. Jonah 4:2; Ex. 34:5-7)
        - (a) Because of **who** God is—gracious, merciful/compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loyal love

- (b) Because of **what** God does—relents of evil
    - (i) The doubt is not concerning God’s mercies but concerning man’s repentance (cf. Jer. 18:8)
  - b) The urgency of obedience at a public assembly—2:15-17
    - i) The seriousness of the commands—2:15-16
      - (1) Don’t leave anyone out; no one is exempt—2:15-16
        - (a) Some things are more important than your honeymoon!
    - ii) The Godward perspective of genuine repentance—2:17
      - (1) **Your** people, **Your** heritage, **Your** protective presence
- 3) Things we need to remember (think, feel, do)**
- a) After all the warnings, the time has come for a decision.
  - b) The promise of judgment is conditioned on man’s failure to meet God’s standards. God’s patience may be long, but it is not inexhaustible.
  - c) No matter how great your failure, God’s grace is greater.