

JOEL

THE ARGUMENT

Since so many undeterminable points of less moment occur in our prophet, as of what tribe he was, whether his father were a prophet, whether he prophesied in Jeroboam's or Hezekiah's time, whether contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah; whether he preached to the ten tribes, or to the two tribes, or to both; whether the locusts are literal only, or typical and significative of enemies, or how many years they continued, what nations they did prefigure, when the execution began, when it ended; or when he began, or how long he continued to prophesy; —we may well rest ourselves contented in the undisputable things of greater moment, such as are, the Divine authority with which he came, attested by himself, **#Joe 1:1**, and confirmed to us by the apostle, **#Ac 2:17 Ro 10:13**, and by Christ himself, **#Mt 24:29 Mr 13:24 Lu 21:25**: all he spake is the word of God. The pernicious consequences of national sins, such as were visible on God's own people at this very time in parching droughts, devouring locusts, and famine; the only method for removing these judgments, fasting, prayer, and amendment of our life; the successive sufferings of the church under the several monarchies till the coming of the Messiah, with the wonderful preservation of the good during those times; the just and final decisions God will make for his against their oppressors in those kingdoms, doing it by raising the succeeding empire to punish and overthrow the precedent; the conversion of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles; the advancement of the kingdom of the Messiah and communications of gifts and graces to his church; the final and universal decision of all things that concern God and his church on the one side, and their enemies on the other; the general judgment of quick and dead,—are the great subjects he doth in plainer or darker terms set before us. In unfolding of the whole, whose excludes the letter and historical reference will fail on one hand, and whose excludes the typical and mystical reference will err as much on the other hand. In a due and just application of both lieth the true mean, which hath been aimed at in this enterprise, and how far attained is submitted to the judgment of those that read the ensuing annotations.

JOEL CHAPTER 1

Joel declareth the destruction of the fruits of the earth by noxious insects, **#Joe 1:1-7**, and by a long drought, **#Joe 1:8-13**. He recommendeth a solemn fasting with prayer to deprecate these judgments, **#Joe 1:14-20**.

Ver. 1.

Since this preface is word for word the same with that of Hosea, **#Ho 1:1**, see it there explained.

Joel; supposed to be of the posterity of Reuben, therefore could not be (as the Jews suppose) Samuel's son, nor will his time fit to **#1Ch 5:4,8**; but of what tribe soever, we know he came from God, and with his authority, and is so cited by the apostle, **#Ac 2:16**.

The son of Pethuel: more of this man I know not, and it is possible he might be, as the Jews suppose, very eminent, because he is named; however, it is an honour to be reported a prophet's father. The time of his prophesying, though not demonstrable, is with greatest probability laid about the latter end of Jeroboam the Second's reign over Israel, and in the days' of Uzziah over Judah.

Ver. 2.

Hear this: he is about to report a very wonderful occurrence, and desires all to consider it, mark it well, and tell me what you know.

Ye old men; the oldest among you, who can remember things done in your days when you were young, some scores of years past.

Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land: it is an appeal to all that may possibly know more than others, and remember better than others can.

Hath this been in your days? did you personally ever know the like?

Or even in the days of your fathers? did your fathers ever tell you of such a thing happening in their days? was there ever such a thing known among them? have you ever heard them speak of it?

Ver. 3.

Declare it very particularly, or record it, write it as in a book, that your children may know it, and the memory of it may be perpetuated; for as it was a very wonderful and unusual thing, so it was for to mind us of the cause of it, and what it taught, or should have taught, them and us.

Ver. 4.

Four sorts of insects pernicious to all sorts of trees, corn, and herbs are here mentioned, which did succeed each other, and devoured all that might be a future support to the Jews; whence ensued a grievous famine for four years together, say the Jewish interpreters, though there is no cogent reason in what they mention for proof hereof. These insects might in the same year succeed each other, the one, as is usual, might come sooner, the rest successively, each in its season, and so spoil the springing of all things, which they did (I do believe) really; and though these might be emblems of some future devastation, yet it seems most agreeable to reason, and the context, that there should really have been such caterpillars and other vermin, and that they did devour all that was green; and though this is no where else mentioned, as I remember, in the sacred history, yet it is likely it was done, as here told, and as so done was a figure of some greater devastation made by foreign powers, as by Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 5.

Awake: great drinkers of intoxicating liquors are apt to sleep and be secure, the prophet doth therefore here call to them, as to sleepers, and by one apt word expresseth a double duty, vigilance of mind as well as of the body; so may this be paralleled with **#Ro 13:11 1Th 5:6 1Pe 5:8**, or **#Eph 5:14**.

Ye drunkards; riotous livers, such as **#Pr 23:30-32 Isa 5:11,12**, whose life is nothing but a continued feasting with choicest wines, and in excess, such as **#Am 6:4-6**, describeth.

Weep and howl; lament your condition with sober tears, for the sorrows coming upon you are just matter of weeping; nor will an ordinary degree of weeping suffice, cry out and howl, like men surprised with insupportable miseries, **#Isa 13:6 14:31 15:2**.

All ye drinkers of wine, who offend by an inordinate use of wine, for it is not to be understood of every one that drinketh wine, but of such as before are called drunkards, who are in love with wine.

Because of the new wine, which is sweet and pleasing to the taste, and no doubt drank without stint or measure by men of that age, against which Joel prophesieth.

For it is cut off from your mouth; suddenly cut off, even when you are ready to drink it, and totally, all cut off by these devouring vermin; which as it was a narrative of what was already done, refers to that waste and famine by the locusts; as it is allegorical and predictive, it will be more dreadfully fulfilled when the enemies of Judah shall destroy all.

Ver. 6.

This verse countenanceth their conjecture who take the locusts and vermin to be emblematical in part as well as literal; for it seems not very suitable to call their teeth *teeth of a lion*.

For a nation; an innumerable multitude of locusts and caterpillars, called a nation here, as Solomon calls the conies and the ants, #Pr 30:25,26. A prognostic of a very numerous and mighty nation, that ere long will invade Judah.

Is come up, or suddenly will come, upon my land; upon Canaan, which God calls his land; or more particularly the two tribes, Judea strictly taken.

Strong; mighty in power and undaunted in courage, if you refer it to the Assyrians or Babylonians; if to those vermin, they are, though each weak by itself, yet in those multitudes which come, strong enough, and irresistible, and shall do God's work, that is, waste the land, and devour all before them.

Without number; not simply numberless, but in such multitudes none of you shall be able to recount them.

Whose teeth are the teeth of a lion; a strong lion of the middle age, that hath whelps, and hunts the prey for them.

And he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion; which is old, and the more fierce and terrible in his looks, no way lessened in his strength, and that preys for his young ones: now what waste such

lions make, such these locusts will make, such the Assyrians will make.

Ver. 7.

He, that nation of locusts, #**Joe 1:6**, both literally and mystically understood, hath laid my vine waste; made it a desolation, i.e. most desolate, which is more particularly declared in what followeth.

And barked my fig tree; peeled off the bark. which is certain destruction to the tree.

Made it clean bare; eat off all the rind and green bark, and left the body of both vine and fig tree bare and stripped.

And cast it away; as vermin cast out of their mouth the chewings of what they spoil, so here.

The branches thereof, all the branches of both vine and fig tree, are by these devouring vermin made white, all their green being eaten off; so miserably desolate will the enemy signified by these locusts make Judah, God's vine.

Ver. 8.

The vicious and wicked among the Jews were alarmed and threatened in the former part of the chapter; now the prophet bespeaks the good and godly among them to prepare for mournful times.

Lament: this is minatory, and threatens calamitous times shall come, as well as directive, what to do when they are come; when God calls for weeping we must not rejoice.

Like a virgin: this tells us to whom the prophet directs this part of his sermon, it is to those who amidst the Jews were like chaste and modest virgins, whose heart was fixed on one, her own, her chosen beloved husband.

Girded with sackcloth: in deep mournings the people of those countries did use sackcloth in their mourning habit, and wore it girded close to their skin.

For the husband of her youth; either married to her in youth, or espoused to her, but snatched away from her by an untimely death, which she doth most bitterly lament.

Ver. 9.

The meat-offering; which by Divine appointment was to be of fine flour, oil, and frankincense, as #Le 2:1, &c.; vi. 14, &c. This meat-offering was necessary to every sacrifice offered under the law; so that without the *mincha*, or meat-offering, the sacrifice was maimed and illegal.

The drink-offering; required daily, as appears #Ex 29:40,41 Nu 28:8; a fourth part of a hin of wine for one lamb, #Nu 28:7.

Is cut off; by the destruction of the vines by the locusts forementioned, all that wine (out of which they ought to, offer the drink-offering) did fail.

From the house of the Lord; it was to be poured out, if wine, and part of the meat-offering was to be burnt on the altar, so both were disposed according to the law in the house of the Lord.

The priests; sons of Aaron, with the Levites.

The Lord's ministers, who did serve the Lord in the services of the temple.

Mourn; grieve inwardly, and express it by outward signs. These had more cause than others to mourn, for as they had equal cause with others in respect to God, whose service hereby failed, so the priests, in respect to their private gain and maintenance, had more cause to mourn, their provision was by this means shortened.

Ver. 10.

The field is wasted; the soil that was wont to be fat and fruitful, and did shout with fruits, now lieth waste, horrid to look upon, and such as promises no fruit; the famine in their houses, and the ceasing of the sacrifices in the house of God, is like to be perpetuated.

The land mourneth; the inhabitants of the land, by a usual figure, here called the land.

The corn is wasted; the wheat and barley, their bread corn, is eaten up in its greenness by these devouring locusts, whether in the letter by vermin, or in the figure by the Babylonians.

The new wine is dried up; the word may as well be rendered is *ashamed*, or *confounded*; it is then a figurative expression, which

this prophet useth, #Joe 1:12,17, in the last of which it is rendered *withered*; if you retain, as well you may, our version, it plainly tells us the heats and drought with them were so great, that the vines were withered, and all their hopes of new wine by this means cut off.

The oil; the olive trees, as the vines, fade too, and promise very little oil.

Languisheth; neither able to send sap from the root to maintain its verdure, nor to put forth berries, or to bring them to maturity. Now as these words declare what barrenness was now upon the land, so it is a plain account of the reason why the priests are called to mourn, and why the meat-offering and drink-offering are cut off; these must cease when that ceaseth which made them up corn, wine, and oil.

Ver. 11.

Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen: some read it assertively, the husbandmen are ashamed, and as to matter of fact it is true they were ashamed; but the imperative mood, or by way of exhortation, will better suit the context. They are now called upon to blush, repent, and search into the cause of this barrenness, and loss of their labour in ploughing, sowing, and manuring their tillage; the prophet aims at this principally, to bring them, as well as the priests, to repentance.

Vine-dressers; a sort of men as well known with that people as gardeners are with us; men whose work was to plant, water, prune, and manage vineyards, and whose labour (unless for sin blasted) did usually succeed to a great increase.

Because the harvest of the field is perished; your sins have brought upon you this woeful scarcity, your harvest in which you expected your labour, and cares should be recompensed is perished, quite destroyed, as the word imports. This is just cause why you, O husbandmen, should lament, and further inquire why God is so displeased with you.

Ver. 12.

The vine is dried up: see #Joe 1:10,

The fig tree; a tree well known, and the fruit of it was usually a great advantage and benefit to the people of those countries.

The pomegranate tree; a pleasant tree, as appears So 4:13 7:12; and its fruit lovely, therefore fit for ornaments about the pillars of the temple. These in the common drought and by locusts have lost their beauty, and fail the hopes of him that planted them.

The palm tree; of great beauty in the height and uniformity of its growth, and that doth rise under the weight which would depress it, #Ps 92:12: with these Ezekiel's temple was adorned, #Eze 40:16,22,26; with the branches of these triumphant shows were also made; but these are withered and dry.

The apple tree; the fruit whereof was very useful, and did ordinarily well recompense the care of the planter, but now, as other trees, fail them.

All the trees of the field; none so hardy and able to bear unkind seasons, but are now destroyed by the judgments of God in drought and locusts.

Are withered; not as in autumn, when the leaf falleth, but, because the root fails, is either dead or dying.

Because; or therefore, or surely, for the particle here used is oftentimes assertive, not causal.

Joy is withered away from the sons of men; all mirth and liveliness of men is blasted with this dismal blast upon their labours and hopes; they cannot rejoice who foresee they shall be, nay, are already, pinched with want and famine.

Ver. 13.

Gird yourselves; bind your mourning sackcloth close to you with a girdle, that it may be more troublesome to the flesh; for though in Hebrew it is only gird, the phrase is well known in the Scripture, on these occasions, to include sackcloth, as what is girded on the mourner, and sackcloth is expressly mentioned #Joe 1:8, and in many other places, #Isa 15:3 Jer 4:8 La 2:10 Eze 7:18 27:31.

Lament; weep bitterly, as they do who mourn for the dead, lament over your dead joys; let it be a hearty grief, as that of

Abraham for Sarah, #Ge 23:2, of Jacob's children and friends sorrowing for his death, #Ge 1 10, or of Israel lamenting their brave judge, #1Sa 28:3. *Ye priests*; that you may be example to others, and because they had, as observed yet. 9, a double cause to mourn, one more than the rest of the people.

Howl: see #Joe 1:5.

Ye ministers of the altar: they were the Lord's ministers, #Joe 1:9; now ministers of the altar, they served the Lord in the things of the altar.

Lie all night; the case needs a continued fasting, weeping, and supplication in the most humble posture, and with all the tokens of an afflicted spirit. The priests should above others mourn; if they mourn in the day, the priests should mourn night and day.

My God, who, having sent me to speak to you in his name, doth call you to this, that he may pardon and bless you. when you repent.

The meat-offering, &c.: see #Joe 1:9.

Ver. 14.

Sanctify ye; you priests, ministers of my God, set apart a day, or more days, appoint a time, forbid all servile work and sensual pleasures, do what you may to prepare for such a necessary work.

A fast; wherein to afflict yourselves, confess your sins, repent of them, sue out your pardon, and return to God, that tie may remove your present calamities, and prevent the future.

Call a solemn assembly; proclaim and publish it, that every one may know they are restrained from common, daily work, and that they are commanded to come together, most solemnly to seek the Lord. Gather the elders; both for age and for authority, magistrates and rulers, who possibly had been by their sins, more than others, cause of these grievous calamities, and should now be examples to others in repenting.

And all the inhabitants of the land; make this fast as public and universal as you can, command all the people of the land, all that dwell with you; perhaps the prophet intends proselytes of the law, and those of commerce, as well as the Jews.

Into the house of the Lord; courts of the temple, for priests only might go into the temple itself; the court of Israel, where the people were wont to pray. Your God; remember the covenant by which you are his people, and he is your God, that you may plead his promises as well as wait for his mercies. And cry unto the Lord, with tears of repentance, with prayer of faith, cry more with the broken heart than loud voice.

Ver. 15.

This verse and the three next may be looked upon either as a particular declaration of the grounds of this fast, or as a direction how to manage the fast, a suggesting to the people what they should spread before the Lord, or else as the words of the priests, bewailing the calamitous state of the land.

Alas! it is a very pathetic bemoaning themselves, which speaks their sense of the evil they suffered.

For the day; the day of trouble, sorrow, and great distress.

For the day of the Lord: this explains the former; it is a day of greater troubles than yet they felt, troubles which God will heap upon them, a day in which God will be judge, and punish by the locusts, by the drought, and by Babylonians, unless you repent.

Is at hand; great calamities were now upon them, and greater were approaching to them: if the prophet aim at the captivity of the two tribes, it was one hundred and eighty years off; if of the ten tribes, it was about sixty years off, for he prophesieth about the latter end of Jeroboam the Second; it is likely therefore he aimeth at some other calamities.

As a destruction; a total overthrow of the kingdom, the worship of God, and all your labours in your land.

From the Almighty; whose displeasure, as a consuming fire, can and will burn up all before it; his power and hand will do it, and then nothing can resist it.

Shall it come; most certainly and speedily, nothing can retard or divert it, unless fasting, prayers, and tears, and amendment do it.

Ver. 16.

Is not the meat? the question does most vehemently affirm, our food, what we should eat, i.e. all provision we should live upon.

Cut off; devoured by locusts, or withered with drought, it is perished.

Before our eyes; we see it, it is not so far off as what is foretold, it is under our eye.

Yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God: sacrifices fail much, and priests have scarce enough to live upon, while free-will offerings, first-fruits, and tithes amount to very little, not sufficient to feast the sacrificers and offerers, who on such occasion did use to rejoice in the house of God.

Ver. 17.

The seed; called so from the seedsman's scattering it abroad when he soweth it, and in this place only so used, for aught I can observe, and yet this use of it here is justified by all the following words; the grain which is sown for the seed against next spring.

Is rotten; is putrefied, grown musty and fruitless; nor is this word any where else used in Scripture. Under their clods, and earth, from under which the seed covered should spring up, but now, as unsound, rotten, and fruitless seed, is lost under it.

The garner, or storehouses, treasuries of corn, in which it was kept for future use,

are laid desolate; either run to ruin, because the owners, discouraged with the barrenness of the seasons, would not repair them; this will intimate that this judgment lasted some years, and is better ground for it than the four sorts of vermin repeated one after another, in **#Joe 1:4:** or else desolate, being pulled down, and the materials employed for other uses, till they may have corn to keep in them.

The barns, in which they lodged their unthrashed corn,

are broken down; neglected, and without repair;

for the corn is withered; there was no use of them, no corn to be laid up, all withered, and therefore the barns were not regarded.

Ver. 18.

How do the beasts groan? so great was the penury and want of sustenance, that the beasts in the field, pinched with hunger,

groaned, made dismal noise for fodder and water; the word *beasts* is general, and contains all sorts.

The herds of cattle; the greater cattle, which go wandering about, and range over all places, yet can find no pasturage.

The flocks of sheep; which, led by shepherds, might likely be supposed better secured; yet their shepherds find no pasture, and the sheep pine away and starve. These things are mentioned, either as convincing men of their stupidity, who were less sensible of present miseries than brute beasts were, or to provoke them to lay to heart the pressing calamities, or as arguments that lie would pity and relieve innocent brutes, though he punished sinful brutes.

Ver. 19.

O Lord, Maker and Preserver of these poor famished cattle,

to thee will I cry: either it is the prophet's prayer he maketh, or a form prescribed for the priests.

The fire; the immoderate heats, or else the scorching and blasting flashes of fire in the air, which in those hot countries are more frequent and more precious than in colder climates.

Hath devoured the pastures; the fruitful and pleasant places where shepherds pitched their tents, and were used to feed their sheep, all are parched and dried as if burned with fire.

Of the wilderness; either because the shepherds chose to pitch their tents far from cities and towns; or else because in those vast wildernesses there were some fruitful pastures scattered up and down, some lower places of springs and water-courses.

The flame, the flashes of fire from the clouds, or in the air, without thunder, or else lightnings with thunder,

hath burnt all the trees, that they neither afford their fruit, their shade, or their green boughs for browse for the relief of man or beast. This extreme desolation should affect them all; it doth shame the sinfully Senseless among them; and it is a good argument to use with God, whose creatures they are as well as man.

Ver. 20.

The beasts: see #Joe 1:18.

Cry; the wilder sort, that rove about many miles seeking their livelihood, find no sustenance, they look up to God, and cry to him: these creatures, that can better shift for themselves, yet can make no good shift; they utter their complaints in their sad tones, they have a voice to cry, as well as an eye to look to God.

Unto thee, who only canst open thy hand, and fill them. Learn, ye brutish among men, look and cry to God. And again, Have pity, O God, many of thy sinless creatures perish without relief; hear them, though thou shouldst not hear men.

The rivers are dried up; most extreme and tedious drought, which hath dried up the rivers themselves; there is no drink for the cattle, they must perish without help, unless thou, O God, send a plentiful and fruitful rain.

The fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness: see this explained above, #Joe 1:19.

JOEL CHAPTER 2

The prophet describeth the locusts as a mighty ar led by God to destroy the land, #Joe 2:1-11. He exhorteth to repentance, #Joe 2:12-14; prescribeth a general fast and humiliation, #Joe 2:15-17; and promiseth mercy from God, #Joe 2:18-20. He comforteth Zion with present blessings, #Joe 2:21-27; and prophesieth the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and other blessings of the gospel, #Joe 2:28-32.

Ver. 1.

Blow ye the trumpet: the prophet continueth his advice or exhortation to the priests, who were by office appointed to summon the solemn assemblies, and to call them together by sound of trumpet or cornet; and so would he have the priests to gather the people together to fast, and weep, and pray.

In Zion; which taken largely is the same with Jerusalem, though strictly taken it is the hill on which the city of David, or his royal palace, did stand.

Sound an alarm; give notice that all may be prepared against the enemy, let it be known that the enemy is coining, what danger attends his coming, and what provision should be made.

In my holy mountain; in Jerusalem, in Moriah, on which the temple did stand.

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; stand in awe of God's majesty, fear his displeasure, and do this with a penitent heart, all you that dwell in the land of Canaan, the parched and burnt land.

For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: see #Joe 1:15.

Ver. 2.

A day of darkness and of gloominess; metaphorically taken for a time of exceeding great troubles and calamities, according to the style of the Scriptures, which express prosperity by the metaphor of light, and adversity by darkness. which certainly is intended here; and the synonymous terms are here multiplied, to intimate the extremity and length of these troubles. And this passage may well allude to the day of judgment, and the calamities which shall precede that day.

Thick darkness does undoubtedly imply, as the gradual approach, so the dismal effect of God's judgments and the Jews' miseries. See this word used #2Sa 22:10, with #12-16 Ps 18:9,11. It was such terror with which God gave the law, and in such he will punish the transgressors of his law.

As the morning spread upon the mountains; as the morning spreads itself suddenly over all the hemisphere, and as it first spreads itself upon the high mountains, so should the approaching calamities overtake this people.

A great people: this seems more directly to intend the Babylonians rather than locusts, yet both are numerous, as the word imports, Heb.: see #Joe 1:6.

And a strong; bold to attempt, and mighty in strength to execute; both true of Assyrians or Babylonians, or the locusts.

There hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more: locusts, emblem of the warlike nations, and the spoil done by both, are here described the greatest that ever yet were known; and of the Assyrian or Babylonian spoil made in Judea, the history doth ascertain this.

Even to the years of many generations; if ever the like be, it shall not be in many ages to come.

Ver. 3.

A fire, either the heat of the sun more vehement than usual, or the locusts, or Chaldeans and Babylonians resembled by locusts, as fire, shall devour, utterly consume and eat up,

before them; that people, #Joe 2:2.

Behind them a flame burneth; what is left behind them is as burnt with a flame; all that the locusts leave behind them is as that which the flame hath scorched, dried, and turned into charcoal; or, all the Chaldeans and Babylonians leave behind them is (as customary with the barbarous invaders) set on fire, and what they cannot bat or carry away they destroy with fire.

The land is as the garden of Eden before them; it is every where most fruitful and pleasant, a land where they have not yet come. This is expressed in that proverbial speech,

as the garden of Eden: see #Isa 51:3 Eze 36:35.

And behind them a desolate wilderness; but wherever these locusts, or the armies they signify, come, all is turned into a most desolate wilderness. Nothing shall escape; nothing that was for beauty and pleasure, nor any thing for necessity and support of life.

Ver. 4.

The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; their carriage, for fierceness, agility, and irresistibleness, is like that of horses trained up to the wars, of which #Job 39:19, &c.

And as horsemen, so shall they run: this gives light to the former expression, and by it we see these locusts are not resembled to the horse for shape, but for their nimbleness in motion. And as were these types, so should the armies which were typified be also.

Ver. 5.

Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap; such warlike chariots on resounding mountains do, with their rapid motions, and shaking their irons about them, make a

great and dreadful noise; so should these locusts in their flight; by which they shall terrify the people before they come to them, for the noise of them may be heard, say some, at six miles' distance.

Like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble; which does with continued crackling burn what is under the flame, and threaten speedy and inevitable ruin to what is before it; all shall be endangered by it, as if surrounded with flaming fire.

As a strong people; so #Joe 2:2.

Set in battle array; prepared to assault and destroy: in pursuance of this metaphor, see #Joe 2:7-11.

Ver. 6.

Before their face, at the sight of these locusts, both literally and figuratively considered,

the people of the land shall be much pained; as a woman in travail is in pain, their fears shall be very great, lest these devouring creatures should seize and destroy whatever was for support of their life, and life of their families.

All faces shall gather blackness; such as is the colour of dead men, or as is the dark paleness of men frightened into fits and swoons.

Ver. 7.

They, locusts, and they who by the locusts are signified, viz. Chaldeans, Assyrians, or Babylonians,

shall run, with speed, fierceness, and irresistible power, against their enemies.

Mighty men; valiant and strong men, or giants.

They shall climb the wall; no walls of any fortified towns shall be high enough to keep them out. Strange locusts, that assault cities! but armed and commissioned of God, they shall vigorously act their part, and do what he appointeth and commandeth them to do.

Like men of war; who fear no power that from within the cities might oppose them, they shall valiantly and skilfully manage the assault.

They shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: naturalists testify the truth of this in the stories of these insects, and their marshalling of themselves, of which also see #Pr 30:27 Na 3:17. This skill in ordering, and steadiness in keeping order, like exactly trained soldiers, foretells the terror and strength both of the armies signified by these locusts, and of the locusts themselves. As these then did, so the Assyrians, Chaldeans, or Babylonians should proceed in arms against this people.

Ver. 8.

Neither shall one thrust another: the prophet, in pursuance of the allegory, tells us how this army of locusts do move without disorder; so shall they who are hereby typified; it is much the same with the last clause of the former verse.

They shall walk; before it was run, i.e. for speed, now it is walk, for stedfast and even motion.

Every one in his path; the track he first takes to, follow his leader exactly, and observe rank and file.

When they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded; the sword shall not be a weapon to destroy them, they shall run among swords, yet not be wounded; literally verified in the locusts, and verified in the strange preservations and escapes from dangers in midst of the most desperate adventures made by Assyrians or Babylonians.

Ver. 9.

In this verse we must discern what is any whir proper to the locusts, and what is applicable more fitly to the soldiers figured by them.

They shall run to and fro: this seems not proper to these insects, which move forward, and alter not their course in such limited and straitened bounds as a city; but this well suits with soldiers that conquer a city, and search all places for plunder and prey.

In the city; in every city that they take.

They shall run upon the wall; to clear the wall of all the besieged who did defend it, to help up others that were scaling the

wall, and to seize towers which were built upon the wall: this is better fitted to soldiers that take a city than to locusts.

They shall climb up upon the houses; either forsaken and shut fast up by the inhabitants before they left them, or houses defended by such as are in them, as is usual in cities taken by assault.

They shall enter in at the windows; where they can find the first entrance, there they will through, and nothing shall keep them out.

Like a thief; suddenly, unexpectedly, to spoil at least, if not to kill and destroy: locusts and soldiers will do this.

Ver. 10.

Literally taken, this verse is an elegant description of most unparalleled armies of locusts, sent of God to waste this sinful people, in the description whereof the prophet shows his lofty style, and in a divine hyperbole warns the people: but there is another sense of the words we must look to; these locusts in this prophecy are hieroglyphics and emblems, and so are the earth, heaven, sun, moon, and stars. By

earth, thus considered, the vulgar, mean multitudes are many times set forth; here, the common people among the Jews.

Shall quake before them; locusts first, and armies of foreign enemies afterwards, and that ere long.

The heavens shall tremble; grandees, rulers, and counsellors, or the whole frame of the kingdom and government, shall shake and tremble, their hearts shall sink within them who should be a support to others.

The sun, their king,

and the moon, their queen, who may as particularly be here pointed at as the queen of Nineveh is **#Na 2:7,**

shall be dark; overwhelmed with amazement from the greatness of their troubles. The stars shall withdraw their shining; the courtiers and men of eminency, that were as stars for glory and brightness, shall be covered with clouds, and these thick and black; all this miserable confusion threatened against them for

their sins, and in this emblem of vast multitudes of locusts presented to their thoughts.

Ver. 11.

The Lord, Jehovah, the eternal and almighty God, Lord of hosts, **shall utter his voice**; summon them in, and encourage them, as a general doth encourage his soldiers engaging in fight; God commands their attendance, and countenanceth their attempts.

Before his army of locusts and insects; and of Assyrians, Chaldeans, or Babylonians, signified by locusts.

His camp is very great; very numerous and strong, and therefore described by the prophet in a manner almost above belief; it is the host which God gathers together, and by which he will do great things.

He is strong; he giveth strength to his army, and is among them the Strong One; he doth by them execute his own purpose and threats, and so shows his strength.

That executeth his word; what he hath declared and threatened to do.

The day of the Lord: see #Joe 1:15.

Is great; wherein great sinners are punished, great judgments are executed, by great power in the instruments, and by greater power in the hand that useth them.

Very terrible; full of terror, and such as will make the stoutest heart quail.

Who can abide it? neither king, nobles, nor warriors, but all faces gather blackness, as it is #Joe 2:6,10.

Ver. 12.

Therefore, since so great displeasure is conceived against you for your sins, and so terrible execution is shortly to be made upon you, and there is no way of resistance or escape left,

turn ye even to me; repent of your sins whereby you have departed from me; all this preparation made against you is made not to destroy you utterly, but to awaken you to repentance; whilst

you may find mercy upon repentance, be advised to it, and prevent your final desolation.

With all your heart; not hypocritically, with divided heart, but sincerely and with full purpose of amendment: let your heart, your whole heart, first be turned to me your God and Sovereign.

With fasting; public fasting as well as private, such fasting as is required, **#Joe 1:14,**

With weeping; make it appear that you are sensible of, and deeply affected with, your former sins in the jollity of your sensual life, now weep for it.

And with mourning; tears do well become a fast, but they must not be tears only, but a mournful frame of heart within, a fountain of these tears, is expected, and indeed required.

Ver. 13.

Rend your heart; lay them open, as chirurgeons lay open putrefying sores that they may be thoroughly cleansed; remove iniquity from your heart, as the Chaldee paraphrast.

And not your garments; as hypocrites do, who in sudden or great troubles easily stoop to tear a loose garment, but hardly are brought to rend their hearts: what God expecteth most they cannot be persuaded to, but what he careth least for they are ready to do. Be not such hypocrites before God, who cannot be mocked, nor spare them who dare do it: let your garments escape if you please; but your hearts, break them, circumcise them, **#De 10:16.**

Turn unto the Lord your God; in repenting keep hope alive, look to God as your God, who by covenant hath promised to stow you mercy on your repenting and turning to him, **#De 13:17 30:8,9 Isa 55:7 Jer 31:19,20 32:38-10.**

He is gracious; gentle, easy to be entreated, and ready to forgive the guilty.

Merciful; compassionate, and ready to show pity and relieve the indigent: you are both guilty and afflicted; return to your God, who is gracious to pardon your guilt, and merciful to relieve your miseries.

Slow to anger; who hath spared, doth still spare, and waits purposely that you might have time to repent, and turn and live.

Of great kindness: your provocations are many and great, yet return, for his mercy is great, his kindnesses are many.

And repenteth him of the evil; not as man, but as becometh his own holy, just, and immutable nature, he turneth from executing the fierceness of his wrath, **#Jer 18:7-10**. Be wise and obedient, and follow my counsel, repent and make your peace with God.

Ver. 14.

None need be discouraged, as if it were too late to seek and hope for mercy; God will pardon the truly penitent, and deliver them from eternal miseries, and it is possible he may deliver from present temporal calamities also. If you obtain not all you would, you shall obtain enough to show that it was worth your while to seek God.

Return: God doth not locally move from one place to another, but when he withholds his blessings, the fruits of his favour, he is said to withdraw himself; so when he gives out his blessings, he is said to return.

Repent: see #Joe 2:13.

Leave a blessing behind him; cause the locusts to depart before they have eaten up all that is in the land.

A meat-offering and a drink-offering: see #Joe 1:9.

Ver. 15.

Blow the trumpet in Zion: see #Joe 2:1.

Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: see #Joe 1:14.

Ver. 16.

Gather the people, assemble the elders: see **#Joe 1:14**.

Gather the children; though they understand little what is done, yet their cries under the affliction of a fast ascend, God hears, and with pity looks on their tears.

And those that suck the breasts; let your fast be most universal, spare not sucking children, bring them with you; their tears and cries may perhaps move the congregation to greater mourning and

earnest supplication to God for mercy, or will be a fit object to present unto the God of mercy to move him to show mercy. So the Ninevites, #Jon 3:7,8.

Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber; let the newly-married man leave the mirth of the nuptials, and lay aside his bravery awhile, and afflict himself with the rest.

And the bride out of her closet, or chamber, in which with the virgins she adorned herself or caressed them. That these may more earnestly seek the Lord, let them at this season forbear lawful delights.

Ver. 17.

Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep, see #Joe 1:13.

Between the porch; that stately porch built by Solomon, #1Ki 6 3 Eze 40:48,49.

And the altar; not of incense, for that was in the holy place; but the great brazen altar, or altar of burnt-offering, which stood at some distance from this porch; and here the priests are commanded to stand, fasting and praying, whence they might be heard and seen by the people in the next court, in which the people were wont to pray.

Let them say, with loud voice, and with louder heart and affection; after this manner let them pray and intercede with God.

Spare: this includes confession of sin, acknowledging God's justice, laying themselves at the foot of God for mercy, and imploring of mercy; Though we have sinned and deserve severe wrath, yet spare, deal not with us as we deserve.

Thy people: this includes all they can plead from the covenant of God with them, his grace, promise, faithfulness, &c.; We are thy peculiar people, thou art our God, therefore spare, &c.

Give not; thou only canst expose us to famine and servitude, and both will come upon us if thou first give us up to these predooming locusts, they will consume all, and if thou after give us up to those nations which as locusts are innumerable and irresistible. O give us not up to them.

Thine heritage; chosen, redeemed, possessed through many ages by thee. O Lord, even since we came out of Egypt thou hast owned us for thine heritage: though whilst we were impenitent, and sinned high against thee, we deserved to be cast off; now we return, repent, and pray, be gracious to us, and continue to own and bless thine heritage; since thou canst make it fruitful and beautiful, command it to excel in both; cultivate, fence, and watch over it, it is thine-heritage.

To reproach; it is a reproach to any land that it starves or eats up the inhabitants thereof, #Nu 13:32 Eze 36:30; and famine, though by locusts, will be a reproach to this thine heritage; it will be greater reproach to be slaves to the nations signified by the locusts; therefore of mercy deliver us from both one and the other.

The heathen; whether Assyrians, or Chaldeans, or Babylonians.

Rule over them; conquer first, and then enslave thy people; or, as the word will bear, take them up for a taunt and proverb, when they shall know that they leave their own land as too barren a place to maintain them, or seek their bread at a dear rate in heathen lands.

Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? nay, these barbarous people will not so much consider our sins, or justify our God, but they will reproach God, our God, the great God, as if unable to maintain us. O spare for thine own glory's sake, never let them as #Ps 115:2 deride thee our God.

Ver. 18.

Then, when you follow my advice, saith Joel. and heartily you of your sins, and turn to God, &c.,

will the Lord be jealous, will show his love and zeal, for the credit of his land, the land of Canaan,

and pity his people; consider their prayers, their arguments, and tears, and upon the whole will deal so with them that they shall know I do own them for my people, and that I will do them good.

Ver. 19.

Yea, or *And*, Heb.

The Lord will answer; before it was he would pity, #**Joe 2:18**; not as men many times pity and profess to have compassion for the miserable who cry to them, yet do nothing; but God will pity their case and hear their request, nay, grant their request and relieve them.

And say; speak to and work for his people.

Unto his people; his covenant, praying, repenting, and reforming people.

Behold; what he doth for such a people shall be visible, remarkable, and such as they may observe.

I will send you corn, and wine, and oil: fruitful seasons shall come when God sends them, his command to the heavens to pour down their sweet and fruitful influences shall certainly be obeyed; these must hear God, and then the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, as #**Ho 2:21,22**.

Ye shall be satisfied therewith; you shall have abundance to fill and satisfy you, that you may rejoice in your habitations and know no want.

I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen; your heathen neighbours shall no more insult over you ny people, nor over The your God. Obey my prophet, turn from your sins, and I will do you all this good I promise, or you need and ask.

Ver. 20.

But, Heb. *And,*

I will remove far off from you the northern army; that part of these numerous locusts which are towards the north shall be removed far from you, no more to annoy you on that quarter: some say this refers to the dissipation of Sennacherib's army, which came up from the parts which lay somewhat northerly from Jerusalem and Judea.

And will drive him; some other part of this locust army shall be driven away into the southern deserts, here described by a

barren and desolate land.

His face; the van of this army, here called the *face*, shall be driven into the

east sea; the sea of Tiberias, or the Salt Sea, or the Dead Sea, east of Jerusalem.

His hinder part, the rear of this army of insects, shall be driven into the great, the west sea, here called the utmost sea, in the letter and history. The total destruction of this army of insects is here foretold, which no doubt came to pass. If Sennacherib's army and its dissipation were here shadowed out, it is fairly accommodable to this place, when upon his death and the rout of his army from heaven, his forces retired out of Judea on all quarters with loss of men, as is ever the fate of an invading army beaten in the heart of the invaded country.

His ill savour shall come up; the stench of these locusts destroyed and lying putrefied on the face of the earth, or the corpses of the Assyrians slain and unburied.

Because he hath done great things: some refer this to the locusts, and those whom they signified; he, i.e. this army of locusts or Assyrians: others refer it to God, thus,

for he will do great things; as indeed the utter destroying of this devouring army, and removal of this dreadful famine, was a great work and marvellous, and it was an answer to their fasting and praying; though it was not all done which is contained in this conditional promise, for that this people never performed the condition.

Ver. 21.

Fear not, O land. In #Joe 2:10, the land is said to quake at the approach of this devouring army; now at the approach of mercy it is encouraged, and commanded not to fear; by the same figure and in the same sense, it should not fear now as before it did quake.

Be glad and rejoice: this tells us that *fear not* was a meosis; shout for joy, express the greatest confidence.

For the Lord, who is your God whom you seek, who by me assureth you it is his gracious purpose to do great things for your good,

will do great things: either this explains that last clause, **#Joe 2:20**, or is antitheton to it; the locusts, God's messengers and servants. did great things against, but now God will recall these, and do great things for Israel.

Ver. 22.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field. In **#Joe 1:18-20**, the poor beasts were represented as in greatest perplexity, for want of pasture they were like to perish; but now they are (as if capable of fears or joy from foresight of what was coming toward them) encouraged, they should find pasture, both the tamer which are under man's hand, and the wilder which range the mountains.

The pastures of the wilderness: see **#Joe 1:19**. *Do spring*; begin to look green, and the grass fresh promise the food for you. The tree beareth her fruit; all sorts of trees, though they were withered, and seemed to be dead, **#Joe 1:12**, now they recover their strength and bring forth fruit.

The fig tree does not, as **#Joe 1:12**, languish.

The vine is not, as before, dried up, but with change of season hath changed its hue.

Do yield their strength; both these trees do mightily bear, are full of fruit, and bring forth as much as ever they are able to stand under.

Ver. 23.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion: in the former verse the prophet, by a usual figure, and with known elegancy, called on land and beasts, though they understood him not; now he addresseth himself to them that can understand their work as well as their advantages, and the children of Zion, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, who were called to fast and weep.

Rejoice in the Lord; show yourselves sensible of your mercies, thankful to that free bounty which gave your mercies; rejoice, but not only in your barns, garners, and bellies full, but in the eternal God, who hath been found of you.

Your God; as such you were advised to seek him, as such own him, rejoice in him, and ascribe glory to him, who keepeth

covenant to a thousand generations, and hath remembered his covenant for you in this your low estate.

He hath given you the former rain moderately; the Hebrew will bear it, *a teacher of, or unto, or according to, righteousness.* Either some eminent prophet, or prophets, as Isaiah, or Joel himself, but as forerunners and types of the great Prophet Christ; so the words will be a promise of the Messiah, and lead these children of Zion to the Messiah, as the fountain of all the blessings they receive of God in temporals as well as spirituals: it is usual in Scripture thus to pass from temporal to spiritual, and from spiritual to temporal promises and blessings; so **#Isa 7:4**, &c, with **#Isa 7:14-16**: but since our best interpreters retain, as ours, this version, rain moderately, or in due measure. We adhere to it also: God had sent sweet, gentle, yet sufficient showers to make the earth fruitful, and these showers have made pastures and trees to spring, flourish, and be fruitful.

And he will cause to come down for you the rain; as he hath already given some, so he will give more, as the earth and trees shall need.

The former rain; the autumn rain, which is needful to mellow the earth, and fit it to receive the corn and fruits, and to plant and sow them, about September.

The latter rain; needful to bring forward and ripen the fruits planted or sown, accounted the latter rain because these husbandmen and vine-dressers reckoned from seed time unto spring and harvest.

In the first month; that is, our March; both these rains, as promised **#De 11:14 Le 26:4**, shall be given from heaven.

Ver. 24.

The floors, where they thrashed their corn, shall be full of wheat, the best and most useful grain, the bread corn for man's life and support.

The fats, the vessels into which the liquor ran out of the press,

shall overflow with wine and oil; there shall be of the grape and olive enough to fill the vessels, nay, to make them run over,

though the care of good husbands will save it; for what was said, **#Joe 2:22**, is here fulfilled, the vine doth yield its strength.

Ver. 25.

I will restore; make up to you, or compensate: the lean years of Egypt did eat up the fat, but with you now the fat years shall feed and enrich the lean ones.

The years: by this it appears that this dreadful famine by these insects was longer than of one year's continuance, and perhaps countenanceth the Jewish conjecture of four because four sorts of insects are mentioned. These in the late years devoured the fruit of the earth, but now God will restore the fruits.

The locust, &c.; all recounted **#Joe 1:4**, with little variation of the order wherein named.

My great army: see **#Joe 2:3-11**.

Which I sent: there was somewhat extraordinary in these armies of insects by which the people then living and afflicted by them might see they were sent immediately from Heaven, though history do not report it to us.

Ver. 26.

Ye shall eat; enjoy and live upon. *In plenty;* not with scarcity, as when water is measured to them, and bread is given by weight, **#Eze 4:16**.

Be satisfied; the bread they eat shall refresh them, maintain their strength, not be as that **#Hag 1:6**.

Praise the name; ascribe the glory to the mercy and faithfulness, to the power and wisdom, of your God; ye shall speak of it to his praise, stop the mouths of insulting heathens.

The Lord your God: see **#Joe 2:13**. *Dealt wondrously;* in one year giving as much as the locusts wasted in the years foregoing, whether three, or four, or more.

My people; you that are my people, demeaning yourselves as becometh my people.

Shall never be ashamed; neither disappointed of your hopes, nor refused when you pray, nor necessitated to seek relief among the heathen, who will reproach you and me.

Ver. 27.

And ye, who repent, pray, are blessed with such answer to your prayers,

shall know; by experience shall see, and acknowledge.

That I am in the midst of Israel; my true Israel, obedient Israel; I am with them to bless them, defend them, guide them, and provide for them.

That I am the Lord; the almighty and everlasting God.

Your God, as I was the God of your father Abraham; yours in peculiar manner by covenant, and to redeem you from evil.

And none else; that there is not a god beside me, that the idols you formerly doted upon were no gods, that the idols the heathen boast of are a doctrine of lies, and deceive them that trust on them.

My people shall never be ashamed: see #Joe 2:26.

Ver. 28.

It shall come to pass, most certainly this shall be done, afterward; in the latter days, after the return out of Babylonish captivity, after the various troubles and salvations by which they may know that I am the Lord, their God in the midst of them, when those wondrous works shall be seconded by the most wonderful of all, the sending the Messiah, in his day and under his kingdom.

I will pour out my Spirit; in large abundant measures will I give my Holy Spirit, which the Messiah exalted shall send, #Joh 16:7; in extraordinary power and gifts in the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, and in ordinary measure and graces to all believers, #Eph 4:8-11.

Upon all flesh; before these gifts were confined to a few people, to one particular nation, to a very small people; but now they shall be enlarged to all nations, #Ac 2:33 10:45, to all that believe, all that are regenerate.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: this was in part fulfilled according to the letter in the first days of the gospel; but this promise is rather of a comparative meaning, thus, By pouring out of the Holy Spirit on your sons and your daughters, they shall have as clear and full knowledge of the deep mysteries of God's law as prophets beforetime had. The law and prophets were till John, and during this time the gifts of the Spirit were given in lesser measures, and of all men the prophets had greatest measures of the Spirit; but in these days, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John.

Your old men shall dream dreams; no difference of age, to old men who had been long blind in the things of God the mysteries of grace shall be revealed, and these shall know as certainly and clearly as if God had extraordinarily revealed himself to them by dreams sent of God upon them.

Your young men shall see visions; many young men shall be as eminent in knowledge as if the things known were communicated by vision. In a word, all knowledge of God and his will shall abound among all ranks, sexes, and ages in the Messiah's days, and not only equal, but surpass, all that formerly was by prophecy dreams, or visions.

Ver. 29.

And also, with equal freeness, upon the servants and upon the handmaids, upon the meanest believers: see **#Ga 3:28 Col 3:11.**

My Spirit, of sanctification and adoption.

Ver. 30.

And I will show wonders; as he promiseth such grace to believers, so he warneth them that they should not be surprised with those alarming prodigies which in those days God would show, which would usher in the hard times that should be chastisement to the best, and destruction to the worst: whoso will read and observe what historians and naturalists report of those times will see this fulfilled in the very letter, and **#Mt 24:7,29 Mr 13:24 Lu 21:11,25.**

In the heavens and in the earth; above men, and under their feet; all which signs are particularly named, and first the signs on the earth.

Blood; possibly eruption of blood, as some fountains have been reported to have run with blood, and these prefiguring the great effusion of blood by the sword and wars following, or by antichristian persecutions.

Fire; either breaking out of the earth, or else unusual lightnings, and unparalleled flashes of lightnings in the lower region of the air, setting many things on fire.

Pillars of smoke; from those burning things fired by lightnings, or by extraordinary flashes, a smoke shall go up like a pillar. Particular instances of these may not here be gathered together, but Hottinger, that learned and painful historian, hath gathered many together of the first age, and so of the following ages of the church, in his Ecclesiastical History, which who desireth may consult.

Ver. 31.

Having mentioned the prodigies which were to be wrought on earth, now the prophet specifieth what shall be done in heaven, where the great luminaries shall be wonderfully affected.

The sun shall be turned into darkness; shall be greatly obscured; shall seem to be turned from a body of light to mere darkness.

The moon into blood; either by eclipse, or by the intervention of vapours drawn up from the places where was great slaughter and effusion of blood; however as to manner, it is most certain as to the event; the moon shall seem to be blood.

Before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come; great to all, terrible to the rejecters and persecutors of Christ. This day was the day of Jerusalem's' destruction, and burning of the temple, and slaughter of the Jews, for their violence against and murder of the Messiah, for their sins against the gospel: this was fulfilled partly in the devastation of Jerusalem, but shall fully and finally be fulfilled in the day of judgment, and at the consummation of the world.

Ver. 32.

Yet when nature seems out of course, and such terrible convulsions overthrow all states and kingdoms, and nothing but ruin and destruction appear on every side, yet then most certainly

it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord; whoso heareth the gospel, repenteth of sin, believeth in Christ, and prayeth for grace, peace, and glory; whoso worshippeth the Father through the Son in truth and faith;

shall be delivered; either delivered from those sad outward afflictions, or else, which is infinitely better, from eternal miseries, which will swallow up the unbelieving and impenitent world. When the Jews who rejected Christ were destroyed by the Romans, all (as Eusebius reports) the Jews that believed in Christ and submitted to the gospel escaped.

In Mount Zion; in the true church, typified by Zion, the city of David; and in Jerusalem; not local Jerusalem; there was the chief place of slaughter, blood, fire, and death; but mystical Jerusalem, the church and city of the Messiah;

shall be deliverance; salvation, whether temporal or eternal, or both;

as the Lord hath said; according as God hath promised; and this promised deliverance gives the believer satisfaction and rest, whether in life or by death.

And in the remnant, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, whom the Lord shall call; called of God to be his peculiar people; called to the knowledge of Christ, to profess his name, to believe in Christ, and by him to wait for eternal life and glory, **#Joh 10:16 Ac 13:46 Ro 11:4,5,7.**

JOEL CHAPTER 3

God's judgments against the enemies of his people, **#Joe 3:1-17.**
His blessing upon the church, **#Joe 3:18-21.**

Ver. 1.

Though our dividing this chapter from the former seems to some a beginning of some new matter, yet indeed the prophet prosecutes his old subject, and proceeds to declare how that great thing mentioned in the last verse of the second chapter should be effected, and in this verse you have a transition to that thing.

Behold: it is a note of great attention, and heeding what is to be here spoken.

When I shall bring again the captivity; when I shall by Cyrus the type bring Judah's people out of Babylonish captivity, the emblem of a greater and worse captivity. Judah after the flesh as the type, but, according to the mystery of it, Judah signifieth the whole remnant or residue of those God will save.

Jerusalem, both literally and typically understood; so that beside what refers to the history of the two tribes, or kingdom of the house of David, restored out of captivity by Cyrus, the bringing back the captivity of the whole Israel of God by Christ the Messiah is here to be considered, and all along through this chapter.

Ver. 2.

I will also gather all nations: in the type, it is not simply all nations, but all those nations that have with hostile minds oppressed and scattered Judah; in the antitype, it is all nations that have been enemies to Christ and the church.

And will bring them down: this is spoken with respect to the low situation of the place, being a valley, and we descend into low parts; so here they are caused to go down

into the valley of Jehoshaphat: much difficulty interpreters find in explaining this; we must look to it as a type to somewhat signified by it, and so apply it. The valley of blessing where Jehoshaphat discomfited mighty and numerous enemies, and then triumphed in God with praises to him, #2Ch 20:22, &c.: so the whole church may be this valley of blessing, and in this God will judge the enemies of his people, and give them occasions of praising God for his righteous judgments; and Jerusalem his church shall see this, as the inhabitants of Jerusalem might see what is done in the valley of Jehoshaphat, if they would be at a little pains to go out of the city.

Will plead with them; after the manner of a just and impartial judge I will debate my people's cause, and do them right.

There; in midst of my church, signified by the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of the judgment of God.

For my people; Judah, the two tribes, but, as in their history, bearing a type of the church of Christ.

For my heritage Israel; purchased and possessed by me ever since they were brought out of Egypt; though many times invaded and injured by their unjust neighbours, who were so much their enemies because they were my peculiar people, and kept to my worship.

Whom they have scattered among the nations; either by force driving them out of their habitations, or else carrying them into captivity, and dispersing them in their insolent humour, of which dispersion more follows, #**Joe 3:3,6,8**.

And parted my land; divided among themselves the land I gave to my people to hold immediately of me; so it was my land that they divided, their robbery and spoil was sacrilege. Such is the injustice and oppression of persecutors of the church now, and so God will judge them in due time.

Ver. 3.

It was customary with conquerors to divide the captives by lot, and so did these enemies of the Jews, #**Ob 11**; and so did the Chaldeans on the captive Ninevites, #**Na 3:10**; though this was grievous, yet it was the common lot of captives.

Have given a boy for an harlot; either procured a boy to bestow on some harlot or other which they kept, or gave a boy, instead of money, the price of an harlot to be enjoyed by lewd soldiers.

And sold a girl; a young girl, which, being captive, fell to their lot, they have valued at a base, low price, and sold

for wine, that they might drink; so much as at one sitting one of them could drink; or perhaps for one draught of wine, when the barbarous soldier was dry or minded to be drunk.

Ver. 4.

What have ye to do with me? what just cause of quarrel have you against me? Have I done you any wrong which now you avenge upon my people? or do you begin to violate the law of neighbourhood and friendship, and think to escape? Do ye think you have to do with a poor oppressed people, my people, and I nothing concerned at it?

Tyre, a great mart town, which neighbour to the Jews, and ought to be friends, either joined forces with the enemy against them, or,

retaining friendship with the enemy, bought the Jews for slaves, and sold them again to strangers, to Grecians: this, in his man trade, Tyre was accustomed to, #Eze 27:13.

Zidon, a famous ancient emporium, whose merchants also bought up captive Jews at cheap rates of these barbarous soldiers.

All the coasts of Palestine, which lay along the midland sea, among which were towns of trade, and merchants that bought and sold these captives.

Will ye render me a recompence? Do ye this by way of reprisal? Have I or my people so dealt with you or yours?

Speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; I will, since you deal so with my people, and with me, certainly and speedily avenge myself and my people on you; as you have used them they shall use you. It is probable this may refer to the Assyrian invasion, when Sennacherib took all the fenced cities of Judah, and might sell the captives, or to Shalmaneser's time', when he captured the ten tribes; or it may be a prediction of what Tyre, and Zidon, and these cities of Palestine would do in the Babylonish successes, and a threat what God would do against them for it; but to whatever particular history it refer, who sees not this in it, that God will plead the cause of his oppressed church, and avenge it as his own cause?

Ver. 5.

Ye have taken; you Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines have received at the hands of those you confederated with, you have taken them either as part of the spoil, or as part of your pay.

My silver and my gold; silver and gold vessels dedicated to my service in the temple, and about the altar.

And have carried into your temples; and in contempt of me, with proud insulting, have presented them in your temples to your idols, as if they were mightier and more glorious than I: so did the Philistines carry the ark into Dagon's temple, but it cost Dagon his head, #1Sa 5:4; and Nebuchadnezzar carried away the sacred vessels when he spoiled the temple.

My goodly pleasant things; God speaks of these after the manner of man, and so accounteth of these things.

Ver. 6.

The children also of Judah, the Jews who dwelt in the land, and the children of Jerusalem, the citizens of Jerusalem; or perhaps the young ones, boys and girls, as **#Joe 3:3**, both of city and country.

Ye; Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines, though neighbours, and oftentimes befriended by the Jews, yet you have done this.

Sold unto the Grecians; or sons of Grecians, who either employed them as slaves in Greece, or else sold them to other nations for slaves.

That ye might remove them far from their border; that there might be no hope to these poor captives ever to return to their country, nor fear to the Tyrians and Zidonians of being called to account for the injury by them it was done unto. **#Am 1:6,9**, mentions this sin of the Philistines, and God's displeasure at it.

Ver. 7.

Behold; observe it well, for as it will be strange when done, so it shall certainly be done, to your joy, O my people, and to the astonishment of your enemies.

I will raise them; awaken and raise them; though they lay sleeping, or as dead men, I will stir up some who shall befriend them. Out of the place whither ye have sold them; fulfilled when Alexander the Great and his successors, as Josephus, lib. 13. cap. 5, reports, dismissed all Jews that were slaves in Greece, and gave them leave to return to their own country.

And will return your recompence upon your own head; and more than this, I will pay you in your own coin, you shall read and know your sin in your punishment.

Ver. 8.

I will sell your sons and your daughters; give them up into the hands of the Jews, who thereby shall have opportunities of disposing of them as they see good; so you did with my people, so I will recompense you.

Into the hand of the children of Judah; to the Jews, the posterity and kindred of those you sold.

They shall sell them; either as factors for Nebuchadnezzar or Alexander the Great and his successors, or else as merchants trading on their own account, they shall make this one part of their trade, to sell Grecians, Tyrians, &c. Now though we should not have any particular history that relates the transactions of those people in this kind, yet we may rest assured it was done, since God said it should be done; nor can we expect, or is it necessary it should be, that the Jews should by a conquest of these people bring them captives, and sell them: the Zidonians, Tyrians, and Philistines did not so against the Jews, but they bought particular persons out of the hands of Syrians and Assyrians, who took the Jews captives; so when Tyre, and Zidon, and the Philistines shall be captivated by the Babylonish power, or by the Grecian, these shall sell their captives either into the hands or by the hands of the Jews.

Sabeans were a people in the parts of Arabia most remote from Tyre and Zidon; they were accounted the ends of the earth, #Mt 12:42, and spread themselves along by the sea-coast on both sides of the Arabian bay or Red Sea, and passed over that sea, and planted in Africa, and were part of that country which now doth, or lately did belong to the emperor of Abyssinia, who (as the king of Spain in both Indies) glorieth in being king of both Sabeas, and successor to the queen of Sheba; to one or both of these Sabeans did the Jewish men-sellers dispose of those slaves.

To a people far off: this may be an elliptic speech, thus to be filled up, and the Sabeans shall sell them (i.e. whom they bought of the Jews) unto another nation far off from the Sabeans; or else it is an additional description of this people and their country,

For the Lord hath spoken it; then it was done, whether we know when, or by whom, or how many were sold, or not.

Ver. 9.

Proclaim; publish, or make known, as by sound of trumpet: some say it is an irony; I rather think it is a declaration of what is to come to pass through some ages before the coming of the Messiah, as will appear probable from what followeth.

This; or these things, which I am purposed to do in retaliating to the enemies of my people; proclaim wars which may make captives for sale under the hand of my people.

Among the Gentiles; the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Grecians successively. Prepare war; make ready for wars against the enemies of my people, who shall by these be corrected, but their enemies at last shall be destroyed.

Wake up the mighty men; the valiant men, who dare attempt any thing, and are of great strength to execute what they attempt.

Let all the men of war draw near; all the captains, and experienced soldiers, let them appear at the rendezvous.

Let them come up; when marshalled, let them march up on their design, toward the seat of the war, which will now for many ages be in or about the valley of vision, the church, the valley of judgment from the Lord.

Ver. 10.

Beat your ploughshares into swords: here is a prediction of war, and such as should continue, with some intermissions, through many years; as, on the contrary, when swords were to be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, it was a prediction of peace, **#Isa 2:4:** lay aside your husbandry in ploughing and sowing.

And your pruning-hooks into spears; and let gardeners, vinedressers, and planters think of getting spears instead of pruning-hooks.

Let the weak, either of body, through sickness or natural weakness, or else weak of mind, fearful and cowardly, say,

I am strong: put on strength and valour greater than he hath, let none be absent from this war.

Ver. 11.

Assemble yourselves; the war proclaimed, **#Joe 3:9,** pro vision made, **#Joe 3:10,** now hasten to the general rendezvous; embody yourselves as you march, and hasten what you can, as the word imports.

Come all; not simply and in utmost latitude, but all that are here concerned.

Gather yourselves together round about; all round about Judea, the nations near about this valley of vision.

Thither, toward Judea and Jerusalem, the church and heritage of God, cause thy mighty ones to come down; direct and lead them by thy providence, that they may pitch their tents, or encamp there; let all thy mighty ones, whether enemies of thy church gathered against it, or friends of thy church, and gathered for its defence, let them all here encamp; or all those mighty warriors which thou wilt make use of successively to punish the proud oppressors of thy church; so the Chaldeans punished Assyria, Persians and Medes punished Babylon, Alexander punished the Persians, and the divided captains successors plagued one another with wars within sight, as it were, of Jerusalem and Judah.

O Lord; with which the prophet comforts himself and God's people, intimating that all these mighty ones are under God's conduct, and he is in the midst of them to save his own people.

Ver. 12.

Let the heathen; the several nations in their appointed time; and perhaps the Assyrians are first to awake and stir under Shalmaneser, next under Sennacherib, both which came up against this valley of Jehoshaphat.

Be wakened, by the sins and divisions of God's own people, by their own ravenous and turbulent disposition, and by a secret hand of Providence.

And come up, in hostile manner, against the church and people of God, intended here by this valley: so Sennacherib did in Hezekiah's time.

For there, in the midst of my people and church,

will I sit to judge, to plead with, condemn, and punish by the sword,

all the heathen round about; not all the world, but all the heathen round about Judea, which was oppressed by these heathens: there God judged Sennacherib by his own hand; there

God punished the Egyptians by Nebuchadnezzar who defeated Necho; and within sight of the Jews were all the punishments God inflicted on the Assyrian, Babylonish, Persian, and Grecian monarchies executed; and God all this while in the midst of his people preserved them as a bush all in a flame, yet not consumed: so did the Lord lead his mighty ones, and limited their power.

Ver. 13.

Put ye in the sickle; ye mighty ones, ye men of war, executioners of Divine vengeance, begin to reap, cut down sinners ripe for judgment. Let Tiglath-pileser and his soldiers cut down Syria and its king Rezin, 2 Kings xvi., for their violence against my people; let Cyaxares and his armies begin to cut down Assyria, with Nineveh and its king, for their sins are ripe to judgment; let Nebuchadnezzar put in the sickle and cut down Moab, Aremen, Mount Seir, Egypt, Tyre, Zidon, and the Philistines; after this let Cyrus reap down the ripened Babylonians, and Alexander with his mighty ones reap down Medes and Persians, and let divided Grecian captains cut down one another, till the Romans cut them down. And when this is done, God will have mighty ones still to cut down his enemies, persecutors of his church, when the harvest is fully ripe, and till the final and universal judgment, wherein all God's enemies shall for ever be destroyed.

For the harvest is ripe; the sins of those several nations are fully ripe.

In another metaphor the prophet declares the cutting off the church's enemies. *The press is full:* as the grapegatherer cuts off the bunches and brings them into the press till it be full, and then they are trod; so here the enemies of God's people, ripe in sin and brought together to be punished, are to be trodden in the winepress of God's displeasure. *The fats overflow;* a mighty execution is made, and the blood of slaughtered men runs as wine pressed out in greater abundance than the fats can hold from the press; verified in the slaughter made at the overthrow of the kingdoms here intended. *For their wickedness is great;* the violence and all manner of sins of these kingdoms is grown exceeding great.

Ver. 14.

Multitudes, multitudes; whether prediction or exclamation with wonder, it is doubled to intimate the mighty, numerous armies contending one against another, and thrashing each other, overthrowing numberless men between the conquered and conqueror. So each kingdom was overthrown successively. The Assyrian overthrown by Arbaces and Pul-belochus, conspiring against Sardanapalus, where the multitudes were so great that the blood of the slain is by Diodorus Siculus reported to have coloured the water of a river, and the number of the conspirators' army before Nineveh is said to be four hundred thousand. After this we meet Sennacherib's mighty hosts against Egypt and the Philistines, to neither of which could he march but either through part of Judea or very near to it, and after this he hath one hundred and eighty-five thousand slain in one night before Jerusalem; beside Necho's army marching toward Carchemish, and Nebuchadnezzar's army in pursuit of the routed Egyptian, and the armies of Alexander the Great, and after these the armies of the Seleucid and the Lagidee.

In the valley of decision; where God, having by wise providence gathered them, did by just determination of the victory decide their quarrels, and by the conqueror punished the conquered for their sins against God and his people.

The day of the Lord; the day of vengeance and righteous recompences upon enemies,

is near: if it begin in the punishment of Nineveh and the Assyrian kingdom, by the cutting off Sennacherib's army, it was in Joel's time, not above sixty-four years, supposing Joel prophesied in Jeroboam the Second's time; and probably not quite twenty years to this day of the Lord if Joel prophesied this in Hezekiah's time, or after the captivating of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, which was A.M. 3283, and Sennacherib's overthrow was 3294, eleven years after the deportation, as Archbishop Usher in his Annals.

Ver. 15.

See **#Joe 2:10**. When God doth in the valley of decision punish any of the kingdoms which persecuted and oppressed his church, the punishment shall be so great as to darken the glory of such

kingdoms, it shall be to the utter overthrow of those kingdoms and governments; and so it was effected on Babylon by the Mede and Persian; so on this by the Grecians, and on them by their intestine wars, and by the Romans at last on these and on the murderers of Messiah.

Ver. 16.

The Lord; who, #**Joe 2:27**, is the Lord in the midst of Israel or in the midst of his church.

Shall roar; when he brings forth his mighty ones the men of war, and commands them to march out against his and his church's enemies, he will strike the enemy with astonishment and fear, as the roaring of the lion doth astonish the weaker beasts of the forest. Fear shall surprise them when God shall speak against them.

Out of Zion; the place where God chooseth to dwell, emblem of his church, and of the kingdom of Christ.

And utter his voice, in wrath and indignation against those he will destroy, because they have destroyed his church.

From Jerusalem; typical, so God roared and uttered his voice against Sennacherib; mystical, so he hath often already, and still will further discover his displeasure against his enemies, and he will, as one who dwells in a place for the defence of it, rebuke and check those who assault it: so God dwells in his Jerusalem, as it is #**Joe 3:17**.

The heavens; metaphorically the states and kingdoms, the great ones in those states.

The earth; the common sort of people, the inferior ranks of men; the foundations of those kingdoms shall be shaken and overthrown.

Shall shake, and fly as affrighted, so the word signifieth.

But the Lord; but at that time, and in the midst of all those commotions, the eternal and almighty God, who fills the enemy with fears and astonishment,

will be the hope; shall be the object of his people's expectation, they shall look for good from him by all these troubles: and so

God was to his after their return out of captivity, through the Medo-Persian reign, through the Grecian rule under Alexander, and under the times of Alexander's successors.

Of his people; of them that believe his word and obey his law.

And the strength, strong defence and fortress, to his, here called the children of Israel, those that are Israelites indeed.

Ver. 17.

So, by these effects of my presence with my people, by my anger against their enemies, by punishing them by each other, overthrowing oppressors, by fulfilling what is foretold, shall ye, ye that suffer for my sake, but hope in my word, and support yourselves on my strength,

know, by most comfortable and unquestionable experience,

that I am the Lord your God; that I have remembered my covenant for you, and acted according to the power and mercy of an almighty and all-gracious God.

Dwelling in Zion; very graciously present with you, and ever watching over you, and delighting to save you, as a man would do his dwellinghouse.

My holy mountain; which is chosen and separated from all others to be the place of his habitation, as **#Ps 2:6**, which he loves above all places.

Then, after these things are finished, when enemies are destroyed, and the remnant is saved, and the Messiah is come, (for to him and his days do these things finally and ultimately refer,) and the gospel is preached,

shall Jerusalem, the church of Christ, the spiritual Jerusalem,

be holy; be much more holy and pure than now, being made so by the word and Spirit, and afflictions too.

There shall no strangers pass through her any more; no profane and unclean persons shall pass through it as formerly, and bring their strange fashions, rites, worship, or doctrine; though they have done it formerly, as in Solomon's days, and Ahaz's and Manasseh's time, they shall do so no more for ever.

Ver. 18.

In that day; when afflictions, amidst which they were preserved, from which delivered, and by which they were purified.

The mountains; the vines planted upon the mountains, which were dried up, #**Joe 1:12**, shall now be full of juice and fruit.

Shall drop down, shall come down as the showers or dew, sweetly and plentifully, new wine; sweet and delicious.

The hills shall flow with milk; so fruitful shall the hills be, and keep so many cows, sheep, and goats, that milk shall abound every where, as it were a current that ever runs down.

All the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters: in the great drought rivers dried up, now the rivers shall be full of water and ever flow.

A fountain: the prophet alludes to those waters which were conveyed from some spring through conduit pipes towards the altar, of which #**Eze 47:1-5**, for the use of the temple, in which water the priests washed what was to be washed. This no doubt is a shadow of the purifying blood of Christ, and his sanctifying Spirit and word. And in that it is said to

come from the house of the Lord, it intimateth that these glad tidings, this saving grace, shall be first preached from Jerusalem, and by the church, which is the house of God, shall be published to others.

Shall water, refresh, purge, and make fruitful in all holy works,

the valley of Shittim; it was a place in the plains of Moab, on the borders of Israel towards the south-east, #**Nu 33:49 Jos 3:1**, not far from the Dead Sea. These spiritual waters shall flow down to the dry and thirsty, the barren and fruitless Gentiles, and make them fruitful.

Ver. 19.

Egypt: it was in Egypt that the people of God were long kept in bondage, which defiled Israel too with its idolatries, contrived the ruin of Israel by a barbarous and unparalleled cruelty, murdering all the new-born males, and with utmost obstinacy resisted the deliverer who came to fetch Israel out of bondage. By Egypt

understand we then all the enemies of the church of Christ, who carry it toward the church as Egypt carried it toward Israel. *Shall be a desolation*; most desolate, when God shall judge and punish; so shall spiritual Egypt, **#Re 11:8**.

Edom; the posterity of Esau, of near kin to Israel according to the flesh, whose first father envied Jacob the blessing and vowed his death, and made him flee from his father's house and become a servant in a strange land, and was the first who denied Israel a friendly passage and the common civility of necessities for their money, and came out in hostile manner to fight them, **#Nu 20:18**, &c. It was Edom of whom you read in Obadiah, a most bloody, implacable enemy to Judah in his greatest distress. And all who come under Edom's character are here intended, and threatened under this name.

Shall be a desolate wilderness; most desolate, and which art cannot repair; desolate houses or vineyards may, but wildernesses cannot, by art be repaired.

The children of Judah; the people of God, his churches.

They have shed innocent blood in their land; where distressed Jews should have found safety, they met their death; in Egypt and Judea.

Ver. 20.

But and or yet

Judah the chosen peculiar redeemed of the Lord, his church.

shall dwell for ever; no more be captivated and driven from home, but in their own land and houses abide safely and perpetually. This typifieth the eternal peace and rest to which God's people are redeemed.

Jerusalem; city of God. From generation to generation; through many generations on earth, through eternity in heaven. Some shadow of this possibly we may find in the days of the Maccabees, but the fulness of this we expect when that day, great, dreadful, and finally decisive day, to which interpreters refer this chapter, shall destroy all the wicked and put the godly into possession of eternal mansions of glory.

Ver. 21.

For, Heb. *And.*

Cleanse; purge away, both by the Spirit of sanctification, and by free pardon in the blood of the Redeemer; by their sufferings also, by the waters of affliction, as well as by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Their blood; their moral pollutions and sinfulness, compared here unto blood, as also **#Eze 16:6,9;** and so men in sinful state are called flesh and blood, **#Mt 16:17 Ga 1:16.** God will pardon and purify believers, and when they are pardoned and purified, nothing attempted against them shall succeed. *That I have not cleansed;* which before I had not taken away; what was wanting in their sanctification, or justification and reconciliation, I will make up in them and to them.

For the Lord dwelleth in Zion; and I am Jehovah dwelling in Zion, whence the law of grace was published, where the wonders of pardoning and sanctifying grace are wrought, that Israel might be a people with whom the holy God might dwell. Now whereas this can be done but in part here on earth, there is a Zion above, whither Jehovah who dwells there will take every saint after the day of judgment, having first vindicated, acquitted, and pronounced them holy and meet for enjoyment of the Holy One.