

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE BOOK OF

THE PROPHET JOEL

From the desolations about to come upon the land of Judah, by the ravages of locusts and other insects, the prophet Joel exhorts the Jews to repentance, fasting, and prayer. He notices the blessings of the gospel, with the final glorious state of the church.

CHAPTER 1

*A plague of locusts. (1-7) All sorts of people are called to lament it. (8-13) They are to look to God. (14-20)*

~~2008~~ **Joel 1:1**

**Vs. 1-7:** The most aged could not remember such calamities as were about to take place. Armies of insects were coming upon the land to eat the fruits of it. It is expressed so as to apply also to the destruction of the country by a foreign enemy, and seems to refer to the devastations of the Chaldeans. God is Lord of hosts, has every creature at his command, and, when he pleases, can humble and mortify a proud, rebellious people, by the weakest and most contemptible creatures. It is just with God to take away the comforts which are abused to luxury and excess; and the more men place their happiness in the gratifications of sense, the more severe temporal afflictions are upon them. The more earthly delights we make needful to satisfy us, the more we expose ourselves to trouble.

~~2008~~ **Joel 1:8**

**Vs. 8-13:** All who labor only for the meat that perishes, will, sooner or later, be ashamed of their labor. Those that place their happiness in the delights of sense, when deprived of them, or disturbed in the enjoyment,

lose their joy; whereas spiritual joy then flourishes more than ever. See what perishing, uncertain things our creature-comforts are. See how we need to live in continual dependence upon God and his providence. See what ruinous work sin makes. As far as poverty occasions the decay of piety, and starves the cause of religion among a people, it is a very sore judgment. But how blessed are the awakening judgments of God, in rousing his people and calling home the heart to Christ, and his salvation!

**Joel 1:14**

**Vs. 14-20:** The sorrow of the people is turned into repentance and humiliation before God. With all the marks of sorrow and shame, sin must be confessed and bewailed. A day is to be appointed for this purpose; a day in which people must be kept from their common employments, that they may more closely attend God's services; and there is to be abstaining from meat and drink. Every one had added to the national guilt, all shared in the national calamity, therefore every one must join in repentance. When joy and gladness are cut off from God's house, when serious godliness decays, and love waxes cold, then it is time to cry unto the Lord. The prophet describes how grievous the calamity. See even the inferior creatures suffering for our transgression. And what better are they than beasts, who never cry to God but for corn and wine, and complain of the want of the delights of sense? Yet their crying to God in those cases, shames the stupidity of those who cry not to God in any case. Whatever may become of the nations and churches that persist in ungodliness, believers will find the comfort of acceptance with God, when the wicked shall be burned up with his indignation.

## CHAPTER 2

*God's judgments. (1-14) Exhortations to fasting and prayer; blessings promised. (15-27) A promise of the Holy Spirit, and of future mercies. (28-32)*

### Joel 2:1

**Vs. 1-14:** The priests were to alarm the people with the near approach of the Divine judgments. It is the work of ministers to warn of the fatal consequences of sin, and to reveal the wrath from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The striking description which follows, shows what would attend the devastations of locusts, but may also describe the effects from the ravaging of the land by the Chaldeans. If the alarm of temporal judgments is given to offending nations, how much more should sinners be warned to seek deliverance from the wrath to come! Our business therefore on earth must especially be, to secure an interest in our Lord Jesus Christ; and we should seek to be weaned from objects which will soon be torn from all who now make idols of them. There must be outward expressions of sorrow and shame, fasting, weeping, and mourning; tears for trouble must be turned into tears for the sin that caused it. But rending the garments would be vain, except their hearts were rent by abasement and self-abhorrence; by sorrow for their sins, and separation from them. There is no question but that if we truly repent of our sins, God will forgive them; but whether he will remove affliction is not promised, yet the probability of it should encourage us to repent.

### Joel 2:15

**Vs. 15-27:** The priests and rulers are to appoint a solemn fast. The sinner's supplication is, Spare us, good Lord. God is ready to succor his people; and he waits to be gracious. They prayed that God would spare them, and he answered them. His promises are real answers to the prayers of faith; with him saying and doing are not two things. Some understand these promises figuratively, as pointing to gospel grace, and as fulfilled in the abundant comforts treasured up for believers in the covenant of grace.

**Joel 2:28**

**Vs. 28-32:** The promise began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and it was continued in the converting grace and miraculous gifts conferred on both Jews and Gentiles. The judgments of God upon a sinful world, only go before the judgment of the world in the last day. Calling on God supposes knowledge of him, faith in him, desire toward him, dependence on him, and, as evidence of the sincerity of all this, conscientious obedience to him. Those only shall be delivered in the great day, who are now effectually called from sin to God, from self to Christ, from things below to things above.

## CHAPTER 3

*God's judgments in the latter days. (1-8) The extent of these judgments. (9-17) The blessings the church shall enjoy. (18-21)*

### **Joel 3:1**

**Vs. 1-8:** The restoration of the Jews, and the final victory of true religion over all opposers, appear to be here foretold. The contempt and scorn with which the Jews have often been treated as a people, and the little value set upon them, are noticed. None ever hardened his heart against God or his church, and prospered long.

### **Joel 3:9**

**Vs. 9-17:** Here is a challenge to all the enemies of God's people. There is no escaping God's judgments; hardened sinners, in that day of wrath, shall be cut off from all comfort and joy. Most of the prophets foretell the same final victory of the church of God over all that oppose it. To the wicked it will be a terrible day, but to the righteous it will be a joyful day. What cause have those who possess an interest in Christ, to glory in their strength and their Redeemer! The acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favor to some, will be a day of remarkable vengeance to others: let every one that is out of Christ awake, and flee from the wrath to come.

### **Joel 3:18**

**Vs. 18-21:** There shall be abundant Divine influences, and the gospel will spread speedily into the remotest corners of the earth. These events are predicted under significant emblems; there is a day coming, when every thing amiss shall be amended. The fountain of this plenty is in the house of God, whence the streams take rise. Christ is this Fountain; his sufferings, merit, and grace, cleanse, refresh, and make fruitful. Gospel grace, flowing from Christ, shall reach to the Gentile world, to the most remote regions, and make them abound in fruits of righteousness; and from the house of the Lord above, from his heavenly temple, flows all the good we daily taste, and hope to enjoy eternally.