

JOEL 1 vs 1

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In the preface to this book, Matthew Henry wrote: We are altogether uncertain concerning the time when this prophet prophesied. The author is not identified with any of the OT persons bearing this name, and nothing is known of him outside the book. Let us help Matthew Henry: we know Joel is OT, and we know Peter who was taught of the Lord Jesus every day for 3&½ years; and Paul who was tasked to write 2/3 of the NT; both quote Joel 2:23. Peter quotes more fully Joel 2:28-32. If any have a question about Joel's credentials, we can rest it in the hands of those in the church the Lord Jesus is building.



The Day of the Lord is the major theme of this book; the 7 Days of the Lord are explained in Leviticus 23; Paul tells us, they are a shadow of things to come fulfilled in Christ, the Messiah of God.

The first 4 Days are complete; they are the major theme of the 4 NT gospel writers. **The last 3 Days** are still on the Lord's calendar: the **5th Day of Trumpets**; the **6th Day Afflicting Souls** and the **7th Day of Tents**. Each Day describes God's special intervention in the history of mankind. The Day of the Lord mentioned here and by all the prophets is a day of destruction... Daniel said, such as never has been seen on the earth.

¹ The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

² Hear this, you elders, give ear, all you inhabitants of the land / so this includes you and me.

Has such a thing occurred in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? / the adamant answer is: NO!

³ Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children,

and their children to another generation / in other words: spread the word. It is good to tell the next generation; let them know what of God's wrath you have been under, that they take warning of what you suffered; it is intended for warning them also. Tell them not only as an odd thing that serves for matters of talk; but teach the children to stand in awe of God and His judgments; to respect Him. We ought not forget to convey to posterity the memory of God's justice as well as His mercies – Matthew Henry.

⁴ What the gnawing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; and what the swarming locust left, the creeping locust has eaten; and what the creeping locust left, the stripping locust has eaten / you might want to read that verse a 2nd time; the fallacy of modern environmentalists is simple especially when considering this question found in the ancient book of Esdras: **are you more concerned about the creation than the Creator?** In light of those words, read again this verse.

Watching skittish birds on the balcony pick through the various kinds of bird seeds: sunflower, peanuts, grains and millet, depending on the package; you notice the little birdbrains are very discriminating; they will work overtime to consume some things; but after a while will leave a scattered mess for the next. When the Lord of hosts calls on His creation to join in His work and accomplish His purposes, watch out!

JOEL 1 vs 1

His creatures are part of His arsenal; they are faithful to do their assignment. What is this verse speaking about? In Hebrews: shearer, swarmer, lapper, and devourer. When God summons His army; He has all creation available: a locust swarm can number in the billions as they gnaw, swarm, creep; strip and destroy.



In 1875, locust swarms 1800 miles long and 110 miles wide, ravaged fields from California to Minnesota to Texas. Locusts ate barley, buckwheat, melons, tobacco, strawberries, spruce, apple trees – fence posts, and laundry hung out to dry. Farmers lit fires, and women blanketed their gardens – both were ineffective; which makes we wonder what government policies of greed and graft in this country were being exploited. In Russia 2016, a locust swarm destroyed 270,000 square miles of crops: an area the same size as Texas.

It's interesting: these despicable insects can be crushed with a foot or a finger. Note, God is Lord of hosts, who has all creatures at His command, and, when He pleases, can humble and mortify a proud and rebellious people by the weakest and most contemptible creatures – Matthew Henry.

⁵ Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because the new wine is cut off from your mouth / prophet Isaiah indicts the crown of pride; **the drunkards of Ephraim**, same title – **Isaiah 28**; who were the direct inheritors of the blessings given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; **Ephraim who would become the great commonwealth of nations**; and **Manasseh** a great nation; both at the center of the earth; the destruction of the vines affected their favorite pastime; this suggests they had been very stupid under the former signs of God's displeasure; so, they are called to wake up and weep. Those who are not roused out of their careless security by the word of God... will be roused by His rod.

⁶ For a nation has come up against My earth, powerful, and beyond number / what criminal nation? What people like a pesky locust swarm did this,

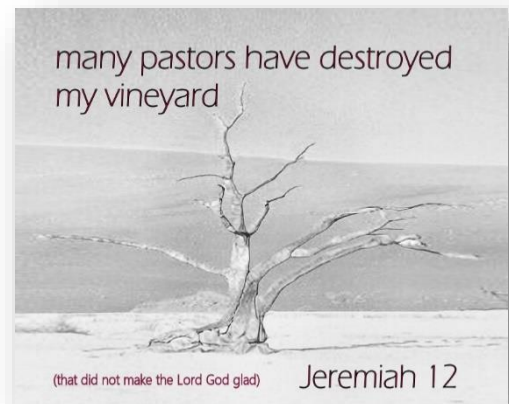
its teeth are lion's teeth, and it has fangs of a lioness / this is a people of savage brutality; we read the devil is like a roaring lion seeking who he can devour; I wonder does he have teeth of a female lion?

⁷ It has laid waste My vine, and splintered My fig tree / both prized plantings of the Lord were greatly destroyed; His vine, His Father is the vinedresser; (Israel) and His broken fig tree, (Judah); some demonic inspired thieving peoples have been sent to gnaw, swarm, creep, strip and destroy:

it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; its branches are made white / when the branches are stripped bare, it can kill a tree.

⁸ Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth / weep like a teenage bride for her husband; she was espoused, but is he dead, or just gravely injured? We don't know; but we do know the creeping locust swarm destroyed everything.

⁹ **The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord** / under such a calamity, the land was totally wasted, stripped clean; there is nothing left for man or beast... or even to offer God; the average neighborhood grocery store is restocked every 3 days. Can you imagine if there was such a seeming natural caused disaster in your area? What would it be like? That is what war does; that is what our military might – at tax payer expense... has been doing for years in communities throughout the world; yet the church remains silent; which makes you wonder, what God will require from such a nation violently destroying the lives of millions – young and old... many in those countries who are His people;



the priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord / the faithless, clergymen and women all moan; the Lord said, **many pastors have destroyed My vineyard** – Jeremiah 12.

¹⁰ **The field is destroyed, the ground mourns; because the grain is destroyed** / whatever was planted in the field was destroyed; more than any time in the NT, **field** is use in the Parable of the Sower; Jesus defines His terms: the field is the world – Matthew 13; even God's creation is affected:

the wine dried up, the oil failed.

¹¹ **Be ashamed, O caretakers; wail, O vinedressers** / let them be ashamed of the care and pains they have taken about the vineyard, for it will be all labor lost, and they will gain no advantage by it; they will see the fruit of their labor eaten up before their eyes, and will not be able to save any of it – Matthew Henry. Be ashamed whoever was given the title... and opportunity to work in the field... who didn't do their job; which sounds like so many in the 21st century,

for the wheat and for the barley / the whole crop, staples of life failed; wheat, the bread of the rich; and barley, the bread of the poor;

because the harvest of the field perished / both rich and poor alike; if their bread perishes, they both will perish; this word: **harvest**... first connects to the days of Noah, after the great destruction, when the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat; and God promised never to destroy every living thing as He had done; While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest shall not cease – Genesis 8.

Harvest, in the OT is most frequently used in context with the Days belonging to the Lord; twice related to Pentecost; and twice related to the **Ingathering of the Harvest**; twice it is used by Isaiah describing the Lord as He watches from His dwelling place, for before the harvest – Isaiah 18. In the NT, this word is first used when Jesus said, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few – Matthew 9.

¹² **The vine dried up and the fig tree suffered; the pomegranate tree, palm tree, and apricot tree, all the trees of the field, are dried up** / which is why the caretakers should be ashamed, they did not do their job; Paul wrote: some plant, some water, and God would give the increase – 1Corinthians 3:

and joy dried up from the children of Adam / after 3 days without water, man starts to die; and the joy of Adam's race is dried up because they haven't been given the water of God's word whereby they live; so, what's going on? The prophet reminds us: the joy of the Lord is our strength – **Nehemiah 8**.

Note, those who make God their heart's delight, rejoice in Him as the God of their salvation, even when the fig-tree does not blossom. Their spiritual joy is so far from withering, that it flourishes more than ever – **Habakkuk 3**. Creature-comforts perish. We can never be sure of the continuance of them – Matthew Henry.

¹³ Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests: wail, O ministers of the altar: come, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God / let the ministers of the Lord, weep for they share deeply in the calamity; those who rejoiced before the Lord, and spent time in singing; must now lament:

for the grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the household of your God / God keeps covenant with His people... to His own hurt – **Psalms 15**; but when they stopped giving thanks to Him? Wow! As long as they had the fruits of the earth in their season, they presented something even a dollar or two to the Lord, bringing flowers to the altar and tithes to those who served there.

Note, people may fill up the measure of their iniquity, while keeping their external performances in religion. When the meat and drink failed, the meat-offering and drink-offering also failed. The decay of piety and the neglect of divine offices, starves the faithful, it is indeed a sore judgment – Matthew Henry.

¹⁴ Consecrate a fast / Note, under public judgment, there ought to be public humiliation; by them the Lord God calls to weep and mourn -- Matthew Henry. In the NT we know it is good to fast; it is okay to be hungry; it can remind us many throughout the world are very hungry; many are literally starving to death; and it can remind us many are dying... who have never once heard the good news of God's word,

call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the earth

to the household of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord / call a day of restraint (so the margin reads) a day when people are restrained from ordinary business, and from bodily refreshments. They were to come to the place God designated to put His Name; it was a House of prayer for all the nations. The king of Nineveh appointed a fast, in which they were to taste nothing – **Jonah 3**. When God says, You will fast, it is time not to argue, it is time to say, **We will fast** – Matthew Henry.

¹⁵ Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near / God was beginning a controversy with them; either this means the continuing present judgment which they now saw breaking upon them, or some greater judgment and this was its preface. Joel says it is a specific day... and it is near; a day equal to Passover and Pentecost... it's a workday for Messiah; an appointment the Lord intends to keep; and if the Day of the Lord was near, then just imagine how close it is now in the 21st century; so stay awake, as the world begins its descent -- keep your eyes on the Lord,



and as destruction from the Almighty, it comes / it will be terrible; yet there is no escaping it, no resisting it: from the Almighty, it comes. **Isaiah 13** says, It is not a correction, it is a destruction; and it comes from the hand, not of a weak creature, but **the Almighty** – keep your eyes on Him.

¹⁶ **Is not the food cut off before our eyes** / we cannot remind ourselves enough... man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord – **Deuteronomy 8**;

yes, joy and gladness is cut off from the household of our God?

¹⁷ **The seed withers under their clods, the storehouses are desolate** / due to the lack of water; somebody stopped doing their job; Malachi said, bring the whole tithe -- all the 10th to the storehouse; and test God to see if He will not pour out a blessing you cannot contain – **Malachi 3**,

the granaries are broken down; because the grain dried up / due to the lack of water; somebody stopped watering the plantings in the field with the word of God; what a shame; the Lord said, some only needed... a cup of cold water.

¹⁸ **How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed, because there is no pasture for them; yes, even the flocks of sheep suffer** / a desperate generation will be asking, what is going on? all creation will be affected: cattle don't often complain; flocks of sheep innocently line up for the slaughter.

Concluding this section, Joel says, even the beasts of the field cry to their Creator; they appeal to His pity, according to their capacity; as they naturally depend upon God by instinct. And when they groan by reason of their calamity, He is pleased to say they cry to Him; their complaint is for the lack of water, the lack of grass, and these creatures of His creation, crying to God in those situations... they shame the stupidity of those who do not cry to God in any situation – Matthew Henry. **Wild Animals showing love to Humans**

¹⁹ **O Lord, to You I call: for fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame has burned all the trees of the field** / the watering places drying up at record speed = certain death.

²⁰ **Even the beasts of the field pant for You:**

for the water brooks are dried up, and the fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness / even the animals are asking: what is going on throughout the world? Their only water sources continue to rapidly dry up. It is interesting, most people do not know: as this commentary is being written in 2017, with all the DEW -- directed energy weapons... and years of rogue govt agencies – like Hitler on steroids, seeking to manipulate weather for their nefarious purposes (which always has to do with grabbing money) in numerous areas from north to south along the Mississippi River, in spite of all the recent rainstorms from manmade hurricanes and flooding, large tracks of water are suddenly drying up; farmers are asking: what's going on?

But God is laughing at the fools whom He is watching. Destruction is right on target. Keep our eyes on Him.

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