

THE BOOK OF

JOEL

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

INTRODUCTION

JOEL (meaning “one to whom Jehovah is God,” that is, worshipper of Jehovah) seems to have belonged to Judah, as no reference occurs to Israel; whereas he speaks of Jerusalem, the temple, the priests, and the ceremonies, as if he were intimately familiar with them (compare ²⁰¹⁴ Joel 1:14 2:1,15,32 3:1,2,6,16,17,20,21). His predictions were probably delivered in the early days of Joash 870-865 B.C.; for no reference is made in them to the Babylonian, Assyrian, or even the Syrian invasion; and the only enemies mentioned are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Edomites, and Egyptians (²⁰¹⁴ Joel 3:4,19). Had he lived after Joash, he would doubtless have mentioned the Syrians among the enemies whom he enumerates since they took Jerusalem and carried off immense spoil to Damascus (¹⁸⁰² 2 Chronicles 24:23,24). No idolatry is mentioned; and the temple services, the priesthood, and other institutions of the theocracy, are represented as flourishing. This all answers to the state of things under the high priesthood of Jehoiada, through whom Joash had been placed on the throne and who lived in the early years of Joash (²¹¹⁷ 2 Kings 11:17,18 12:2-16 2 Chronicles 24.4-14). He was the son of Pethuel.

The first chapter describes the desolation caused by an inroad of locusts — one of the instruments of divine judgment mentioned by Moses (¹⁸³⁸ Deuteronomy 28:38,39) and by Solomon (¹⁰⁸⁷ 1 Kings 8:37). The second chapter (²⁰¹¹ Joel 2:1-11): the appearance of them, under images of a hostile army suggesting that the locusts were symbols and forerunners of a more terrible scourge, namely, foreign enemies who would consume all before them. (The absence of mention of *personal* injury to the inhabitants is not a just objection to the figurative interpretation; for the figure is consistent throughout in attributing to the locusts only injury to *vegetation*, thereby injuring indirectly man and beast). ²⁰¹² Joel 2:12-17: exhortation to repentance, the result of which will be: God will deliver His people, the former and latter rains shall return to fertilize their desolated lands, and

these shall be the pledge of the spiritual outpouring of grace beginning with Judah, and thence extending to “all flesh.” ^{Joel 2:18-3:21} Joel 2:18-3:21: God’s judgments on Judah’s enemies, whereas Judah shall be established for ever.

Joel’s style is pre-eminently pure. It is characterized by smoothness and fluency in the rhythms, roundness in the sentences, and regularity in the parallelisms. With the strength of Micah it combines the tenderness of Jeremiah, the vividness of Nahum, and the sublimity of Isaiah. As a specimen of his style take the second chapter wherein the terrible aspect of the locusts, their rapidity, irresistible progress, noisy din, and instinct-taught power of marshalling their forces for their career of devastation, are painted with graphic reality.

CHAPTER 1

JOEL 1:1-20.

THE DESOLATE ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY THROUGH THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS; THE PEOPLE ADMONISHED TO OFFER SOLEMN PRAYERS IN THE TEMPLE; FOR THIS CALAMITY IS THE EARNEST OF A STILL HEAVIER ONE.

1. *Joel* — meaning, “Jehovah is God.”

son of Pethuel — to distinguish Joel the prophet from others of the name. Persons of eminence also were noted by adding the father’s name.

2, 3. A spirited introduction calling attention.

old men — the best judges in question concerning the past (⁶⁵¹⁷Deuteronomy 32:7 ⁸³¹⁷Job 32:7).

Hath this been, etc. — that is, Hath any *so grievous* a calamity *as this* ever been before? No such plague of locusts had been since the ones *in Egypt*. ²¹¹⁴Exodus 10:14 is not at variance with this verse, which refers to *Judea*, in which Joel says there had been no such devastation before.

3. *Tell ye your children* — in order that they may be admonished by the severity of the punishment to fear God (³⁷⁰⁶Psalm 78:6-8; compare ²¹³⁸Exodus 13:8 ⁶¹⁰⁷Joshua 4:7).

4. This verse states the subject on which he afterwards expands. Four species or stages of locusts, rather than four different insects, are meant (compare ⁸¹¹²Leviticus 11:22). Literally,

(1) the *gnawing* locust;

(2) the *swarming* locust;

(3) the *licking* locust;

(4) the *consuming* locust; forming a climax to the most destructive kind.

The last is often three inches long, and the two antennae, each an inch long. The two hinder of its six feet are larger than the rest, adapting it for leaping.

The first “kind” is that of the locust, having just emerged from the egg in spring, and without wings. The second is when at the end of spring, still in their first skin, the locusts put forth little ones without legs or wings. The third, when after their third casting of the old skin, they get small wings, which enable them to leap the better, but not to fly. Being unable to go away till their wings are matured, they devour all before them, grass, shrubs, and bark of trees: translated “rough caterpillars” (³⁶²⁷Jeremiah 51:27). The fourth kind, the matured winged locusts (see on Na 3:16). In ²⁹²⁵Joel 2:25 they are enumerated in the reverse order, where the restoration of the devastations caused by them is promised. The Hebrews make the first species refer to Assyria and Babylon; the second species, to Medo-Persia; the third, to Greco-Macedonia and Antiochus Epiphanes; the fourth, to the Romans. Though the primary reference be to literal locusts, the Holy Spirit doubtless had in view the successive empires which assailed Judea, each worse than its predecessor, Rome being the climax.

5. *Awake* — out of your ordinary state of drunken stupor, to realize the cutting off from you of your favorite drink. Even the drunkards (from a *Hebrew* root, “any strong drink”) shall be forced to “howl,” though usually laughing in the midst of the greatest national calamities, so palpably and universally shall the calamity affect all.

wine ... new wine — “New” or “fresh wine,” in *Hebrew*, is the unfermented, and therefore unintoxicating, *sweet juice* extracted by pressure from grapes or other fruit, as *pomegranates* (So 8:2). “Wine” is the produce of the grape alone, and is intoxicating (see on ²⁹¹⁰Joel 1:10).

6. *nation* — applied to the locusts, rather than “people” (²⁹¹⁵Proverbs 30:25,26), to mark not only their *numbers*, but also their *savage hostility*; and also to prepare the mind of the hearer for the transition to the figurative locusts in the second chapter, namely, the “nation” or *Gentile* foe coming against Judea (compare ²⁹¹²Joel 2:2).

my land — that is, Jehovah’s; which never would have been so devastated were *I* not pleased to inflict punishment (²⁹¹⁸Joel 2:18 ²⁹⁴⁵Isaiah 14:25 ²⁹¹⁸Jeremiah 16:18 ²⁹¹⁵Ezekiel 36:5 38:16).

strong — as irresistibly sweeping away before its compact body the fruits of man’s industry.

without number — so ²⁹⁰⁵Judges 6:5 7:12, “like grasshoppers (or “locusts”) for multitude” (²⁹²³Jeremiah 46:23 Na 3:15).

teeth ... lion — that is, the locusts are as destructive as a lion; there is no vegetation that can resist their bite (compare ⁽⁻⁶¹⁹⁸⁾Revelation 9:8). PLINY says “they gnaw even the doors of houses.”

7. barked — BOCHART, with the *Septuagint* and *Syriac*, translates, from an *Arabic* root, “hath broken,” namely, the topmost shoots, which locusts most feed on. CALVIN supports *English Version*.

my vine ... my fig tree — being, in “My land,” that is, Jehovah’s (⁽⁻²⁰⁰⁶⁾Joel 1:6). As to the vine-abounding nature of ancient Palestine, see ⁽⁻⁰⁴³²⁸⁾Numbers 13:23,24.

cast it away — down to the ground.

branches ... white — both from the bark being stripped off (⁽⁻⁰³⁸⁷⁾Genesis 30:37), and from the branches drying up through the trunk, both bark and wood being eaten up below by the locusts.

8. Lament — O “my land” (⁽⁻²⁰⁰⁶⁾Joel 1:6 ⁽⁻²³⁰⁴⁾Isaiah 24:4).

virgin ... for the husband — A virgin betrothed was regarded as married (⁽⁻⁶²²⁾Deuteronomy 22:23 ⁽⁻⁴⁰¹⁸⁾Matthew 1:19). The *Hebrew* for “husband” is “lord” or “possessor,” the husband being considered the master of the wife in the East.

of her youth — when the affections are strongest and when sorrow at bereavement is consequently keenest. Suggesting the thought of what Zion’s grief ought to be for her separation from Jehovah, the betrothed husband of her early days (⁽⁻²⁴¹²⁾Jeremiah 2:2 ⁽⁻²⁴⁰⁸⁾Ezekiel 16:8 ⁽⁻²⁴⁰⁷⁾Hosea 2:7; compare ⁽⁻²¹²⁷⁾Proverbs 2:17 ⁽⁻²⁴⁰⁸⁾Jeremiah 3:4).

9. The greatest sorrow to the mind of a religious Jew, and what ought to impress the whole nation with a sense of God’s displeasure, is the cessation of the usual temple-worship.

meat offering — *Hebrew*, *mincha*; “meat” not in the English sense “flesh,” but the unbloody offering made of flour, oil, and frankincense. As it and the drink offering or libation *poured out* accompanied every sacrificial *flesh* offering, the latter is included, though not specified, as being also “cut off,” owing to there being no food left for man or beast.

priests ... mourn — not for their own loss of sacrificial perquisites (⁽⁻⁰⁴⁸⁸⁾Numbers 18:8-15), but because they can no longer offer the appointed offerings to Jehovah, to whom they minister.

10. field ... land — differing in that “field” means the open, unenclosed country; “land,” the rich *red* soil (from a root “to be red”) fit for

cultivation. Thus, “a man of the field,” in *Hebrew*, is a “hunter”; a “man of the ground” or “land,” an “agriculturist” (⁴⁰²⁷Genesis 25:27). “Field” and “land” are here personified.

new wine — from a *Hebrew* root implying that it *takes possession* of the brain, so that a man is not master of himself. So the *Arabic* term is from a root “to hold captive.” It is already fermented, and so intoxicating, unlike the *sweet fresh wine*, in ²⁹⁰⁶Joel 1:5, called also “new wine,” though a different *Hebrew* word. It and “the oil” stand for the vine and the olive tree, from which the “wine” and “oil” are obtained (²⁹¹²Joel 1:12).

dried up — not “ashamed,” as *Margin*, as is proved by the parallelism to “languisheth,” that is, droopeth.

11. Be ... ashamed — that is, Ye shall have the *shame* of disappointment on account of the failure of “the wheat” and “barley ... harvest.”

howl ... vine dressers — The semicolon should follow, as it is the “husbandmen” who are to be “ashamed ... for the wheat.” The reason for the “vine dressers” being called to “howl” does not come till ²⁹¹²Joel 1:12, “The vine is dried up.”

12. pomegranate — a tree straight in the stem growing twenty feet high; the fruit is of the size of an orange, with blood-red colored pulp.

palm tree — The dates of Palestine were famous. The palm is the symbol of Judea on coins under the Roman emperor Vespasian. It often grows a hundred feet high.

apple tree — The *Hebrew* is generic, including the orange, lemon, and pear tree.

joy is withered away — such as is felt in the harvest and the vintage seasons (³⁹⁰⁷Psalms 4:7 ²⁹⁰⁸Isaiah 9:3).

13. Gird yourselves — namely, with sackcloth; as in ²³⁰¹Isaiah 32:11, the ellipsis is supplied (compare ²⁴⁰⁸Jeremiah 4:8).

lament, ye priests — as it is your duty to set the example to others; also as the guilt was greater, and a greater scandal was occasioned, by your sin to the cause of God.

come — the *Septuagint*, “enter” *the house of God* (compare ²⁹¹⁴Joel 1:14).

lie all night in sackcloth — so Ahab (⁴¹²⁷1 Kings 21:27).

ministers of my God — (⁴⁹¹³1 Corinthians 9:13). Joel claims authority for his doctrine; it is *in God’s name and by His mission* I speak to you.

14. Sanctify ... a fast — Appoint a solemn fast.

solemn assembly — literally, a “day of restraint” or cessation from work, so that all might give themselves to supplication (^{<2025>}Joel 2:15,16 ^{<2025>}1 Samuel 7:5,6 ^{<2025>}2 Chronicles 20:3-13).

elders — The contrast to “children” (^{<2026>}Joel 2:16) requires age to be intended, though probably elders in *office* are included. Being the people’s leaders in guilt, they ought to be their leaders also in repentance.

15. day of the Lord — (^{<2021>}Joel 2:1,11); that is, the day of His anger (^{<2319>}Isaiah 13:9 ^{<2015>}Obadiah 1:15 ^{<2015>}Zephaniah 1:7,15). It will be a foretaste of the coming day of the Lord as Judge of all men, whence it receives the same name. Here the transition begins from the plague of locusts to the worse calamities (^{<2021>}Joel 2:1-11) from invading armies about to come on Judea, of which the locusts were the prelude.

16. Compare ^{<2009>}Joel 1:9, and latter part of ^{<2012>}Joel 1:12.

joy — which prevailed at the annual feasts, as also in the ordinary sacrificial offerings, of which the offerers ate before the Lord with gladness and thanksgivings (^{<2616>}Deuteronomy 12:6,7,12 16:11,14,15).

17. is rotten — “is dried up,” “vanishes away,” from an *Arabic* root [MAURER]. “Seed,” literally, “grains.” The drought causes the seeds to lose all their vitality and moisture.

garners — granaries; generally underground, and divided into separate receptacles for the different kinds of grain.

18. cattle ... perplexed — implying the restless gestures of the dumb beasts in their inability to find food. There is a tacit contrast between the sense of the brute creation and the insensibility of the people.

yea, the ... sheep — *Even the sheep*, which are content with less rich pasturage, cannot find food.

are made desolate — literally, “suffer *punishment*.” The innocent brute shares the “punishment” of guilty man (^{<2029>}Exodus 12:29 ^{<2029>}Jon 3:7 4:11).

19. to thee will I cry — Joel here interposes, As this people is insensible to shame or fear and will not hear, I will leave them and address myself directly to Thee (compare ^{<2315>}Isaiah 15:5 ^{<2029>}Jeremiah 23:9).

fire — that is, the parching heat.

pastures — “grassy places”; from a *Hebrew* root “to be pleasant.” Such places would be selected for “habitations” (*Margin*). But the *English Version* rendering is better than *Margin*.

20. *beasts ... cry ... unto thee* — that is, look up to heaven with heads lifted up, as if their only expectation was from God (^{<388B>}Job 38:41 ^{<39A21>}Psalm 104:21 145:15 147:9; compare ^{<39D11>}Psalm 42:1). They tacitly reprove the deadness of the Jews for not even now invoking God.

CHAPTER 2

JOEL 2:1-32.

THE COMING JUDGMENT A MOTIVE TO REPENTANCE. PROMISE OF BLESSINGS IN THE LAST DAYS.

A more terrific judgment than that of the locusts is foretold, under imagery drawn from that of the calamity then engrossing the afflicted nation. He therefore exhorts to repentance, assuring the Jews of Jehovah's pity if they would repent. Promise of the Holy Spirit in the last days under Messiah, and the deliverance of all believers in Him.

1. **Blow ... trumpet** — to sound an alarm of coming war (⁴⁰⁰⁰Numbers 10:1-10 ⁴⁰⁰⁸Hosea 5:8 ⁴⁰⁰⁶Amos 3:6); the office of the priests. ⁴⁰¹⁵Joel 1:15 is an anticipation of the fuller prophecy in this chapter.

2. **darkness ... gloominess ... clouds ... thick darkness** — accumulation of synonyms, to intensify the picture of *calamity* (⁴⁰²²Isaiah 8:22). Appropriate here, as the swarms of locusts intercepting the sunlight suggested *darkness* as a fit image of the coming visitation.

as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people — Substitute a comma for a colon after mountains: As the morning light spreads itself over the mountains, so a people *numerous* [MAURER] and strong shall spread themselves. The *suddenness* of the rising of the morning light, which gilds the mountain tops first, is less probably thought by others to be the point of comparison to the sudden inroad of the foe. MAURER refers it to the *yellow splendor* which arises from the reflection of the sunlight on the wings of the immense hosts of locusts as they approach. This is likely; understanding, however, that the locusts are only the symbols of human foes. The immense Assyrian host of invaders under Sennacherib (compare ⁴³⁷⁶Isaiah 37:36) destroyed by God (⁴⁰²⁸Joel 2:18,20,21), may be the primary objects of the prophecy; but ultimately the last antichristian confederacy, destroyed by special divine interposition, is meant (see on ⁴⁰⁰²Joel 3:2).

there hath not been ever the like — (Compare ⁴⁰⁰²Joel 1:2 ⁴²⁰⁴Exodus 10:14).

3. **before ... behind** — that is, *on every side* (⁴³⁹⁰1 Chronicles 19:10).

fire ... flame — destruction ... desolation (²³⁰⁷Isaiah 10:17).

as ... Eden ... wilderness — conversely (²⁵¹⁸Isaiah 51:3 ²⁶⁶⁸Ezekiel 36:35).

4. appearance ... of horses — (⁶⁹⁰⁷Revelation 9:7). Not literal, but figurative locusts. The fifth trumpet, or first woe, in the parallel passage (⁶⁹⁰⁷Revelation 9:1-11), cannot be literal: for in ⁶⁹⁰⁷Revelation 9:11 it is said, “they had a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit” — in the Hebrew, *Abaddon* (“destroyer”), but in the Greek, *Apollyon* — and (⁶⁹⁰⁷Revelation 9:7) “on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.” Compare ²⁹¹¹Joel 2:11, “the day of the Lord ... great and very terrible”; implying their ultimate reference to be connected with Messiah’s second coming in judgment. The locust’s head is so like that of a horse that the Italians call it *cavalette*. Compare ¹⁸³⁰Job 39:20, “the horse ... as the grasshopper,” or *locust*.

run — The locust *bounds*, not unlike the horse’s gallop, raising and letting down together the two front feet.

5. Like the noise of chariots — referring to the loud sound caused by their wings in motion, or else the movement of their hind legs.

on the tops of mountains — MAURER connects this with “they,” that is, the locusts, which first occupy the higher places, and thence descend to the lower places. It may refer (as in *English Version*) to “chariots,” which make most noise in crossing over rugged heights.

6. much pained — namely, with terror. The Arab proverb is, “More terrible than the locusts.”

faces shall gather blackness — (²³³⁸Isaiah 13:8 ²⁸¹⁶Jeremiah 30:6 Na 2:10). MAURER translates, “withdraw their brightness,” that is, wax pale, lose color (compare ²⁹¹⁰Joel 2:10 ²⁹¹⁵Joel 3:15).

7-9. Depicting the regular military order of their advance, “One locust not turning a nail’s breadth out of his own place in the march” [JEROME]. Compare ¹⁸¹²Proverbs 30:27, “The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them *by bands*.”

8. Neither shall one thrust another — that is, press upon so as to thrust his next neighbor out of his place, as usually occurs in a large multitude.

when they fall upon the sword — that is, among *missiles*.

not be wounded — because they are protected by defensive armor [GROTIUS]. MAURER translates, “Their (the locusts’) ranks are *not broken* when they rush among missiles” (compare ²⁷¹²Daniel 11:22).

9. *run to and fro in the city* — greedily seeking what they can devour.

the wall — surrounding each house in Eastern buildings.

enter in at the windows — though barred.

like a thief — (^{<300>}John 10:1; compare ^{<312>}Jeremiah 9:21).

10. *earth ... quake before them* — that is, the inhabitants of the earth quake with fear of them.

heavens ... tremble — that is, the powers of heaven (^{<429>}Matthew 24:29); its illumining powers are disturbed by the locusts which intercept the sunlight with their dense flying swarms. These, however, are but the images of revolutions of states caused by such foes as were to invade Judea.

11. *Lord ... his army* — So among Mohammedans, “Lord of the locusts” is a title of God.

his voice — His word of command to the locusts, and to the antitypical human foes of Judea, as “His army.”

strong that executeth his word — (^{<638>}Revelation 18:8).

12. With such judgments impending over the Jews, Jehovah Himself urges them to repentance.

also now — *Even now*, what none could have hoped or believed possible, God still invites you to the hope of salvation.

fasting ... weeping ... mourning — Their sin being most heinous needs extraordinary humiliation. The outward marks of repentance are to signify the depth of their sorrow for sin.

13. Let there be the inward sorrow of heart, and not the mere outward manifestation of it by “rending the garment” (^{<606>}Joshua 7:6).

the evil — the calamity which He had threatened against the impenitent.

14. *leave ... a meat offering and a drink offering* — that is, give plentiful harvests, out of the first-fruits of which we may offer the meat and drink offering, now “cut off” through the famine (^{<309>}Joel 1:9,13,16). “Leave behind Him”: as God in visiting His people now has left behind Him a curse, so He will, on returning to visit them, leave behind Him a blessing.

15. *Blow the trumpet* — to convene the people (^{<403>}Numbers 10:3). Compare ^{<314>}Joel 1:14. The nation was guilty, and therefore there must be a

national humiliation. Compare Hezekiah's proceedings before Sennacherib's invasion (^{<480>}2 Chronicles 30:1-27).

16. sanctify the congregation — namely, by expiatory rites and purification with water [CALVIN], (^{<290>}Exodus 19:10,22). MAURER translates, "appoint a solemn assembly," which would be a tautological repetition of ^{<305>}Joel 2:15.

elders ... children — No age was to be excepted (^{<403>}2 Chronicles 20:13).

bridegroom — ordinarily exempted from public duties (^{<634>}Deuteronomy 24:5; compare ^{<405>}1 Corinthians 7:5,29).

closet — or, nuptial bed, from a *Hebrew* root "to cover," referring to the canopy over it.

17. between the porch and ... altar — the porch of Solomon's temple on the east (^{<1063>}1 Kings 6:3); the altar of burnt offerings in the court of the priests, before the porch (^{<482>}2 Chronicles 8:12; compare ^{<386>}Ezekiel 8:16 ^{<423>}Matthew 23:35). The suppliants thus were to stand with their backs to the altar on which they had nothing to offer, their faces towards the place of the Shekinah presence.

heathen should rule over them — This shows that not locusts, but human foes, are intended. The *Margin* translation, "use a byword against them," is not supported by the *Hebrew*.

wherefore should they say ... Where is their God? — that is, do not for thine own honor's sake, let the heathen sneer at the God of Israel, as unable to save His people (^{<3790>}Psalms 79:10 115:2).

18. Then — when God sees His people penitent.

be jealous for his land — as a husband *jealous* of any dishonor done to the wife whom he loves, as if done to himself. The *Hebrew* comes from an *Arabic* root, "to be flushed in face" through indignation.

19. corn ... wine ... oil — rather, as *Hebrew*, "the corn ... the wine ... the oil," namely, which the locusts have destroyed [HENDERSON]. MAURER not so well explains, "the corn, etc., necessary for your sustenance." "The Lord will answer," namely, the prayers of His people, priests, and prophets. Compare in the case of Sennacherib, ^{<290>}2 Kings 19:20,21.

20. the northern army — The *Hebrew* expresses that the *north* in relation to Palestine is not merely the quarter whence the invader comes, but is his native land, "the Northlander"; namely, the Assyrian or Babylonian (compare ^{<404>}Jeremiah 1:14,15 ^{<302>}Zephaniah 2:13). The locust's native

country is not the *north*, but the *south*, the deserts of Arabia, Egypt, and Libya. Assyria and Babylon are the type and forerunner of all Israel's foes (Rome, and the final Antichrist), from whom God will at last deliver His people, as He did from Sennacherib (⁴²⁸⁵2 Kings 19:35).

face ... hinder part — more applicable to a human army's *van* and *rear*, than to locusts. The northern invaders are to be dispersed in every other direction but that from which they had come: "a land barren and desolate," that is, Arabia-Deserta: "the eastern (or *front*) sea," that is, the Dead Sea: "the utmost (or *hinder*) sea," that is, the Mediterranean. *In front* and *behind* mean east and west; as, in marking the quarters of the world, they *faced* the east, which was therefore "in front"; the west was *behind* them; the south was on their *right*, and the north on their *left*.

stink — metaphor from *locusts*, which perish when blown by a storm into the sea or the desert, and emit from their putrefying bodies such a stench as often breeds a pestilence.

because he hath done great things — that is, because the invader hath *haughtily magnified himself in his doings*. Compare as to Sennacherib, ⁴²⁹¹2 Kings 19:11-13,22,28. This is quite inapplicable to the locusts, who merely seek food, not self-glorification, in invading a country.

21-23. In an ascending gradation, the *land* destroyed by the enemy, the *beasts of the field*, and the *children of Zion*, the land's inhabitants, are addressed, the former two by personification.

Lord will do great things — In contrast to the "great things" done by the haughty foe (²⁹²¹Joel 2:20) to the hurt of Judah stand the "great things" to be done by Jehovah for her benefit (compare ⁴³⁰¹Psalms 126:2,3).

22. (³⁸⁸²Zechariah 8:12). As before (²⁹¹⁸Joel 1:18,20) he represented the beasts as *groaning* and *crying* for want of food in the "pastures," so now he reassures them by the promise of *springing pastures*.

23. rejoice in the Lord — not merely *in the springing pastures*, as the brute "beasts" which cannot raise their thoughts higher (²³¹⁰Isaiah 61:10 ³⁸⁸⁸Habakkuk 3:18).

former rain ... the rain ... the former ... the latter rain — The autumnal, or "former rain," from the middle of October to the middle of December, is put first, as Joel prophesies in summer when the locusts' invasion took place, and therefore looks to the time of early sowing in autumn, when the autumnal rain was indispensably required. Next, "the rain," *generically*, literally, "the showering" or "heavy rain." Next, the two species of the latter, "the former and the latter rain" (in March and April). The repetition

of the “former rain” implies that He will give it not merely for the exigence of that particular season when Joel spake, but also for the future in the regular course of nature, the autumn and the spring rain; the former being put first, in the order of nature, as being required for the sowing in autumn, as the latter is required in spring for maturing the young crop. The *Margin*, “a teacher of righteousness,” is wrong. For the same *Hebrew* word is translated “former rain” in the next sentence, and cannot therefore be differently translated here. Besides, Joel begins with the inferior and temporal blessings, and not till ²⁰²⁸Joel 2:28 proceeds to the higher and spiritual ones, of which the former are the pledge.

moderately — rather, “in due measure,” as much as the land requires; literally, “according to right”; neither too much nor too little, either of which extremes would hurt the crop (compare ⁶⁵¹⁴Deuteronomy 11:14 ²¹⁶⁵Proverbs 16:15 ²¹⁶⁸Jeremiah 5:24; see on ²⁰⁰⁸Hosea 6:3). The phrase, “in due measure,” in this clause is parallel to “in the first month,” in the last clause (that is, “*in the month* when *first* it is needed,” each rain in its proper season). Heretofore the *just* or *right* order of nature has been interrupted through your sin; now God will restore it. See my *Introduction* to Joel.

24. The effect of the seasonable rains shall be abundance of all articles of food.

25. ***locust ... cankerworm ... caterpillar ... palmer worm*** — the reverse order from ²⁰⁰⁶Joel 1:4, where (see on ²⁰⁰⁴Joel 1:4) God will restore not only what has been lost by the full-grown *consuming locust*, but also what has been lost by the less destructive *licking locust*, and *swarming locust*, and *gnawing locust*.

26. ***never be ashamed*** — shall no longer endure the “reproach of the heathen (²⁰¹⁷Joel 2:17), [MAURER]; or rather, “shall not bear the shame of disappointed hopes,” as the husbandmen had heretofore (²⁰¹¹Joel 1:11). So spiritually, waiting on God, His people shall not have the shame of disappointment in their expectations from Him (⁶⁰³³Romans 9:33).

27. ***know that I am in the midst of Israel*** — As in the Old Testament dispensation God was present by the Shekinah, so in the New Testament first, for a brief time by the Word made flesh dwelling among us (⁶⁰¹⁴John 1:14), and to the close of this dispensation by the Holy Spirit in the Church (⁴⁸³¹Matthew 28:20), and probably in a more perceptible manner with Israel when restored (²⁵⁷⁶Ezekiel 37:26-28).

never be ashamed — not an unmeaning repetition from ²⁰²⁵Joel 2:26. The twice-asserted truth enforces its unfailing certainty. As the “shame” in ²⁰²⁵Joel 2:26 refers to temporal blessings, so in this verse it refers to the

spiritual blessings flowing from the presence of God with His people (compare ^{<2486>}Jeremiah 3:16,17 ^{<6203>}Revelation 21:3).

28. *afterward* — “in the last days” (^{<2101>}Isaiah 2:2) under Messiah *after* the invasion and deliverance of Israel from the *northern army*. Having heretofore stated the outward blessings, he now raises their minds to the expectation of extraordinary spiritual blessings, which constitute the true restoration of God’s people (^{<2448>}Isaiah 44:3). Fulfilled in earnest (^{<4127>}Acts 2:17) on Pentecost; among the Jews and the subsequent election of a people among the Gentiles; hereafter more fully at the restoration of Israel (^{<2543>}Isaiah 54:13 ^{<2609>}Jeremiah 31:9,34 ^{<3539>}Ezekiel 39:29 ^{<3820>}Zechariah 12:10) and the consequent conversion of the whole world (^{<2101>}Isaiah 2:2 11:9 66:18-23 ^{<3107>}Micah 5:7 ^{<3112>}Romans 11:12,15). As the Jews have been the seedmen of the elect Church gathered out of Jews and Gentiles, the first Gospel preachers being Jews from Jerusalem, so they shall be the harvest men of the coming world-wide Church, to be set up at Messiah’s appearing. That the promise is not *restricted* to the first Pentecost appears from Peter’s own words: “The promise is (not only) unto you and to your children, (but also) to *all that are afar off* (both in space and in time), even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (^{<4129>}Acts 2:39). So here “upon *all* flesh.”

I will pour out — under the new covenant: not merely, *let fall drops*, as under the Old Testament (^{<379>}John 7:39).

my spirit — the Spirit “proceeding from the Father and the Son,” and at the same time one with the Father and the Son (compare ^{<3102>}Isaiah 11:2).

sons ... daughters ... old ... young — not merely on a privileged few (^{<4129>}Numbers 11:29) as the prophets of the Old Testament, but men of all ages and ranks. See ^{<4129>}Acts 21:9 ^{<4315>}1 Corinthians 11:5, as to “daughters,” that is, women, prophesying.

dreams ... visions — (^{<4090>}Acts 9:10 16:9). The “dreams” are attributed to the “old men,” as more in accordance with their years; “visions” to the “young men,” as adapted to their more lively minds. The three modes whereby God revealed His will under the Old Testament (^{<4126>}Numbers 12:6), “prophecy, dreams, and visions,” are here made the symbol of the full manifestation of Himself to all His people, not only in miraculous gifts to some, but by His indwelling Spirit to all in the New Testament (^{<3121>}John 14:21,23 15:15). In ^{<4129>}Acts 16:9 18:9, the term used is “vision,” though in the night, not a *dream*. No other dream is mentioned in the New Testament save those given to Joseph in the very beginning of the New Testament, before the full Gospel had come; and to the wife of Pilate, a *Gentile* (^{<4121>}Matthew 1:20 2:13 27:19). “Prophesying” in the New Testament is

applied to all speaking under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and not merely to foretelling events. All true Christians are “priests” and “ministers” of our God (^{<2616>}Isaiah 61:6), and have the Spirit (^{<3626>}Ezekiel 36:26,27). Besides this, probably, a special gift of prophecy and miracle-working is to be given at or before Messiah’s coming again.

29. *And also* — “And even.” The very slaves by becoming the Lord’s servants are His freemen (^{<4172>}1 Corinthians 7:22 ^{<4183>}Galatians 3:28 ^{<5181>}Colossians 3:11 ^{<5116>}Philemon 1:16). Therefore, in ^{<4418>}Acts 2:18 it is quoted, “My servants” and “My handmaidens”; as it is only by becoming *the Lord’s* servants they are spiritually free, and partake of the same spirit as the other members of the Church.

30, 31. As Messiah’s manifestation is full of joy to believers, so it has an aspect of wrath to unbelievers, which is represented here. Thus when the Jews received Him not in His coming of grace, He came in judgment on Jerusalem. Physical prodigies, massacres, and conflagrations preceded its destruction [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*]. To these the language here may allude; but the figures chiefly symbolize political revolutions and changes in the ruling powers of the world, prognosticated by previous disasters (^{<3189>}Amos 8:9 ^{<4182>}Matthew 24:29 ^{<4215>}Luke 21:25-27), and convulsions such as preceded the overthrow of the Jewish polity. Such shall probably occur in a more appalling degree before the final destruction of the ungodly world (“the great and terrible day of Jehovah,” compare Malachi 4:5), of which Jerusalem’s overthrow is the type and earnest.

32. *call on ... name of ... Lord* — *Hebrew*, JEHOVAH. Applied to Jesus in ^{<5183>}Romans 10:13 (compare ^{<4014>}Acts 9:14 ^{<4101>}1 Corinthians 1:2). Therefore, Jesus is JEHOVAH; and the phrase means, “Call on Messiah in His divine attributes.”

shall be delivered — as the Christians were, just before Jerusalem’s destruction, by retiring to Pella, warned by the Savior (^{<4116>}Matthew 24:16); a type of the spiritual deliverance of all believers, and of the last deliverance of the elect “remnant” of Israel from the final assault of Antichrist. “In Zion and Jerusalem” the Savior first appeared; and there again shall He appear as the *Deliverer* (Zechariah 14:1-5).

as the Lord hath said — Joel herein refers, not to the other prophets, but to his own words preceding.

call — metaphor from an invitation to a feast, which is an act of gratuitous kindness (^{<2416>}Luke 14:16). So the remnant called and saved is according to the election of grace, not for man’s merits, power, or efforts (^{<5115>}Romans 11:5).

CHAPTER 3

JOEL 3:1-21.

GOD'S VENGEANCE ON ISRAEL'S FOES IN THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT. HIS BLESSING ON THE CHURCH.

1. *bring again the captivity* — that is, reverse it. The Jews restrict this to the return from Babylon. Christians refer it to the coming of Christ. But the prophet comprises the whole redemption, beginning from the return out of Babylon, then continued from the first advent of Christ down to the last day (His second advent), when God will restore His Church to perfect felicity [CALVIN].

2. Parallel to Zechariah 14:2,3,4, where the “Mount of Olives” answers to the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” here. The latter is called “the valley of blessing” (*Berachah*) (⁴⁰⁰²2 Chronicles 20:26). It lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives and has the Kedron flowing through it. As Jehoshaphat overthrew the confederate foes of Judah, namely, Ammon, Moab, etc. (⁸³⁰⁶Psalm 83:6-8), in this valley, so God was to overthrow the Tyrians, Zidonians, Philistines, Edom, and Egypt, with a similar utter overthrow (²⁰⁰⁴Joel 3:4,19). This has been long ago fulfilled; but the ultimate event shadowed forth herein is still future, when God shall specially interpose to destroy Jerusalem’s last foes, of whom Tyre, Zidon, Edom, Egypt, and Philistia are the types. As “Jehoshaphat” means “the judgment of Jehovah,” *the valley of Jehoshaphat* may be used as a *general* term for the theater of God’s final judgments on Israel’s foes, with an allusion to the judgment inflicted on them by Jehoshaphat. The definite mention of the Mount of Olives in Zechariah 14:4, and the fact that this was the scene of the ascension, makes it likely the same shall be the scene of Christ’s coming again: compare “this same Jesus ... shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (⁴⁰¹¹Acts 1:11).

all nations — namely, which have maltreated Judah.

plead with them — (²⁷⁰⁶Isaiah 66:16 ³⁷⁰²Ezekiel 38:22).

my heritage Israel — (⁴⁵³⁹Deuteronomy 32:9 ²⁴⁰⁶Jeremiah 10:16). Implying that the source of Judah’s redemption is God’s free love, wherewith He chose Israel as *His peculiar heritage*, and at the same time assuring them,

when desponding because of trials, that He would plead their cause as His own, and as if He were injured in their person.

3. *cast lots for my people* — that is, divided among themselves My people as their captives by lot. Compare as to the distribution of captives by lot (^{<3011>}Obadiah 1:11 Na 3:10).

given a boy for ... harlot — Instead of paying a harlot for her prostitution in money, they gave her a Jewish captive boy as a slave.

girl for wine — So valueless did they regard a Jewish girl that they would sell her for a draught of wine.

4. *what have ye to do with me* — Ye have no connection with Me (that is, with My people: God identifying Himself with Israel); I (that is, My people) have given you no cause of quarrel, why then do ye trouble Me (that is, My people)? (Compare the same phrase, ^{<1224>}Joshua 22:24 ^{<1112>}Judges 11:12 ^{<1610>}2 Samuel 16:10 ^{<1029>}Matthew 8:29).

Tyre ... Zidon ... Palestine — (Amos 1:6,9).

if ye recompense me — If ye injure Me (My people), in revenge for fancied wrongs (^{<3515>}Ezekiel 25:15-17), I will requite you in your own coin swiftly and speedily.

5. *my silver ... my gold* — that is, the gold and silver of My people. The Philistines and Arabians had carried off all the treasures of King Jehoram's house (^{<4216>}2 Chronicles 21:16,17). Compare also ^{<11518>}1 Kings 15:18 ^{<1218>}2 Kings 12:18 14:14, for the spoiling of the treasures of the temple and the king's palace in Judah by Syria. It was customary among the heathen to hang up in the idol temples some of the spoils of war as presents to their gods.

6. *Grecians* — literally, "Javanites," that is, the Ionians, a Greek colony on the coast of Asia Minor who were the first Greeks known to the Jews. The Greeks themselves, however, in their *original descent* came from Javan (^{<1010>}Genesis 10:2,4). Probably the germ of Greek civilization in part came through the Jewish slaves imported into Greece from Phoenicia by traffickers. ^{<5713>}Ezekiel 27:13 mentions *Javan* and Tyre as trading in the persons of men.

far from their border — far from Judea; so that the captive Jews were cut off from all hope of return.

7. *raise them* — that is, I will *rouse* them. Neither sea nor distance will prevent My bringing them back. Alexander, and his successors, restored to

liberty many Jews in bondage in Greece [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 13.5; *Wars of the Jews*, 9,2].

8. *sell them to ... Sabeans* — The Persian Artaxerxes Mnemon and Darius Ochus, and chiefly the Greek Alexander, reduced the Phoenician and Philistine powers. Thirty thousand Tyrians after the capture of Tyre by the last conqueror, and multitudes of Philistines on the taking of Gaza, were sold as slaves. The Jews are here said to do that which the God of Judah does in vindication of their wrong, namely, sell the Phoenicians who sold them, to a people “far off,” as was Greece, whither the Jews had been sold. The Sabeans at the most remote extremity of Arabia Felix are referred to (compare ^{<316D>}Jeremiah 6:20 ^{<312C>}Matthew 12:42).

9. The nations hostile to Israel are summoned by Jehovah to “come up” (this phrase is used because Jerusalem was on a *hill*) against Jerusalem, not that they may destroy it, but to be destroyed by the Lord (^{<380F>}Ezekiel 38:7-23 Zechariah 12:2-9 14:2,3).

Prepare war — literally, *sanctify* war: because the heathen always began war with religious ceremonies. The very phrase used of Babylon’s *preparations* against Jerusalem (^{<316A>}Jeremiah 6:4) is now used of the final foes of Jerusalem. As Babylon was then desired by God to advance against her for her destruction, so now all her foes, of whom Babylon was the type, are desired to advance against her for *their own* destruction.

10. *Beat your ploughshares into swords* — As the foes are desired to “beat their *ploughshares into swords*, and *their pruning hooks into spears*,” that so they may perish in their unhallowed attack on Judah and Jerusalem, so these latter, and the nations converted to God by them, after the overthrow of the antichristian confederacy, shall, on the contrary, “beat their *swords into ploughshares*, and their *spears into pruning hooks*,” when under Messiah’s coming reign there shall be war no more (^{<312A>}Isaiah 2:4 ^{<312B>}Hosea 2:18 ^{<310E>}Micah 4:3).

let the weak say, I am strong — So universal shall be the rage of Israel’s foes for invading her, that even the *weak* among them will fancy themselves *strong* enough to join the invading forces. Age and infirmity were ordinarily made valid excuses for exemption from service, but so mad shall be the fury of the world against God’s people, that even the feeble will not desire to be exempted (compare ^{<310E>}Psalms 2:1-3).

11. *Assemble* — “Hasten” [MAURER].

thither — to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

thy mighty ones — the warriors who fancy themselves “mighty ones,” but who are on that very spot to be overthrown by Jehovah [MAURER]. Compare “the mighty men” (^{298B}Joel 3:9). Rather, Joel speaks of God’s really “mighty ones” in contrast to the self-styled “mighty men” (^{298B}Joel 3:9 ^{493D}Psalms 103:20 ^{293B}Isaiah 13:3; compare ^{270B}Daniel 10:13). AUBERLEN remarks: One prophet supplements the other, for they all prophesied only “in part.” What was obscure to one was revealed to the other; what is briefly described by one is more fully so by another. Daniel calls Antichrist a king, and dwells on his worldly conquests; John looks more to his spiritual tyranny, for which reason he adds a second beast, wearing the semblance of spirituality. Antichrist *himself* is described by Daniel. Isaiah (^{290B}Isaiah 29:1-24), Joel (^{298B}Joel 3:1-21) describe *his army* of heathen followers coming up against Jerusalem, but not Antichrist himself.

12. See ^{298B}Joel 3:2.

judge all the heathen round about — that is, all the nations from all parts of the earth which have maltreated Israel; not merely, as HENDERSON supposes, the nations *round about* Jerusalem (compare ^{480B}Psalms 110:6 ^{290B}Isaiah 2:4 ^{300B}Micah 4:3,11-13 ^{308B}Zephaniah 3:15-19 Zechariah 12:9 14:3-11 Malachi 4:1-3).

13. Direction to the ministers of vengeance to execute God’s wrath, as the enemy’s wickedness is come to its full maturity. God does not cut off the wicked at once, but waits till their guilt is at its *full* (so as to the Amorites iniquity, ^{415B}Genesis 15:16), to show forth His own long-suffering, and the justice of their doom who have so long abused it (^{412D}Matthew 13:27-30,38,40 ^{644B}Revelation 14:15-19). For the image of a harvest to be threshed, compare ^{261B}Jeremiah 51:33; and a wine-press, ^{293B}Isaiah 63:3 and ^{201B}Lamentations 1:15.

14. The prophet in vision seeing the immense array of nations congregating, exclaims, “Multitudes, multitudes!” a Hebraism for *immense multitudes*.

valley of decision — that is, the valley in which they are to meet their “determined doom.” The same as “the valley of Jehoshaphat,” that is, “the valley of judgment” (see on ^{298B}Joel 3:2). Compare ^{298B}Joel 3:12, “there will I sit to judge,.” which confirms *English Version* rather than *Margin*, “threshing.” The repetition of “valley of decision” heightens the effect and pronounces the awful *certainty* of their doom.

15. (See on ^{290D}Joel 2:10; ^{298D}Joel 2:30).

16. (Compare ^{<3788>}Ezekiel 38:18-22). The victories of the Jews over their cruel foe Antiochus, under the Maccabees, may be a reference of this prophecy; but the ultimate reference is to the last Antichrist, of whom Antiochus was the type. Jerusalem being the central seat of the theocracy (^{<4213>}Psalms 132:13), it is from thence that Jehovah discomfits the foe.

roar — as a lion (^{<253>}Jeremiah 25:30 ^{<300>}Amos 1:2 3:8). Compare as to Jehovah's voice thundering, ^{<983>}Psalms 18:13 ^{<310>}Habakkuk 3:10,11.

Lord ... the hope of his people — or, “their refuge” (^{<940>}Psalms 46:1).

17. shall ye know — experimentally by the proofs of favors which I shall vouchsafe to you. So “know” (^{<2106>}Isaiah 60:16 ^{<3102>}Hosea 2:20).

dwelling in Zion — as peculiarly *your God*.

holy ... no strangers pass through — to attack, or to defile, the holy city (^{<2318>}Isaiah 35:8 52:1 ^{<3421>}Zechariah 14:21). *Strangers*, or Gentiles, shall come to Jerusalem, but it shall be in order to worship Jehovah there (^{<3446>}Zechariah 14:16).

18. mountains ... drop ... wine — figurative for *abundance of vines*, which were cultivated in terraces of earth between the rocks on the sides of the hills of Palestine (^{<3013>}Amos 9:13).

hills ... flow with milk — that is, they shall abound in flocks and herds yielding milk plentifully, through the richness of the pastures.

waters — the great desideratum for fertility in the parched East (^{<2025>}Isaiah 30:25).

fountain ... of ... house of ... Lord ... water ... valley of Shittim — The blessings, temporal and spiritual, issuing from Jehovah's house at Jerusalem, shall extend even to Shittim, on the border between Moab and Israel, beyond Jordan (^{<0208>}Numbers 25:1 33:49 ^{<0610>}Joshua 2:1 Micah 6:5). “Shittim” means “acacias,” which grow only in arid regions: implying that even *the arid desert* shall be fertilized by the blessing from Jerusalem. So ^{<3570>}Ezekiel 47:1-12 describes the waters issuing from the threshold of the house as flowing into the Dead Sea, and purifying it. Also in Zechariah 14:8 the waters flow on one side into the Mediterranean, on the other side into the Dead Sea, near which latter Shittim was situated (compare ^{<9405>}Psalms 46:4 ^{<6201>}Revelation 22:1).

19. Edom — It was subjugated by David, but revolted under Jehoram (^{<4208>}2 Chronicles 21:8-10); and at every subsequent opportunity tried to injure Judah. Egypt under Shishak spoiled Jerusalem under Rehoboam of the

treasures of the temple and the king's house; subsequently to the captivity, it inflicted under the Ptolemies various injuries on Judea. Antiochus spoiled Egypt (²⁷¹⁴⁹Daniel 11:40-43). Edom was made "desolate" under the Maccabees [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 12.11,12]. The low condition of the two countries for centuries proves the truth of the prediction (compare ²³⁹⁰⁴Isaiah 19:1, etc. ²⁴⁹⁷⁷Jeremiah 49:17 ³⁰¹⁰⁰Obadiah 1:10). So shall fare all the foes of Israel, typified by these two (²³⁶⁰⁴Isaiah 63:1, etc.).

20. *dwell for ever* — (³⁰⁹⁵Amos 9:15), that is, be established as a flourishing state.

21. *cleanse ... blood ... not cleansed* — I will purge away from Judah the extreme guilt (represented by "blood," the shedding of which was the climax of her sin, ²³⁰¹⁵Isaiah 1:15) which was for long not purged away, but visited with judgments (²³⁰⁰⁴Isaiah 4:4). Messiah saves from guilt, in order to save from punishment (⁴⁰¹²⁹Matthew 1:21).