

**Joel Describes Tomorrow
Details About Armageddon and Other Things as Well
Joel 2:1 – 14**

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The theme of Joel is the Day of the Lord. The setting for us to learn from, a supernatural invasion of locusts, totally unprecedented for Judah.

As we begin chapter 2, we go to the future Day of the Lord. “The Day of the LORD unfolding upon Israel (2:1 and 2:11) holds within its compass the possibility of a Day of the Lord in compassionate forgiveness and restoration.” (Seitz 2016, 147-148)

Joel is taking us to the future. He is going to take us to a day that is yet to come. He is taking us to a day that Zephaniah tells us about. Yet he is still talking about locusts, and events soon to come, and things we still anticipate today.

For Joel, looking at the future though, he goes to the Day of the Lord and to Armageddon.

He is doing what?

Joel, what are you doing? In chapter 1 you tell us about the devastation from the locusts, drought and fire. Encourage us already.

Hidden between the lines is the answer.

Nope, unless you repent, here is what is coming. Let me draw you a picture of future events since this is from the Lord and He knows how bull headed you really are.

What does Joel see? He sees the Day of the Lord which is found elsewhere in the scriptures as well.

The picture we find is sobering.

The planet is in ruins. The ecology of earth has been destroyed by the actions of fallen man.

Judgements have not convinced those who are earth dwellers to turn to the Lord. The sky is dark and has been since the fifth bowl judgement was poured out (Revelation 16:10). The capital of the Beast has been destroyed in a nuclear holocaust (Revelation 18:9 & 10). All earthly military forces are now focused on one area, and it is rapidly becoming a wasteland, potentially radioactive as well. The seventh bowl is poured out and destruction becomes worldwide. God's people, the Jews, pray, and the King with His forces comes.

The forces of the Beast are busy engaging Israel in a final battle, one we call Armageddon. "It is the Assyrian of the last days, the dread northern power, who will overrun the land of Palestine just prior to the glorious appearing of the Sun of Righteousness." (Ironsides 1909, 122)

Zephaniah 1:14–18

"The LORD's great day of judgment is almost here; it is approaching very rapidly! There will be a bitter sound on the LORD's day of judgment; at that time warriors will cry out in battle. That day will be a day of God's anger, a day of distress and hardship, a day of devastation and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and dark skies, a day of trumpet blasts and battle cries. Judgment will fall on the fortified cities and the high corner towers. I will bring distress on the people and they will stumble like blind men, for they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dirt; their flesh will be scattered like manure. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's angry judgment. The whole earth will be consumed by his fiery wrath. Indeed, he will bring terrifying destruction on all who live on the earth." (NET 2nd ed.)

Joel takes us to the end of the Great Tribulation, to Jerusalem, or what is left of it, as the Beast and his forces surround the city to destroy all the Jews left in the land. Half of the city has already been taken and things look dark. As one, those Jews left alive, pray and ask for Messiah to save them.

Zechariah 13:9

"Then I will bring the remaining third into the fire; I will refine them like silver is refined and will test them like gold is tested. They will call on my name and I will answer; I will say, 'These are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.' "" (NET 2nd ed.)

The Lord responds to that prayer. He first shows up for those who have been in hiding from the Beast since heading for the hills 3 ½ years earlier. For the last 3 ½ years they have been miraculously sustained by the Lord. The Beast is concentrating forces where they are in hiding to the south and east of the Dead Sea.

Matthew 24:15–22

"So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." (NRSV)

As the Lord and His armies move on Jerusalem, they are seen off in the distance by those defending the city and deeply involved in the final battle. They saw the arrival in the sky. They have seen the vast invasion force arriving from the sky. They have heard some reports on the radio of an engagement taking place to the southeast and witnessed things off in the distance, but now the noise of the battle draws closer.

Isaiah 63:1–6

“Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.” (ESV)

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God in the flesh has arrived as the avenger of blood, just as promised and with Him, all the armies of heaven. His arrival has been visible to all as He has come in the clouds clearly visible to the entire planet, and with an invasion force. He intends to take over.

Revelation 19:11–16

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” (ESV)

This vision of the King coming for them with glory reinvigorates those Jews engaged in battle against the Beast. As He lands to the east on the Mount of Olives, things begin to pick up.

Zechariah 14:1–4

“A day of the LORD is about to come when your possessions will be divided as plunder in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to wage war; the city will be taken, its houses plundered, and the women raped. Then half of the city will go into exile, but the remainder of the people will not be taken away. Then the LORD will go to battle and fight against those nations, just as he fought battles in ancient days. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives that lies to the east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, leaving a great valley. Half the mountain will move northward and the other half southward.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The forces of the Beast have all turned their attention to the invasion from the sky. It will not end well for them.

The forces in Judah will engage the Beast forces as the forces of Messiah arrive and Messiah takes action.

Zechariah 14:12–15

“And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected,

gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.” (ESV)

None of that is detail that was available to Judah or Joel in 835 BC. But as we look back and forward, we can begin to visualize what this battle will begin to look like. This will be taking place not many years from now on a devastated planet destroyed by the hubris of man.

Joel is going to provide additional insight to this battle which he has already introduced as a type with the locust invasion and called the Day of the Lord.

He begins with actions taking place in Jerusalem.

Joel 2:1–2

“Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Indeed, it is near, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.” (NASB 2020)

There is yet another judgment that is coming. Joel first discussed the picture of the locust invasion, but here he switches to another judgement, an actual future invasion from an unidentified military force from the north (Joel 2:20).

Joel begins with three imperative statements. The first is for the Priests to sound the alarm. “The horn blast was thus the ancient equivalent of the modern air raid siren blaring its alert. Here God himself acts as watchman for his people, and through the prophet orders the alarm to be sounded so that due precautions may be taken in Jerusalem.” (Allen 1976, 67)

Doing this achieves the second imperative which is to sound the alarm. The entire planet has been put on notice. Joel is blending together the invasion of the locusts, a future invasion of a military power, and the Day of the Lord. “You recall that was the practice of the prophets to speak into a local situation and then move out into the future Day of the Lord—which includes the Tribulation Period and the Millennium.” (McGee 1997, 666)

Because of this practice of the prophets to blend in current, near future and far future into the prophecies, there are different views that come up. There are those who say Joel is still talking about the locusts and only the locusts and this is a call to repentance.

Others say this is a pointing to the future problems with Assyria, Babylon and Rome.

Then there are those who say this points to the future at the end of the Tribulation.

Then there are those of us who simply say, yes, all three. I am in that last camp.

All of these armies have the Lord as the one leading them. They are referred to as His army (Joel 2:11) yet He will judge this same army in the person of Jesus Christ as the avenger of blood.

The third imperative is for those who are in Jerusalem who have been alerted to and warned of the impending invasion, to tremble for what this truly means is now taking place, the Day of the Lord.

To recap, we see Joel warning about the impending Day of the Lord, judgement on Judah and on those who would attack Judah. Notice is given and the alarm raised for an impending attack and because of the nature of this, it should result in trembling and fear.

For us as believers, we are conflicted. If we love the Lord and are following Him, then we want to see the Day of the Lord take place. We want Him to show up in power because we abide in Him. We want His coming to take place sooner rather than later, in fact right now would be good. Maranatha. Come quickly Lord Jesus.

For those who have allowed their relationship with Jesus to slip due to unconfessed sin, or worse, are not believers at all, then the Day of the Lord is not something to be looking forward to. Their plans do not include His plans for the planet. If He shows up in power, it might not be what an earth dweller, in their flesh, wants. For Judah, who was not right with the Lord, the Day of the Lord would meet the description of verse 2. This would be the same for the earth dwellers.

Joel 2:2

“A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.” (NASB 2020)

When we think about the Day of the Lord, is it something we are anticipating, or dreading. Our concept of it says a lot of where our heart is.

The Day of the LORD refers to the terrifying judgment of God that will fall upon all the wicked of the universe—both nations and individuals. But we must always remember that the Day of the LORD also refers to the great deliverance of God’s people from their enemies and from all the corruption of this world. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 2008, 22)

The picture in chapter 1 was an invasion of locusts, but here at the end of verse 2, we also learn it is a people who are coming.

“The day is then described as the invasion of a people, the like of whom had never been seen by Israel or the land. It was, in fact, the army of Jehovah. His power was with it as His rod. The voice of Jehovah was heard before it; the day of Jehovah announced itself as there. (Chap. 2:11.) We find an instance here of that which is usual in prophetic teaching—some event which should act on the conscience of the people, taken up by the Spirit of prophecy, no doubt, to awaken their conscience at the very time of the event, but far more with the purpose of using it as a picture of some event in the last days of much greater moment.

The judgment of God, already deserved by the people, and suspended by His long-suffering over their heads, awaits the hour in which this long-suffering will have no more effect, will become thenceforward useless, and in which the counsels of His wisdom shall have arrived at their development. The Spirit of God warns the people of this judgment: they should have given heed to it at that very time; but He describes for future days the instruments of God’s vengeance, when He shall actually execute the judgment.” (Darby 2008, 530)

Judah is warned of a day to come which will see not locusts, but a vast army attack from the north. As we consider this, and the history we know of the land, it is easy to begin to see this as a picture of what would happen when the Assyrian army attacks and God delivers.

The enemy forces, even at the end of the age, are still answerable to God. He will use them for judgement, they are accountable to Him, and He will stop them before they go too far.

When Jesus Christ returns at the height of the battle of Armageddon, He comes to stop the genocide, from the army going too far.

Here in verse 2 we are told “...there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.” (Joel 2:2b, NASB 2020). This language makes it hard to think of locusts and moves us to the future and an invasion force yet to come.

Add to this what we see in verse 20 that this army comes from the north, not the south like locusts do, and you realize that you are being taken to the end of the age.

Joel provides a description of what happens as this invasion force moves across the land. Similar to locusts, locust like in behavior, but not exactly locusts.

In fact, the description sounds similar to modern state of the art combat operations involving conventional and unconventional weapon systems; to include swarming drones, autonomous AI enabled robots, cybernetically and genetically enhanced humans, directed energy weapon systems and tactical nuclear weapons. And written in 835 BC.

Joel 2:3–5

“A fire consumes before them, And behind them a flame devours. The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run. With a noise as of chariots They leap about on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people drawn up for battle.” (NASB 2020)

The Assyrian (721) and Babylonian (605–586) sieges would wreak awesome ruin. But in the present case God’s blessing, which follows the invasion, delivers Israel so that it is free from suffering reproach or shame (2:19, 27). This has not realistically happened in the past. Rather it suggests a time during the future tribulation period. (Rosscup 2008, 1320)

Warfare as done by the Assyrians, Babylonians or even the Roman did not leave destruction in front of them, but only behind them. The same with locusts. Behind them is the destruction. This army that is invading has fire consuming in front of them before they even arrive.

This is a look into the future.

A common tactic in 21st century warfare is the use of missiles, rockets, artillery, mortars and air power all integrated and operating in advance of troop movements. Shades of shock and awe which we saw on CNN at the beginning of Desert Storm in 1991.

Targets are first “softened up” in advance of troop movement. The emphasis is to compromise the command and control of enemy troops and enhance the performance of your own forces. Fire consuming before them could be the usage of conventional weaponry in advance of invasion, and it could also be the use of other types of unconventional weaponry as well.

Space based directed energy weapons, laser, microwave, particle beams or sound, could also be used in advance of ground troops. The description could also be descriptive of defensive weapons being used against these such as Israel has recently tested. “Israel’s new laser missile defense system has successfully intercepted mortars, rockets and anti-tank missiles in recent tests.” (Associated Press 2022)

All of this results in fire consuming the land prior to the enemy physically arriving on the scene.

Joel 2:3

“A fire consumes before them, And behind them a flame devours. The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them.” (NASB 2020)

Genetically or cybernetically enhanced soldiers, or ones wearing modern battle suits could be operating in a radioactive battlefield environment. Fire before speaks to the initial assault, fire behind speaks to what is left behind as a scorched earth strategy is being used. A desolate wilderness could also speak of a nuclear battlefield with tactical weapons being used. The intent is not leaving anything for the enemy to use.

Joel 2:4–5

“Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run. With a noise as of chariots They leap about on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people drawn up for battle.” (NASB 2020)

Joel starts off talking about locusts and uses them as a point of departure. John also talks about locusts in Revelation. There they are not locusts but are a supernatural demon army. But the description is intended to draw off Joel’s imagery.

Revelation 9:3–11

“Locusts came down out of the smoke upon the earth, and they were given the same kind of power that scorpions have. They were told not to harm the grass or the trees or any other plant; they could harm only the people who did not have the mark of God’s seal on their foreheads. The locusts were not allowed to kill these people, but only to torture them for five months. The pain caused by the torture is like the pain caused by a scorpion’s sting. During those five months they will seek death, but will not find it; they will want to die, but death will flee from them. The locusts looked like horses ready for battle; on their heads they had what seemed to be crowns of gold, and their faces were like human faces. Their hair was like women’s hair, their teeth were like lions’ teeth. Their chests were covered with what looked like iron breastplates, and the sound made by their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots rushing into battle. They have tails and stings like those of a scorpion, and it is with their tails that they have the power to hurt people for five months. They have a king ruling over them, who is the angel in charge of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon; in Greek the name is Apollyon (meaning “The Destroyer”).” (GNB)

From John’s vantage point, as he sees something come out of the smoke, the sheer volume of creatures coming out of the smoke appear to John, to be just like locusts. So he reports they are locusts. The volume is overwhelming as they literally cover the earth and he reports that power is given to these creatures just as scorpions have power.

John must call them locusts—there were no other comparable creatures in his vocabulary—but they were not locusts in the entomological sense. They swarmed and darkened the sky like locusts, they had emerged from the earth like locusts, and they left misery in their wake like locusts. (Morris 1983, 158)

These are not ordinary locusts, but as scorpions have the ability to terrorize and debilitate, so do these creatures.

They are not here to destroy vegetation, these demonically empowered/possessed creatures reflect the nature of the enemy, they hate and must be told not to kill.

These locusts are charged with hurting people, those without the seal of God, those who do not know Him. They will be the ones who will entertain these demonic hordes for five months.

Rather than repent and come to Christ, they prefer to try and kill themselves to eliminate the suffering and torture they are being subjected to, but the death rate will be 0 for the five months of the swarm. It had been given to these demons that they could torment men and they had been given an ability to impose excruciating scorpionlike stings for this purpose. But it was also given to them (that is, a commandment was given to them) that no man must be killed by such stings. (Morris 1983, 160)

John’s intention was for his reader to recall the locust plague in Exodus 10 and to also recall what it is Joel is talking about here in chapter 2. Joel says they are like horses, he is trying to describe what he is seeing using 9th century BC vocabulary.

Joel 2:5

“With a noise as of chariots They leap about on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people drawn up for battle.” (NASB 2020)

Leaping from mountain top to mountain top is not a picture of 9th century BC warfare, but it is a picture of 21st century warfare.

The picture being drawn is the use of modern battlefield air assets delivering mortar and artillery to hilltop emplacements to include the use of drones. The noise of chariots leaping about on the tops of mountains like the crackling of fire. Joel is doing his best to describe what it is he is seeing take place.

It is a frightening picture of an integrated modern AI assisted assault force moving across the battlefield leaving nothing behind them but destruction and laying fire down in front of them as they advance from hill to hill. This advancing army, most likely the forces of the beast, appear to be invincible.

This could also be a picture of widespread utilization of drones. Even the name used by the Navy is provocative. "The US Navy has tested Low-Cost Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Technology (LOCUST) capable of launching thirty autonomous drones preprogrammed to communicate with each other and "assault the adversary with a cloud of cheap and disposable drones and paralyze defenses by sheer quantity.'" (Sanders, Major, US Army 2017, Kindle Location 76)

They are using a tactic referred to as a swarm. Napoleon liked to use this tactic and did so at Ulm.

Novelty combined with speed, mass, and elusiveness are attributes enhanced by drone swarms, and much like Napoleon's Great Army at Ulm, provide operational shock and cognitive dissonance to opposing military systems and personnel. (Sanders, Major, US Army 2017, Kindle Location 161)

And we see evidence of that taking place as the army continues to advance. The enemy forces are everywhere all at once and totally coordinated. Joel tells us the impact.

Joel 2:6-9

"Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale. They run like warriors, They climb the wall like soldiers; And each of them marches in line, Nor do they lose their way. They do not crowd each other, Every warrior of them marches in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks. They storm the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief." (NASB 2020)

Shock and awe. Cognitive dissonance on steroids. How do you stop hundreds of thousands of robots operating on their own tied in cybernetically to ground troops?

Their relentlessness and fearlessness renders useless any attempt to withstand them, and fortresses offer no protection because of their ability to scale walls and climb through windows with ease. (Fuhr and Yates 2016, 101-102)

This military force is highly disciplined, thinking and operating as if they are of one mind. That is only possible with the utilization of implants allowing for the direction of the troops to be computer guided. It implies an integrated force of genetically or cybernetically enhanced troops with fully autonomous AI led drones and robots.

This is not science fiction but is in development today.

Fighting together, a drone swarm could be far more effective than the same number of drones fighting individually. No one yet knows what the best tactics will be for swarm combat, but experiments such as these are working to tease them out. New tactics might even be evolved by the machines themselves through machine learning or evolutionary approaches. (Scharre 2018, 21)

According to many of the world's most recognized scientists, artificial intelligence used to produce Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems will lead to a third military revolution in warfare following gunpowder and

nuclear arms. The military application of artificial intelligence is unmistakable: It will result in autonomous weapons becoming the Kalashnikovs of tomorrow. (Brock II, Major, US Army 2017, Kindle Location 388)

Governments around the world are working overtime to enable the armament and weapon systems being described by Joel over 2800 years ago. An army operating as if they have a single mind. Complete command and control of the battlefield. Drone swarm weaponry.

By the way, if we operate day to day filled with the Holy Spirit, then we are part of an existing global military force that already operates this way with one mind today. The Holy Spirit who leads and guides us as we go about serving the Lord.

Philippians 1:27

“Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.” (NLT)

1 Corinthians 6:17

“But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.” (NLT)

Ephesians 6:11–13

“Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.” (NLT)

Satan will counterfeit this, and this is part of that happening as described by Joel.

Joel 2:10–11

“Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon become dark, And the stars lose their brightness. The LORD utters His voice before His army; His camp is indeed very great, For mighty is one who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?” (NASB 2020)

This army being described is one that has fire power and technology at their command that is truly awe inspiring. The earthquakes and the heavens tremble are again signs of their military action as they move to a target. The bombardment causes the earth to tremble.

The potential utilization of space-based assets in this final engagement may also create the impression that the heavens are trembling as well. Or this may also be a statement of the reality taking place on earth during the time of the Great Tribulation as the final bowl judgements outlined in Revelation 16 are poured out on a rebellious world.

Revelation 16:17–21

“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.” (NKJV)

The Beast, empowered personally by Satan, the false prophet, the armies of the Beast and all of the demons and fallen angels now confined to the planet, believe they are operating with total impunity, this is their move to victory. But God has a word for them.

Joel 2:11

“The LORD utters His voice before His army; His camp is indeed very great, For mighty is one who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?” (NASB 2020)

Just as the locusts were used by God to humble and discipline His people, just as the same took place with the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, so will be the case with the assault in the last days by the forces of the beast. At the end of the day, the Lord has played the army of the beast and used them for His purposes.

The goal has always been to have His people repent and return to Him. There is an urgency though to this call, this is a limited time offer.

Contrary to what Satan would have us to believe, God is not a giant kill joy in the sky waiting to zap us whenever we get out of line. No, He loves us and has moved heaven and earth to provide the means for us to be with Him for all eternity. Jesus Christ died on the cross for each of us and then rose from the dead confirming His power and deity and when we see yes to Him, we then immediately have the Holy Spirit come inside never to leave.

Joel 2:12–14

““Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping, and mourning; And tear your heart and not merely your garments.” Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in mercy And relenting of catastrophe. Who knows, He might turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him, Resulting in a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God.” (NASB 2020)

“Now” is the time to repent, not tomorrow. God is able to act on our behalf as soon as we turn to Him.

This return is personal in nature and involves

Sincerity, a brokenness before God. “This involves rending the heart in real brokenness to submit to God. This is so different from a mere external show as in tearing a garment. Repentance becomes evident in a life yielded to godly values (Isa. 58:6–10; Hosea 10:12).” (Rosscup 2008, 1320)

For Judah, this would also include fasting, weeping and mourning. “He is not looking for a parade of emotions, which can be all surface put-on. He seeks people gripped in every facet of their beings to render allegiance to Him and prize what He can do. Such mourning can be a genuine gesture of concern bent on honoring God’s priorities, and being broken over sin seen as a hindrance and shame where His glory belongs.” (Rosscup 2008, 1321)

Praise the Lord, for us as believers, when we recognize our need to humble ourselves and repent of sin in our life, He does not ask us to show emotions, not everyone does that, but He does ask us to confess.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (ESV)

Then we are back in fellowship, and He is once again able to produce fruit in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22–24

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (ESV)

Joel points out that the Lord makes this an individual thing for each of us. I cannot do this for you, and you cannot do this for me.

Joel 2:13

“And tear **your heart** and not merely your garments.” Now **return to the LORD your God**, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in mercy And relenting of catastrophe.” (NASB 2020)

David realized this truth of individual accountability as he repented from the sordid affair involving Bathsheba, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.” (Psalm 51:4, NKJV)

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

How do we do that?

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

Let’s recap what we just learned.

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

Repentance is what God required of Judah, they did this and will do this in the future. He stands ready to save and ready to make all things new. It is our choice.

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