



# JOEL/YOEL CHAPTER 1

THE LOCUST INVASION

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS....

- ▶ **JOEL 1:2** HEAR THIS, ELDERS! GIVE EAR, ALL INHABITANTS OF THE LAND. HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED IN YOUR DAYS, OR EVEN IN THE DAYS OF YOUR FATHERS?
- ▶ **JOEL 1:3** TELL YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT IT—YOUR CHILDREN TO THEIR CHILDREN, THEIR CHILDREN TO ANOTHER GENERATION.
- ▶ **JOEL 1:4** WHAT THE LOCUST LEFT, THE SWARMING LOCUST HAS EATEN, AND WHAT THE SWARMING LOCUST LEFT, THE CANKER-WORM HAS EATEN, AND WHAT THE CANKER-WORM LEFT, THE CATERPILLAR HAS EATEN.

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS....

- ▶ *TREI ASAR:*
- ▶ *PAGE 149 STARTING HERE UNTIL THE END OF CHAPTER 2, THE PROPHET FORETELLS OF A GREAT PLAGUE OF ISRAEL AND DESTROY ALL VEGETATION, CAUSING A DEVASTATING FAMINE THROUGHOUT THE LAND. THIS WAS DECREED BY THE ALMIGHTY IN RETRIBUTION FOR THE SINS OF THE JEWISH NATION, AND THE PROPHET URGES THE PEOPLE E TO REPENT FROM THEIR EVIL WAYS AND THEREBY BRING ABOUT THE ANNULMENT OF THE DECREE. HE BEGINS HIS PROPHECY BY EMPHASIZING THE UNIQUE SCALE OF THE IMPENDING PLAGUE.*

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS....

- **1:4–2:17: ON THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS AND THE CORRESPONDING COMMUNAL CRY (OR LAMENTATION) TO THE LORD. 4: *CUTTER ... LOCUST ... GRUB ... HOPPER*: THERE ARE MANY REFERENCES TO LOCUSTS IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS. SOME OF THESE REFERENCES ASSOCIATE THE IMAGERY OF SWARMS OF LOCUSTS WITH THAT OF LARGE INVADING ARMIES OR TROOPS. THE USE OF THESE FOUR TERMS MAY REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO CONVEY A SENSE OF COMPLETENESS, RATHER THAN EXPRESS A BIOLOGICAL, DETAILED FOCUS. ABRAVANEL UNDERSTANDS THE TEXT AS METAPHORICAL: THE FOUR KINDS OF LOCUSTS REFER TO FOUR NATIONS THAT WILL RULE OVER ISRAEL—BABYLONIA, PERSIA, GREECE, AND ROME. JEWISH STUDY BIBLE**

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS...

- ▶ LET FUTURE GENERATIONS KNOW WHAT A TERRIBLE LOCUST PLAGUE THIS WAS INDEED. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT JOEL DID WHEN HE WROTE ABOUT IT IN HIS BOOK.
- ▶ TELL YOUR CHILDREN: EXODUS 13:8, DEUT. 4:9, 6:4-7, 20-21, PSALM 78:4-6
- ▶ JOEL DESCRIBED THE DEVASTATION AS HE TOLD ABOUT FOUR WAVES OF LOCUST INVASIONS IN VERSE 4: *THAT WHICH THE PALMER-WORM HAS LEFT HAS THE LOCUST EATEN; AND THAT WHICH THE LOCUST HAS LEFT HAS THE CANKER-WORM EATEN; AND THAT WHICH THE CANKER-WORM HAS LEFT HAS THE CATERPILLAR EATEN.*
- ▶ AGENTS OF DESTRUCTION: JEREMIAH 15:2-3, EZEKIEL 14:21, REVELATION 6:1-8, 9:15

# Agents of Destruction

Ezekiel 14:21

- **Sword**
- **Famine**
- **Wild Beasts**
- **Plague/Pestilence**

Revelation 6:1-8

- **White Horse – Conquest vs 1-2**
  - **Beginning of Tribulation**
- **Red Horse – War vs 3-4**
  - **Civil war and strife**
- **Black Horse – Famine vs 5-6**
  - **Economic disruption, inflation**
- **Ashen Horse - Death vs 7-8**
  - **Disease & Death**
- **Cosmic Catastrophe – vs 12-15**
- **Zechariah 1:6-10; 6:1-7**

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS....

- BY THE TIME JOEL WROTE THESE WORDS, IT IS NOT PROPHECY; IT IS ALREADY HISTORY. BUT THIS HISTORY IS GOING TO BECOME THE BACKGROUND OF SOMETHING PROPHETIC.
- **PLAGUE ON EGYPT AGAINST EGYPTIANS: EXODUS 10:1–20; PLAGUE IN JOEL DUE TO ISRAEL'S SIN: DEUTERONOMY 28:38**

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS....

- ▶ **JOEL 1:5** AWAKE, DRUNKARDS, AND WEEP! WAIL, ALL YOU DRINKERS OF WINE—ON ACCOUNT OF SWEET WINE, FOR IT IS DENIED TO YOUR MOUTH!
- ▶ **JOEL 1:6** FOR A NATION HAS INVADED MY LAND. VAST—YES, WITHOUT NUMBER! ITS TEETH ARE LION'S TEETH, WITH JAW-TEETH OF A LIONESS.
- ▶ **1:6** LOCUSTS ARE COMPARED TO A NATION, EQUIVALENT TO A GREAT ARMY (CF. PROV. 30:27; JER. 5:15–17; JOEL 2:25; REV. 9:3–7). ARMIES ARE COMPARED TO LOCUSTS ELSEWHERE IN THE OT (JUDG. 6:5; 7:12; ISA. 33:4; JER. 46:23; 51:14, 27) AND OTHER ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS



# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS...

➤ IN VERSE 5, JOEL TELLS THE *DRUNKARDS* THAT THE SOURCE OF THE WINE HAS NOW BEEN REMOVED, SO THEY ARE TO AWAKEN OUT OF THEIR SLEEP AND *WEEP*. THE WORD USED HERE MEANS “TO REEL IN INTOXICATION.” THEY ARE TO AWAKEN OUT OF REELING INTOXICATION AND THEY ARE TO WEEP BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY A *NATION* OF LOCUSTS IN VERSE 6. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR LOCUSTS TO BE DEPICTED AS A HUMAN MILITARY ARMY. IN FACT, BOTH LOCUSTS AND ANTS ARE DEPICTED AS A MILITARY ARMY IN PROVERBS 30:25–27. JOEL’S PERSONAL AGONY IS SEEN IN HIS STATEMENT: “THESE LOCUSTS HAVE EATEN *MY LAND*.” VERSE 7 ONCE AGAIN DESCRIBES THE TOTALITY OF THIS PARTICULAR DEVASTATION. THE DRUNKARDS WHO LIVE FROM ONE CUP OF WINE TO THE NEXT, THOSE WHO HAVE NOT LEARNED TO DRINK IN SIMPLE MODERATION AS THE BIBLE ALLOWS, BUT HAVE GONE INTO EXCESS, WHICH THE BIBLE FORBIDS, ARE THE ONES LAMENTING. INDEED THEY MUST, FOR THE SOURCE OF THEIR JOY AND SECURITY HAS BEEN EATEN BY THIS ARMY OF LOCUSTS.

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS

- ▶ **JOE 1:13** GIRD YOURSELVES AND WEEP, KOHANIM! HOWL, MINISTERS OF THE ALTAR! COME, LIE IN SACKCLOTH ALL NIGHT, MINISTERS OF MY GOD. FOR GRAIN AND DRINK OFFERING ARE WITHHELD FROM THE HOUSE OF YOUR GOD.
- ▶ **JOE 1:14** CONSECRATE A FAST. PROCLAIM A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY. GATHER ELDERS AND ALL LIVING IN THE LAND TO THE HOUSE OF ADONAI YOUR GOD, AND CRY TO ADONAI.

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS...

➤ ONE OF THE REASONS THAT THEY MUST MOURN THIS WAY IS GIVEN IN VERSE 9: *THE MEAL-OFFERING AND THE DRINK-OFFERING ARE CUT OFF FROM THE HOUSE OF YHVH; THE PRIESTS, YHVH'S MINISTERS, MOURN. MOURN PERTAINS TO FASTING.*

➤ THEY MUST MOURN NOW BECAUSE THERE IS NO OFFERING REMAINING FOR THE TEMPLE. THERE IS NO MEAL OFFERING BECAUSE THE CATTLE AND SHEEP ARE DYING DUE TO LACK OF GRAIN. THERE IS NO DRINK OFFERING BECAUSE THE VINES HAVE ALL BEEN EATEN UP. AS A RESULT, THE PRIESTS, WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THESE OFFERINGS AND WHO ARE SUSTAINED BY THESE OFFERINGS, ARE ALSO TO LAMENT.

EXODUS 29:38-42, LEVITICUS 23:13

# AN INVASION OF LOCUSTS...

- ▶ JOEL AGAIN DESCRIBES THE TOTALITY OF THE DEVASTATION, RESULTING IN A CESSATION OF THE JOY OF HARVEST IN VERSES 10–12: *THE FIELD IS LAID WASTE, THE LAND MOURNS; FOR THE GRAIN IS DESTROYED, THE NEW WINE IS DRIED UP, THE OIL LANGUISHES. BE CONFOUNDED, O YE HUSBANDMEN, WAIL, O YE VINEDRESSERS, FOR THE WHEAT AND FOR THE BARLEY; FOR THE HARVEST OF THE FIELD IS PERISHED. THE VINE IS WITHERED, AND THE FIG-TREE LANGUISHES; THE POMEGRANATE-TREE, THE PALM-TREE ALSO, AND THE APPLE-TREE, EVEN ALL THE TREES OF THE FIELD ARE WITHERED: FOR JOY IS WITHERED AWAY FROM THE SONS OF MEN.*
- ▶ **1:10 GROUND MOURNS ... OIL LANGUISHES.** JOEL POETICALLY PERSONIFIES THESE THINGS AS EXPERIENCING GRIEF. THE PRESENCE OF GRAIN, WINE, AND OIL IS EVIDENCE OF GOD'S COVENANT BLESSING (DEUT. 7:13; 11:14; JOEL 2:19, 24), AND THEIR ABSENCE IS EVIDENCE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT (DEUT. 28:49–51; HOS. 2:8–9).ESV NOTES

# DAY OF THE LORD..

- **1:15–20: THE CRY. 15: *DAY OF THE LORD*** (CF. ISA. 13:6; EZEK. 30:2, 3; OBAD. 15; ZEPH. 1:14–15, AMONG OTHERS), A RELATIVELY COMMON TERM IN PROPHETIC LITERATURE. IT POINTS TO A DAY IN WHICH THE LORD DRAMATICALLY ALTERS THE REGULAR ORDER OF THINGS. IN MANY PLACES IT REFERS TO AN EXTRAORDINARY DAY OF JUDGMENT FOR THE WICKED (E.G., ISA. 13:9), AND IT IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH IMAGES OF DARKNESS AND COSMIC UPHEAVAL (E.G., 2:1–2; AMOS 5:18–20; ZEPH. 1:14–15). HERE THE IMAGES STRESS THE ABSENCE AND LACK OF WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR LIFE. **20: IF GOD IS NOT TO PITY THE (SINFUL) PEOPLE, HE SHOULD AT LEAST PITY THE BLAMELESS ANIMALS (SIMILARLY JONAH 4:11).**
- **THIS PASSAGE INTRODUCES JOEL'S NEW THEME ANNOUNCING THE COMING DAY OF JEHOVAH IN VERSE 15: *ALAS FOR THE DAY! FOR THE DAY OF JEHOVAH IS AT HAND, AND AS DESTRUCTION FROM THE ALMIGHTY SHALL IT COME. JEWISH STUDY BIBLE***

# DAY OF THE LORD..

- ▶ **1:15 THE DAY OF THE LORD** (SEE INTRODUCTION: KEY THEMES) IS A MAJOR THEME IN JOEL; IT CAN REFER BOTH TO THE PARTICULAR DEVASTATION OF THE LOCUSTS (V. 15) AND TO A FINAL VINDICATION OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE (3:18–21). IT CAN REFER TO A DAY OF DESTRUCTION AND THREAT FOR ISRAEL (2:1, 11), OR FOR THE NATIONS (3:14). HOWEVER, FOR GOD’S PEOPLE, IT IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH HIS PRESENCE (2:27), BLESSING (3:18), AND SALVATION (2:31–32; 3:16). FOR MORE ON “THE DAY OF THE LORD,” SEE NOTE ON AMOS 5:18–20; AND THE DAY OF THE LORD IN THE PROPHETS. **DESTRUCTION ... ALMIGHTY.** JOEL USES AN ALLITERATION WITH THE HEBREW WORDS *SHOD ... SHADDAY* (SEE **ESV FOOTNOTE**), WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE WORDPLAY IMPLIES SOMETHING LIKE “DESTRUCTION OF THE DESTROYER.”

- ▶ **1:15 THE DAY OF THE LORD, THE DAY WHEN GOD APPEARS, IS A DAY OF JUDGMENT** (SEE NOTE ON ISA. 13:6).

- ▶ **ESV ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION**

# DAY OF THE LORD

- **JOE 1:18** HOW THE ANIMALS GROAN! THE HERDS OF CATTLE ARE PERPLEXED, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO PASTURE. THE FLOCKS OF SHEEP ALSO SUFFER.
- **JOE 1:19** TO YOU, ADONAI, I CRY! FOR FIRE HAS DEVoured THE PASTURES OF THE WILDERNESS, AND FLAME HAS SET ABLAZE ALL THE TREES OF THE FIELD.
- **JOE 1:20** ALSO BEASTS OF THE FIELD PANT TOWARD YOU. FOR THE WATER OF WADIS ARE DRIED UP, AND FIRE HAS DEVoured THE PASTURES OF THE WILDERNESS. TLV (TREE OF LIFE VERSION)

# DAY OF THE LORD..

- **1:18 THE FLOCKS OF SHEEP SUFFER. THE HEBREW FOR “SUFFER” IS ‘ASHAM, AND HERE IT MEANS “TO SUFFER PUNISHMENT” OR “TO BEAR GUILT.” THE IDEA WOULD BE THAT CREATION SUFFERS FOR ISRAEL’S GUILT. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO READ THIS AS A FORM OF SHAMEM, “TO BE DESOLATE” (SEE ESV FOOTNOTE).**
- **1:19–20 TO YOU, O LORD, I CALL (2:32; Ps. 28:1; 30:8). THE DEVASTATION BROUGHT BY THE LORD CAN BE RELIEVED ONLY BY HIM. FIRE IS SOMETIMES AN EXPRESSION OF DIVINE JUDGMENT (GEN. 19:24; NUM. 11:1; DEUT. 32:22; JER. 4:4; HOS. 8:14; AMOS 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; ZEPH. 1:18; 3:8; REV. 21:8).**

➤ ESV ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

➤ CROSSWAY BIBLES. (2008). *THE ESV STUDY BIBLE* (PP. 1646–1648). WHEATON, IL: CROSSWAY BIBLES.

