

Timeline / Overview

Joel is a short collection of prophetic poems. We know little about Joel, except that his name means “Yahweh is God” and that his father was Pethuel (**1:1**). There are a few unique things about Joel’s writings among The Twelve:

1. Not clear when it was written; Could have been between the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, but also possible it was after the return from Babylonian exile because he mentions Jerusalem and the temple but does not mention any kings.
2. Joel is clearly familiar with many other scriptural books. He alludes to or quotes from Isaiah, Amos, Zephaniah, Nahum, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Malachi, and Exodus.
3. Joel doesn’t accuse Israel of any specific sin. Like other prophets, he announces that God’s judgment is coming, but he never says why. This is possibly because he assumes the reader is familiar with the other prophets and already knows about Israel’s failures.

The Day of the Lord (Chapters 1-2a)

This section includes two parallel poems that focus on the day of the Lord with the same poetic design and flow of thought.

A Past Day of the Lord (Chapter 1)

Announcement of Disaster (2-12) - A past disaster where a locust swarm devastated Israel. Four different words are used for “Locust” in **verse 4**, possibly indicating the severity of this invasion. This recalls The Day of the Lord against Egypt during the 8th plague in **Exodus 10**. This time, however, the locusts are being sent against Israel. There is much confusion as to whether these represent actual locusts or a past army invasion.

Call to Repentance (13-20) - Joel calls on the elders and the priests to lead the people in repentance and prayer. Joel himself repents (**1:19**).

A Future Day of the Lord (Chapter 2:1-17)

Announcement of Disaster (1-11) – Describes another wave of locust (**2:25**) but uses military imagery. The invaders have cavalry and soldiers that are marching and destroying everything in their path. The sun is darkened, the earth shakes, and Joel says, “For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?” (**2:11**). As with Chapter 1 there is also much confusion as to whether these represent locusts or a future military invasion.

Call to Repentance (12-17) - Joel calls on the people to repentance. He tells them to “...rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God...” (**2:13a**). God is not interested in just a show, he want’s genuine change. Why should they repent...”he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;” (**2:13b**) This is a quote from **Exodus 34:6** where God forgave Israel after they made the Golden Calf. Joel found that God’s mercy and love is more powerful than His wrath and judgment.

God's Response (Chapter 2:18-27)

"Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people." (2:18)

God would reverse the devastating effects of this day of the Lord and turn it from judgment into salvation. He would do this in three ways:

1. **Defeat the Invaders** and turn them away to their own ruin (20-21)
2. **Restore the Devastated Land** and bring it back to life (22-26)
3. **Bring His Divine Presence** among God's people (27)

In both the future and past events Joel shows that:

- Israel's sin led to disaster and divine judgment
- With God's mercy, there is always hope
- The Past becomes an image of the future day of the Lord

THE Future Day of the Lord (Chapter 2:28 to 3:21)

Three more poems that match God's three-part response from **Chapter 2:18-27**:

2:28-32 Bring His divine presence among God's people – God will bring His presence among His people by filling them with His Spirit. This passage is quoted by Peter in **Acts 2:17-21** to explain what the crowd in Jerusalem has just witnessed. Joel is drawing on the promises of **Isaiah 32:15; 44:3, Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Ezekiel 36:23-28** that God's Spirit would come to transform and empower His people so that they can truly love and follow Him.

Joel 2:28 (ESV)

²⁸ "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

3:1-16 Defeat the Invaders - Joel sees similarities between these locusts and the arrogant, violent nations of his own day that savage and oppress people. He draws upon the promises of **Isaiah 13, Zephaniah 3, and Ezekiel 38 & 39** about the future day of the Lord when God will confront evil among all the nations and turn their violence back on themselves, bringing justice to right all wrongs.

3:17-21 Restore the Devastated Land – The renewal of all Creation. He draws on the promises of **Isaiah 35, Ezekiel 47, and Zechariah 14** that God's final day of justice will be followed by a restoration of the entire world in a New Eden where God's presence in Jerusalem will flow out like a river and bring cosmic renewal. Joel's poem ends with God's forgiveness and mercy opening a whole new creation.

Teacher's Notes

Handout notes are adapted from The Bible Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQLazbgz90c>

Text

Joel 1 (ESV)

¹ The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:

² Hear this, you elders;
give ear, all inhabitants of the land!

Has such a thing happened in your days,
or in the days of your fathers?

³ Tell your children of it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children to another generation.

⁴ What the cutting locust left,
the swarming locust has eaten.
What the swarming locust left,
the hopping locust has eaten,
and what the hopping locust left,
the destroying locust has eaten.

⁵ Awake, you drunkards, and weep,
and wail, all you drinkers of wine,
because of the sweet wine,
for it is cut off from your mouth.

⁶ For a nation has come up against my land,
powerful and beyond number;
its teeth are lions' teeth,
and it has the fangs of a lioness.

⁷ It has laid waste my vine
and splintered my fig tree;
it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down;
their branches are made white.

⁸ Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth
for the bridegroom of her youth.

⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off
from the house of the LORD.

The priests mourn,

- the ministers of the LORD.
- ¹⁰ The fields are destroyed,
the ground mourns,
because the grain is destroyed,
the wine dries up,
the oil languishes.
- ¹¹ Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil;
wail, O vinedressers,
for the wheat and the barley,
because the harvest of the field has perished.
- ¹² The vine dries up;
the fig tree languishes.
Pomegranate, palm, and apple,
all the trees of the field are dried up,
and gladness dries up
from the children of man.
- ¹³ Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests;
wail, O ministers of the altar.
Go in, pass the night in sackcloth,
O ministers of my God!
Because grain offering and drink offering
are withheld from the house of your God.
- ¹⁴ Consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly.
Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of the LORD your God,
and cry out to the LORD.
- ¹⁵ Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD is near,
and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.
- ¹⁶ Is not the food cut off
before our eyes,
joy and gladness
from the house of our God?
- ¹⁷ The seed shrivels under the clods;
the storehouses are desolate;
the granaries are torn down
because the grain has dried up.
- ¹⁸ How the beasts groan!

The herds of cattle are perplexed
because there is no pasture for them;
even the flocks of sheep suffer.

¹⁹ To you, O LORD, I call.

For fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness,
and flame has burned
all the trees of the field.

²⁰ Even the beasts of the field pant for you
because the water brooks are dried up,
and fire has devoured
the pastures of the wilderness.

Joel 2 (ESV)

¹ Blow a trumpet in Zion;
sound an alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

² a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful people;
their like has never been before,
nor will be again after them
through the years of all generations.

³ Fire devours before them,
and behind them a flame burns.
The land is like the garden of Eden before them,
but behind them a desolate wilderness,
and nothing escapes them.

⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses,
and like war horses they run.

⁵ As with the rumbling of chariots,
they leap on the tops of the mountains,
like the crackling of a flame of fire
devouring the stubble,
like a powerful army
drawn up for battle.

⁶ Before them peoples are in anguish;
all faces grow pale.

- ⁷ Like warriors they charge;
 like soldiers they scale the wall.
They march each on his way;
 they do not swerve from their paths.
- ⁸ They do not jostle one another;
 each marches in his path;
they burst through the weapons
 and are not halted.
- ⁹ They leap upon the city,
 they run upon the walls,
they climb up into the houses,
 they enter through the windows like a thief.
- ¹⁰ The earth quakes before them;
 the heavens tremble.
The sun and the moon are darkened,
 and the stars withdraw their shining.
- ¹¹ The LORD utters his voice
 before his army,
for his camp is exceedingly great;
 he who executes his word is powerful.
For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome;
 who can endure it?
- ¹² “Yet even now,” declares the LORD,
 “return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments.”
Return to the LORD your God,
 for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
 and he relents over disaster.
- ¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
 and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
 for the LORD your God?
- ¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
 consecrate a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Consecrate the congregation;
 assemble the elders;
gather the children,
 even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her chamber.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep
and say, "Spare your people, O LORD,
and make not your heritage a reproach,
a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?' "

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land
and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ The LORD answered and said to his people,
"Behold, I am sending to you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
a reproach among the nations.

²⁰ "I will remove the northerner far from you,
and drive him into a parched and desolate land,
his vanguard into the eastern sea,
and his rear guard into the western sea;
the stench and foul smell of him will rise,
for he has done great things.

²¹ "Fear not, O land;
be glad and rejoice,
for the LORD has done great things!

²² Fear not, you beasts of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit;
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ "Be glad, O children of Zion,
and rejoice in the LORD your God,
for he has given the early rain for your vindication;
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the latter rain, as before.

²⁴ "The threshing floors shall be full of grain;
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ I will restore to you the years
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,

my great army, which I sent among you.

²⁶ “You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the LORD your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.

And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else.

And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁸ “And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

Joel 3 (ESV)

¹ “For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, ³ and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

⁴ “What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily. ⁵ For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. ⁶ You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border. ⁷ Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head. ⁸ I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for the LORD has spoken.”

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations:
Consecrate for war;
stir up the mighty men.
Let all the men of war draw near;
let them come up.

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords,
and your pruning hooks into spears;
let the weak say, "I am a warrior."

¹¹ Hasten and come,
all you surrounding nations,
and gather yourselves there.

Bring down your warriors, O LORD.

¹² Let the nations stir themselves up
and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
for there I will sit to judge
all the surrounding nations.

¹³ Put in the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Go in, tread,
for the winepress is full.
The vats overflow,
for their evil is great.

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes,
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near
in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars withdraw their shining.

¹⁶ The LORD roars from Zion,
and utters his voice from Jerusalem,
and the heavens and the earth quake.
But the LORD is a refuge to his people,
a stronghold to the people of Israel.

¹⁷ "So you shall know that I am the LORD your God,
who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
and strangers shall never again pass through it.

¹⁸ "And in that day
the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
and the hills shall flow with milk,
and all the streambeds of Judah
shall flow with water;
and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD
and water the Valley of Shittim.

¹⁹ “Egypt shall become a desolation
and Edom a desolate wilderness,
for the violence done to the people of Judah,
because they have shed innocent blood in their land.
²⁰ But Judah shall be inhabited forever,
and Jerusalem to all generations.
²¹ I will avenge their blood,
blood I have not avenged,
for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

A Past Day of the Lord

Exodus 10 (ESV)

¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”

³ So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, ⁵ and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, ⁶ and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.’” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

⁷ Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?” ⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, “Go, serve the LORD your God. But which ones are to go?” ⁹ Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.” ¹⁰ But he said to them, “The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. ¹¹ No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.” ¹³ So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. ¹⁴ The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. ¹⁵ They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God

only to remove this death from me.”¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the LORD.¹⁹ And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt.²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.”²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.²³ They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.²⁴ Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, “Go, serve the LORD; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.”²⁵ But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.²⁶ Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the LORD our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there.”²⁷ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go.²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.”²⁹ Moses said, “As you say! I will not see your face again.”

THE Future Day of the Lord

2:28-32 Bring His divine presence among God’s people

Acts 2:17–21 (ESV)

¹⁷ “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 and your young men shall see visions,
 and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood,
 before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.
²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Isaiah 32:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
 and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
 and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

Isaiah 44:3 (ESV)

³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.

Jeremiah 31:31–34 (ESV)

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Ezekiel 36:23–28 (ESV)

²³ And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. ²⁴ I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

3:1-16 Defeat the Invaders

Isaiah 13 (ESV)

¹ The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

² On a bare hill raise a signal;
cry aloud to them;
wave the hand for them to enter
the gates of the nobles.

³ I myself have commanded my consecrated ones,
and have summoned my mighty men to execute my anger,
my proudly exulting ones.

⁴ The sound of a tumult is on the mountains
as of a great multitude!
The sound of an uproar of kingdoms,

of nations gathering together!
The LORD of hosts is mustering
a host for battle.

⁵ They come from a distant land,
from the end of the heavens,
the LORD and the weapons of his indignation,
to destroy the whole land.

⁶ Wail, for the day of the LORD is near;
as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

⁷ Therefore all hands will be feeble,
and every human heart will melt.

⁸ They will be dismayed:
pangs and agony will seize them;
they will be in anguish like a woman in labor.
They will look aghast at one another;
their faces will be aflame.

⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,
to make the land a desolation
and to destroy its sinners from it.

¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and their constellations
will not give their light;
the sun will be dark at its rising,
and the moon will not shed its light.

¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil,
and the wicked for their iniquity;
I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant,
and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

¹² I will make people more rare than fine gold,
and mankind than the gold of Ophir.

¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble,
and the earth will be shaken out of its place,
at the wrath of the LORD of hosts
in the day of his fierce anger.

¹⁴ And like a hunted gazelle,
or like sheep with none to gather them,
each will turn to his own people,
and each will flee to his own land.

¹⁵ Whoever is found will be thrust through,
and whoever is caught will fall by the sword.

¹⁶ Their infants will be dashed in pieces
before their eyes;

their houses will be plundered
and their wives ravished.

¹⁷ Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them,
who have no regard for silver
and do not delight in gold.

¹⁸ Their bows will slaughter the young men;
they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb;
their eyes will not pity children.

¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans,
will be like Sodom and Gomorrah
when God overthrew them.

²⁰ It will never be inhabited
or lived in for all generations;
no Arab will pitch his tent there;
no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there.

²¹ But wild animals will lie down there,
and their houses will be full of howling creatures;
there ostriches will dwell,
and there wild goats will dance.

²² Hyenas will cry in its towers,
and jackals in the pleasant palaces;
its time is close at hand
and its days will not be prolonged.

Zephaniah 3 (ESV)

¹ Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled,
the oppressing city!

² She listens to no voice;
she accepts no correction.

She does not trust in the LORD;
she does not draw near to her God.

³ Her officials within her
are roaring lions;
her judges are evening wolves
that leave nothing till the morning.

⁴ Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men;
her priests profane what is holy;
they do violence to the law.

⁵ The LORD within her is righteous;
he does no injustice;
every morning he shows forth his justice;

each dawn he does not fail;
but the unjust knows no shame.

⁶ “I have cut off nations;
their battlements are in ruins;
I have laid waste their streets
so that no one walks in them;
their cities have been made desolate,
without a man, without an inhabitant.

⁷ I said, ‘Surely you will fear me;
you will accept correction.
Then your dwelling would not be cut off
according to all that I have appointed against you.’
But all the more they were eager
to make all their deeds corrupt.

⁸ “Therefore wait for me,” declares the LORD,
“for the day when I rise up to seize the prey.
For my decision is to gather nations,
to assemble kingdoms,
to pour out upon them my indignation,
all my burning anger;
for in the fire of my jealousy
all the earth shall be consumed.

⁹ “For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples
to a pure speech,
that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD
and serve him with one accord.

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Cush
my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones,
shall bring my offering.

¹¹ “On that day you shall not be put to shame
because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me;
for then I will remove from your midst
your proudly exultant ones,
and you shall no longer be haughty
in my holy mountain.

¹² But I will leave in your midst
a people humble and lowly.
They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD,

¹³ those who are left in Israel;
they shall do no injustice
and speak no lies,

nor shall there be found in their mouth
a deceitful tongue.

For they shall graze and lie down,
and none shall make them afraid.”

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you in,
at the time when I gather you together;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes,” says the LORD.

Ezekiel 38 (ESV)

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him ³ and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ⁴ And I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. ⁵ Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you.

⁷ “Be ready and keep ready, you and all your hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. ⁸ After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them. ⁹ You will advance, coming on like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you.

¹⁰ “Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day, thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme ¹¹ and say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,’ ¹² to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth. ¹³ Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its leaders will say to you, ‘Have you come to seize spoil? Have you assembled your hosts to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to seize great spoil?’

¹⁴ “Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, will you not know it? ¹⁵ You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. ¹⁶ You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

¹⁷ “Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them? ¹⁸ But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord GOD, my wrath will be roused in my anger. ¹⁹ For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰ The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. ²¹ I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord GOD. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. ²² With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. ²³ So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39 (ESV)

¹ “And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ² And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel. ³ Then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. ⁴ You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts

of the field to be devoured. ⁵ You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD. ⁶ I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

⁷ “And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. ⁸ Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord GOD. That is the day of which I have spoken.

⁹ “Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bow and arrows, clubs and spears; and they will make fires of them for seven years, ¹⁰ so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons. They will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, declares the Lord GOD.

¹¹ “On that day I will give to Gog a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers, east of the sea. It will block the travelers, for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried. It will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog. ¹² For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. ¹³ All the people of the land will bury them, and it will bring them renown on the day that I show my glory, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁴ They will set apart men to travel through the land regularly and bury those travelers remaining on the face of the land, so as to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make their search. ¹⁵ And when these travel through the land and anyone sees a human bone, then he shall set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon-gog. ¹⁶ (Hamonah is also the name of the city.) Thus shall they cleanse the land.

¹⁷ “As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field: ‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. ¹⁸ You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. ¹⁹ And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. ²⁰ And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,’ declares the Lord GOD.

²¹ “And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. ²² The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward. ²³ And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt so treacherously with me that I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. ²⁴ I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them.

²⁵ “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for my holy name. ²⁶ They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, ²⁷ when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies’ lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. ²⁸ Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of

them remaining among the nations anymore. ²⁹ And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God.”

3:17-21 Restore the Devastated Land

Isaiah 35 (ESV)

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;

² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Ezekiel 47 (ESV)

¹ Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. ² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.

³ Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. ⁶ And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. ⁹ And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. ¹⁰ Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

¹³ Thus says the Lord GOD: “This is the boundary by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. ¹⁴ And you shall divide equally what I swore to give to your fathers. This land shall fall to you as your inheritance.

¹⁵ “This shall be the boundary of the land: On the north side, from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, and on to Zedad, ¹⁶ Berothah, Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. ¹⁷ So the boundary shall run from the sea to Hazar-enan, which is on the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This shall be the north side.

¹⁸ “On the east side, the boundary shall run between Hauran and Damascus; along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side.

¹⁹ “On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah-kadesh, from there along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side.

²⁰ “On the west side, the Great Sea shall be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This shall be the west side.

²¹ “So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. ²² You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the sojourners who reside among you and have had children among you. They shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. With you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. ²³ In whatever tribe the sojourner resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, declares the Lord God.

Zechariah 14 (ESV)

¹ Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. ³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. ⁵ And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

⁶ On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. ⁷ And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.

⁸ On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.

⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

¹⁰ The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. ¹¹ And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.

¹² And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

¹³ And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. ¹⁴ Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. ¹⁵ And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

¹⁶ Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths. ¹⁷ And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD

of hosts, there will be no rain on them. ¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

²⁰ And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “Holy to the LORD.” And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar. ²¹ And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day.

Scriptural Echoes in Joel

One of the distinctive features of the book of Joel is the striking number of parallels with other texts in the Hebrew Bible. Determining the direction of influence for these allusions and echoes is difficult, but the addition of “as the Lord promised” to the quote of Obadiah 17 in Joel 2:32 likely indicates that Joel is quoting Obadiah.¹¹⁸ The late date of Joel would fit well with the numerous references to earlier biblical materials, and Joel may have employed the words of other prophets as a means of enhancing the authority of his message and showing that his message belongs within the larger prophetic tradition.

In his study of Joel’s use of Scripture, John Strazicich has developed the manner in which the first half of the book of Joel (1:1–2:17) appropriates and reapplies earlier texts in primarily negative ways as a means of encouraging repentance.¹¹⁹ The locust plague against Egypt in Exodus 10 is now directed against Judah. Judah is now facing another Day of the Lord (see Isa 13:6; Ezek 30:2–3), and the people must now repent and pray at the temple in the manner advocated by Solomon in 1 Kings 8. In the second half of the book (2:18–3:21), Joel’s vision of Israel’s glorious future is informed by earlier prophetic promises and biblical imagery.¹²⁰ The promised defeat of the northern army and the pouring out of the Spirit in Joel 2:20, 28–29 echoes the vision of the defeat of Gog and the renewal of Israel in Ezekiel 38–39. Jerusalem will become like a new Eden (Joel 3:18; see Gen 2:10; Ezek 47:1–2). The promise of agricultural bounty in Joel 2:19 recalls the promises concerning the fertility of the land given when Israel first entered the land (see Deut 11:12–15). Before the nations turn their “swords into plows” (Isa 2:4), they must first beat their “plows into swords” (Joel 3:10). Joel contains a number of these parallels to other books in the Twelve, including these:

1. 1:15	Obadiah 15; Zeph 1:7
2. 2:2	Zeph 1:14–15
3. 2:6	Nah 2:10
4. 2:13	Jonah 3:9; Mic 7:16–18; Nah 1:3 (see Exod 34:6)
5. 2:31	Mic 4:5
6. 2:32	Obadiah 17
7. 3:5	Obadiah 15
8. 3:10	Mic 4:3 (see Isa 2:4)
9. 3:16	Amos 1:2
10. 3:18	Amos 9:13

Regardless of the direction of influence, these textual connections with other books in the Twelve enhance the unity of this corpus. James Nogalski suggests that the book of Joel serves as a “literary anchor” for the Twelve in the way that Joel’s “Day of the Lord” sayings anticipate recurring references to the Day of the Lord in the Twelve as a whole and provide a “transcendent historical paradigm” of God’s work of judgment and salvation that unfolds in the books that follow.¹²¹ The final editors responsible for the shaping of the Twelve could have added these quotes and allusions as a means of reflecting explicit connections between the

messages of the individual prophets, but it is just as plausible that Joel incorporated the words of other prophets into his own preaching, or that prophets later than Joel did the same with his oracles. In other instances, the parallels may be due to common expressions or shared traditions between the prophets.¹

¹ Fuhr, Al. The Message of the Twelve (pp. 93-96). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.