

Language: English

Book: Joel

Joel

Chapter 1

¹ This is the word of Yahweh that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

² Hear this, you elders,
and listen, all you inhabitants of the land.
Has anything like this happened in your days
or in the days of your ancestors?

³ Tell your children about it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children the next generation.

⁴ What the swarming locust has left,
the great locust has eaten;
what the great locust has left,
the grasshopper has eaten;
and what the grasshopper has left,
the caterpillar has eaten.

⁵ Wake up, you drunkards, and weep!
Wail, all you drinkers of wine,
because the sweet wine has been cut off from you.

⁶ For a nation has come up upon my land,
mighty and without number.
His teeth are the teeth of a lion,
and he has the teeth of a lioness.

⁷ He has made my vineyard into a desolate place
and has stripped my fig tree bare.
He has stripped its bark
and thrown it away;
the branches are bare white.

⁸ Mourn like a virgin girded in sackcloth
for the death of her young bridegroom.

⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering
have been cut off from the house of Yahweh.
The priests, Yahweh's servants, mourn.

¹⁰ The fields are ruined;
the ground is mourning
because the grain has been destroyed.
The new wine has dried up;
the oil fails.

¹¹ Be ashamed, you farmers,
and wail, you vine growers,
for the wheat and the barley.
For the harvest of the fields has perished.

¹² The vines have withered
and the fig trees have dried up;
the pomegranate trees, also the palm trees, and the apple trees—
all the trees of the field have withered.
For joy has withered away

from the descendants of mankind.

13 Gird yourselves with sackcloth and mourn, you priests!
Wail, you servants of the altar.

Come, lie all night in sackcloth,
you servants of my God.
For the grain offering and the drink offering
have been withheld from the house of your God.

14 Call for a holy fast,
and call a holy assembly.
Gather the elders
and all the inhabitants of the land
to the house of Yahweh your God,
and cry to Yahweh.

15 Alas for the day!
For the day of Yahweh is almost here.
With it will come destruction from the Almighty.

16 Has not food been cut off
from before our eyes,
and joy and gladness
from the house of our God?

17 The seeds rot under their clods,
the storehouses are desolate,
and the barns have been torn down,
for the grain has withered.

18 How the cattle groan!
Their herds are wandering in confusion
because they have no pasture.
Even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

19 Yahweh, I cry to you.
For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness,
and flames have burned all the trees of the fields.

20 Even the animals of the fields pant for you,
for the water brooks have dried up,
and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Joel 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Joel is written in poetic form and with striking imagery. The ULB is written in poetic form, but the UDB has been transferred to a prose form. If possible, use the poetic form to communicate the meaning of this book in order to stay closer to the original meaning of the text.

Special concepts in this chapter

Locusts

This book starts very dramatically with the imagery of the locusts and the devastation they produce. There are five different kinds of locusts that appear to come and they progressively destroy the vegetation including the crops, vineyards and even the trees of the whole land of Israel.

It was common for farmers in the ancient Near East to experience large locust swarms that would come and eat all crops in their fields. Joel might be describing such attacks in this first chapter. Because Joel uses military terms and images to describe these locust attacks, his descriptions might represent enemy invaders who would come and destroy the land its people.

Translators should translate simply, presenting the scenes of locusts as Joel describes them, and not worry about the various possible meanings.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The author also uses rhetorical questions that communicate surprise and alarm.

Joel 1:1

General Information:

God speaks through Joel to the people of Israel using poetry.

the word of Yahweh that came to Joel

This idiom is used to announce that God gave messages to Joel. Alternate translation: "the message Yahweh gave to Joel" or "the message Yahweh spoke to Joel"

Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

Pethuel

Joel's father

Joel 1:2

Has anything like this happened in your days or in the days of your ancestors?

Joel is preparing the elders to listen to what he has to say. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Nothing like this has ever happened before either to you or to your ancestors"

Joel 1:3

their children the next generation

You may need to fill in the words that have been left out. Alternate translation: "let their children tell the generation after them"

Joel 1:4

the swarming locust

large groups of insects like grasshoppers that fly together and eat large areas of food crops

swarming locust ... great locust ... grasshopper ... caterpillar

These are, respectively, an adult locust that can fly, a locust too large to fly easily, a locust with wings too young to fly, and a newborn locust that has not yet developed wings. Use names that would be understood in your language.

Joel 1:5

General Information:

God warns the people of Israel about the coming locust army.

you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine
If your language has only one word for "weep" and "wail," you can combine the lines: "you people who love wine should cry out in sorrow"

Joel 1:6

a nation

The locust swarm is like an invading army.

His teeth ... he has the teeth

The locusts are like a nation which is like one person. You can refer to the nation as "it," or to the locusts as "they," or to the invader as one person.

His teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the teeth of a lioness.

These two lines share similar meanings. The reference to the locusts' teeth being as sharp as lions' teeth emphasize how fierce they are as they eat all of the crops of the land.

my land

Yahweh's land

Joel 1:7

He has made ... He has stripped

The locusts are like a nation which is like one person. You can refer to the nation as "it," or to the locusts as "they," or to the invader as one person.

my vineyard ... my fig tree

Yahweh's vineyard and fig tree

desolate

empty and without life

Joel 1:8

General Information:

God continues speaking to the people of Israel.

Joel 1:9

General Information:

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Joel 1:10

the ground is mourning

Here the land is spoken of as if it were a person. These words could also be seen as a metonym for the people who are mourning or even as hyperbole, that the famine is so bad that even things that are not alive are mourning. Alternate translation: "the farmers are mourning"

the grain has been destroyed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "the locusts have destroyed all of the grain"

Joel 1:11

General Information:

God continues speaking to the people of Israel.

barley

a type of grass, like wheat, whose seeds can be used to make bread

Joel 1:12

withered

dried up and died

fig ... pomegranate ... apple

different types of fruit

Joel 1:13

General Information:

God speaks to the priests in Israel

the grain offering and the drink offering

regular offerings in the temple

Joel 1:14

the house of Yahweh your God

the temple in Jerusalem

Joel 1:15

General Information:

This is what God is telling the priests to say.

With it will come destruction from the Almighty

The abstract noun "destruction" can be translated using the verb "destroy." You may need to make

explicit what it is the Almighty will destroy.

Alternate translation: "On that day the Almighty will destroy his enemies"

Joel 1:16

Has not food been cut off from before our eyes, and joy and gladness from the house of our God?

It is certain that destruction will come from the Almighty because these things have already happened. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "We know this is true because we have already seen the Almighty cut off our supply of food, and he has cut off joy and gladness from the house of our God."

from before our eyes

"from us." This refers to all of the nation of Israel.

joy and gladness from the house of our God

You may need to fill in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "joy and gladness have been cut off from the house of our God"

joy and gladness

These two words mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize that there is no kind of joyful activity happening at the temple.

Joel 1:17

clods

lumps of dirt

Joel 1:18

General Information:

God continues to tell the priests how they should pray for Israel.

groan

make a deep sound because of pain

Joel 1:19

General Information:

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Joel 1:20

brooks

small streams

Chapter 2

- ¹ Blow the ram's horn in Zion,
and sound an alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble in fear,
for the day of Yahweh is coming;
indeed, it is near.
- ² It is a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness.
Like the dawn that spreads on the mountains,
a large and mighty army is approaching.
There has never been an army like it,
and there never will be again,
even after many generations.
- ³ A fire is consuming everything in front of it,
and behind it a flame is burning.
The land is like the garden of Eden in front of it,
but behind it there is a ruined wilderness.
Indeed, nothing will escape from it.
- ⁴ The army's appearance is like horses,
and they run like horsemen.
- ⁵ They jump with a noise like that of chariots
on the tops of the mountains,
like the sound of fiery flames that devour the stubble,
like a mighty army ready for battle.
- ⁶ At their presence people are in anguish
and all their faces become pale.
- ⁷ They run like mighty warriors;
they climb the walls like soldiers;
they march, every one in step,
and do not break their ranks.
- ⁸ Neither does one thrust another aside;
they march, each in his path;
they break through the defenses
and do not fall out of line.
- ⁹ They rush on the city,
they run on the wall,
they climb in the houses,
and they go through the windows like thieves.
- ¹⁰ The earth shakes in front of them,
the heavens tremble,
the sun and the moon are darkened,
and the stars stop shining.
- ¹¹ Yahweh raises his voice
in front of his army,
for his warriors are very numerous;
for they are strong,
those who carry out his commands.
For the day of Yahweh is great
and very terrible.
Who can endure it?
- ¹² "Yet even now"—this is Yahweh's declaration—
"Return to me with all your heart.
Fast, weep, and mourn."
- ¹³ Tear your heart
and not only your garments,
and return to Yahweh your God.

- For he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love
and relenting from inflicting punishment.
- 14 Who knows? Will he perhaps turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for Yahweh your God?
- 15 Blow the ram's horn in Zion,
call for a holy fast,
and call a holy assembly.
- 16 Gather the people;
call for the holy assembly.
Assemble the elders;
gather the children
and the nursing infants.
Let the bridegrooms come out of their rooms,
and the brides out of their bridal chambers.
- 17 Let the priests, the servants of Yahweh,
weep between the porch and the altar.
Let them say, "Spare your people, Yahweh,
and do not make your inheritance into an object of scorn,
that the nations mock them.
Why should they say among the nations,
'Where is their God?'"
- 18 Then Yahweh was zealous for his land
and had pity on his people.
- 19 Yahweh answered his people,
"Look, I will send you grain, new wine, and oil.
You will be satisfied with them,
and I will no longer make you
a disgrace among the nations.
- 20 I will remove the northern attackers far from you,
and will drive them into a dry and desolate land.
The front of their army will go into the eastern sea,
and the rear into the western sea.
Its stench will rise,
and its bad smell will rise."
- Indeed, he has done great things.
- 21 Do not fear, land; be glad and rejoice,
for Yahweh will do great things.
- 22 Do not fear, you wild animals!
For the pastures of the wilderness will sprout,
the trees will bear their fruit,
and the fig trees and the vines will yield their full harvest.
- 23 Be glad, people of Zion,
and rejoice in Yahweh your God.
For he will give you the autumn rain
as vindication
and bring down showers for you,
the autumn rain and the spring rain as before.
- 24 The threshing floors will be full of wheat,
and the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.
- 25 "I will restore to you the years of crops
that the swarming locust has eaten—
the great locust, the devouring locust, and the destroying locust—
my mighty army that I sent among you.
- 26 You will eat plentifully and be satisfied,

- and praise the name of Yahweh your God,
who has done wonders among you,
and I will never again bring shame on my people.
- 27 You will know that I am among Israel,
and that I am Yahweh your God,
and there is none else,
and I will never bring shame on my people.
- 28 It will come about afterward
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters will prophesy.
Your old men will dream dreams;
your young men will see visions.
- 29 Also on servants and female servants,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.
- 30 I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood, fire, and pillars of smoke.
- 31 The sun will turn into darkness
and the moon into blood,
before the great and terrible day of Yahweh comes.
- 32 It will be that everyone who calls
on the name of Yahweh will be saved.
For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be an escaped remnant,
as Yahweh has said,
and among the survivors,
those whom Yahweh calls.

Joel 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues in the poetic form with striking imagery of armies and soldiers.

Special concepts in this chapter

Locusts

This book starts very dramatically with the imagery of the locusts and the devastation they produce. There are five different kinds of locusts that appear to come and progressively destroy the vegetation including the crops, vineyards and even the trees of Israel.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

This chapter uses simile to a great extent as Joel tries to describe this army.

Metaphor

The drought, or severe lack of rain, Joel describes is probably a real drought. It might also be a picture of either enemy invaders or of Yahweh himself coming to punish his people and the other nations. Translators should translate simply, presenting the scenes of locusts and drought as Joel describes them, and not worry about the various possible meanings.

Joel 2:1

General Information:

Joel continues poetry that began in the previous chapter.

Blow the ram's horn ... sound an alarm

Joel is emphasizing the importance of calling Israel together in preparation for the destruction that is coming.

Joel 2:2

day of darkness and gloom

The words "darkness" and "gloom" share similar meanings and emphasize that the darkness will be very dark. Both words refer to a time of disaster or divine judgment. Alternate translation: "day that is full of darkness" or "day of terrible judgment"

gloom

total or partial darkness

day of clouds and thick darkness

This phrase means the same thing as, and intensifies the idea of the previous phrase. Like that phrase, both "clouds" and "thick darkness" refer to divine judgment. Alternate translation: "day full of dark storm clouds"

Like the dawn that spreads on the mountains, a large and mighty army is approaching

When direct sunlight shines on a mountain at dawn, it begins at the top and spreads to the bottom. When an army comes over a mountain range, it comes over the top and spreads out as it comes down. Alternate translation: "A large, mighty army comes over the mountains into the land. They spread over the land like the light from the rising sun"

a large and mighty army

The words "large" and "mighty" share similar meanings here and emphasize that the army will be very strong. The word "army" could possibly be 1) a metaphor for a swarm of locusts or 2) referring to a human army.

Joel 2:3

General Information:

Joel's description of the coming army continues.

A fire is consuming everything in front of it

A fire destroys everything as it moves, and the "army"

behind it a flame is burning

After a wall of flame goes through dry land and burns the driest and smallest fuel, there will still be flames as the larger and less dry fuel burns,

land is like the garden of Eden

The garden of Eden was a beautiful place, and the land was beautiful.

Joel 2:4

General Information:

The description continues with the noises of an army of horses.

The army's appearance is like horses

The head of a locust looks like a small horse head. The army is fast, and horses are fast.

horses

A large, strong, fast animal with four legs.

they run like horsemen

Men riding horses move quickly, and the army moves quickly.

Joel 2:5

jump

A horse jumps or leaps as it runs quickly.

a noise like that of chariots ... like the sound of fiery flames ... like a mighty army ready for battle

These sounds would have been very frightening to Joel's readers. If your readers will not understand what these sound like, you might be able to use a more general phrase: "a noise that frightens everyone"

Joel 2:6

General Information:

Joel continues to describe the locust army of Yahweh.

Joel 2:7

They run like mighty warriors ... climb the walls like soldiers

The army of locusts acts as real soldiers do.

walls

walls around the cities

Joel 2:8

General Information:

The description of the locust army of Yahweh continues.

they break through the defenses

they overcome the soldiers defending the city.

Joel 2:9

General Information:

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Joel 2:10

The earth shakes in front of them, the heavens tremble

Joel speaks of the earth and heavens as if they were people who are shaking with fear. This can be translated as either a hyperbole, that the army is so frightening that even things that are not alive are afraid, or as metonymy, that the earth and the heavens are metonyms for the beings who live

there. Alternate translation: "Everyone on earth and in the heavens is very afraid"

the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars stop shining

This exaggeration claims that there are so many locusts that people cannot see the sun, moon, or stars.

Joel 2:11

Yahweh raises his voice

"Yahweh speaks loudly" to give commands.

great and very terrible

In this phrase both descriptions mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "greatly terrible"

Who can endure it?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one will be strong enough to endure Yahweh's judgment."

endure

survive

Joel 2:12

Return to me with all your heart

The heart is a metonym for what the person thinks and loves. Alternate translation: "Turn away from your sins and be totally devoted to me"

Joel 2:13

Tear your heart and not only your garments

The heart is a metonym for what the person thinks and loves. Tearing one's clothes is an outward act of shame or repentance. Alternate translation: "Change your way of thinking; do not just tear your garments"

abounding in steadfast love

The abstract noun "love" can be stated with the verb "love." Alternate translation: "always showing you that he loves you"

Joel 2:14

Will he perhaps turn ... God?

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Perhaps Yahweh will turn from his anger ... God."

leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering

"leave behind him a blessing—that is, a grain offering and a drink offering." The blessing is that plenty of grain and grapes will ripen, and so the people will be able to offer grain and drink offerings.

Joel 2:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Joel 2:16

bridal chambers

rooms, usually in the parents' houses, where brides would wait for their wedding ceremonies

Joel 2:17

do not make your inheritance into an object of scorn

"do not allow your inheritance to become people whom the other nations regard as worthless"

your inheritance

Here the people of Israel are spoken of as God's inheritance. Alternate translation: "your special people"

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

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Other nations should not be able to say, 'Their God does not help them.'" or "Other nations should not be able to say that the God of Israel has abandoned his people."

Joel 2:18

his land

"the nation of Israel"

his people

"the people of Israel"

Joel 2:19

Look

"Pay attention to what I am about to say"

You will be satisfied with them

"You will have all you need of them"

a disgrace

"unworthy of respect"

Joel 2:20

General Information:

God continues his promise to Israel.

northern ... eastern ... western

These directions are from the perspective of people living in the land of Israel.

the eastern sea

the Dead Sea

the western sea
the Mediterranean Sea

he has done great things
That is, Yahweh has done great things. Another possible meaning is that the writer speaks of the invading army, "it has done very bad things."

Joel 2:21

Do not fear, land
Joel speaks to the people of the land as if he were speaking to the land itself. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid, you people of the land"

Joel 2:22

Do not fear, you wild animals
Joel speaks to people who own livestock as if he were speaking to the animals themselves. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid, you people who own livestock"

the pastures of the wilderness will sprout
The pastures are a metonym for the plants that grow in the pastures. Alternate translation: "plants good for food will sprout in the pastures in the wilderness"

Joel 2:23

he will ... bring down showers for you
"he will ... cause much rain to fall so that you will live well"

he will give you the autumn rain as vindication
Possible meanings are that Yahweh will give the rain 1) to show that he is faithful to the Israelites or 2) to show that the Israelites were right to trust Yahweh.

autumn rain and the spring rain
the first rains of the rainy season in early December and the last rains in April and May

Joel 2:24

Connecting Statement:
Yahweh begins a long speech to the Israelites.

vats
large containers for liquids

Joel 2:25

the years of crops that the swarming locust has eaten
"the crops that you took care of for years and that the swarming locusts have eaten"

swarming locust ... the great locust, the devouring locust, and the destroying locust
These are, respectively, an adult locust that can fly, a locust too large to fly easily, a locust with wings too young to fly, and a newborn locust that has not yet developed wings. Use names that would be understood in your language. See how you translated this in Joel 1:4.

Joel 2:26

General Information:
Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

praise the name of Yahweh
The name is a metonym for the person, specifically his reputation. Alternate translation: "praise Yahweh" or "praise Yahweh because everyone knows he is good"

the name of Yahweh ... who has done wonders
Yahweh speaks of himself by name to show that he will certainly do as he has said. Alternate translation: "my name ... because I have done wonders"

Joel 2:27

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Joel 2:28

General Information:
Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

It will come about afterward that I
"This is what I will do after that: I"

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh
Yahweh speaks of the Spirit as if he were speaking of water. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit generously to all flesh"

all flesh
Here "flesh" represents people. Alternate translation: "all people"

Joel 2:29

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Joel 2:30

General Information:
Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

blood, fire, and pillars of smoke

"blood" is symbolizing the death of people.

Alternate translation: "death, fire and pillars of smoke"

Joel 2:31

The sun will turn into darkness

"The sun will no longer give light"

the moon into blood

Here the word "blood" refers to the color red. You can supply the verb for this phrase. Alternate translation: "the moon will turn into blood" or "the moon will become red" or "the moon will become as red as blood"

Joel 2:32

General Information:

Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

It will be that everyone

"This is what will happen: everyone"

everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved

The name is a metonym for the person. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Yahweh will save everyone who calls on his name"

on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem

These refer to the same place. Alternate translation: "on Mount Zion in Jerusalem"

among the survivors, those whom Yahweh calls

The phrase "there will be" is understood from earlier in the sentence. It can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "among the survivors there will be those whom Yahweh calls"

survivors

people who live through a terrible event like a war or a disaster

Chapter 3

¹ Behold, in those days and at that time,
when I reverse the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

² I will gather all the nations,
and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
I will judge them there,
because of my people and my inheritance Israel,
whom they scattered among the nations,
and because they divided up my land.

³ They cast lots for my people,
traded a boy for a prostitute,
and sold a girl for wine so they could drink.

⁴ Now, why are you angry at me,
Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia?
Will you repay me?
Even if you do repay me,
I will immediately return your repayment on your own head.

⁵ For you took my silver and my gold,
and you brought my precious treasures into your temples. ⁶ You sold the people of Judah and
Jerusalem to the Greeks,
in order to send them far away from their territory.

⁷ Look, I am about to stir them up,
out of the place where you sold them,
and will return payment on your own head.

⁸ I will sell your sons and your daughters,
by the hand of the people of Judah.
They will sell them to the Sabeans,
to a nation far off,
for Yahweh has spoken."

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations:
"Prepare yourselves for war;
rouse the mighty men;
let them come near;
let all the men of battle come up.

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruning knives into spears.
Let the weak say,
'I am mighty.'

¹¹ Hurry and come,
all you nearby nations;
gather yourselves together there.

Yahweh, bring down your mighty warriors.

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

¹³ Put in the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Come, crush the grapes,
for the winepress is full.
The vats overflow,
for their wickedness is great."

¹⁴ There is a tumult, a tumult

- in the Valley of Judgment.
For the day of Yahweh is near
in the Valley of Judgment.
- 15 The sun and the moon become dark,
the stars keep back their brightness.
- 16 Yahweh will roar from Zion,
and raise his voice from Jerusalem.
The heavens and earth will shake,
but Yahweh will be a shelter for his people,
and a fortress for the people of Israel.
- 17 "So you will know that I am Yahweh your God
who lives in Zion, my holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem will be holy,
and foreigners will not pass through her again.
- 18 It will come about on that day
that the mountains will drip with sweet wine,
the hills will flow with milk,
all the brooks of Judah will flow with water,
and a fountain will come from the house of Yahweh
and water the Valley of Shittim.
- 19 Egypt will become an abandoned devastation,
and Edom will become an abandoned wilderness,
because of the violence done to the people of Judah,
because they shed innocent blood in their land.
- 20 But Judah will be inhabited forever,
and Jerusalem will be inhabited from generation to generation.
- 21 I will avenge their blood that I have not yet avenged,
for Yahweh lives in Zion."

Joel 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

There is a change in focus in this chapter from the people of Israel to her enemies. The events of this chapters also contain many prophecies about the events of the end of this world. (See: prophet)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Israel

The mention of Israel in this chapter is probably a reference to the people of Judah and not the northern kingdom of Israel. It is also possible this is a reference to the people of Israel as a whole.

Joel 3:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

Behold

"Listen" or "Pay attention"

in those days and at that time

The phrase "at that time" means the same thing as and intensifies the phrase "in those days." Alternate translation: "in those very days" or "at that very time"

when I reverse the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem

The abstract noun "captivity" can be translated as a verbal clause, and it may be understood as a metaphor for Yahweh making the people prosper in a general sense. Alternate translation: "when I cause Judah and Jerusalem to live well again" or "free Judah and Jerusalem from those who had captured them"

Judah and Jerusalem

The names of the cities are metaphors for the people who lived in the cities. Alternate translation: "the people of Judah and Jerusalem"

Joel 3:2

Valley of Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat, whose name means "Yahweh judges," was king of Judah before Joel lived. There is no known place with this name. It would be best to translate this as the name of a valley that people named after the man Jehoshaphat.

my people and my inheritance Israel

These two phrases emphasize how Yahweh views Israel as his own precious people. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel, who are my inheritance"

Joel 3:3

traded a boy for a prostitute, and sold a girl for wine so they could drink

These are examples of the kinds of things they did and do not indicate what they did to two particular children. Alternate translation: "and did things like trading a boy for a prostitute and selling a girl for wine, so they could drink"

Joel 3:4

General Information:

Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

why are you angry at me ... Philistia?

Yahweh is encouraging the people of Judah, who can hear him, by scolding the people of Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia, who cannot hear him, as if they can. The names of the towns are metonyms for the people who live in the towns. These words can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you have no right to be angry at me ... Philistia."

Will you repay me?

"Will you get revenge on me?" God uses this question to make the people think about what they are doing. Alternate translation: "You think you can get revenge on me, but you cannot."

I will immediately return your repayment on your own head

Here the word "head" refers to the person. Yahweh will make them suffer the pain they wanted him to suffer. Alternate translation: "I will cause you to suffer the way you wanted me to suffer when you repaid me"

repayment

This refers to Yahweh harming those who have harmed him, not to him giving them something good because they have done something good for him.

Joel 3:5

General Information:

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Joel 3:6

General Information:

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Joel 3:7

General Information:

Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

Look

"Pay attention" or "Listen"

out of the place where you sold them

The people of Israel will leave the places where they were slaves and come back to the land of Israel.

return payment

"give back what you deserve"

Joel 3:8

I will sell your sons and your daughters, by the hand of the people of Judah

The hand can be a metonym for the power the hand exercises or a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "I will have the people of Judah sell your sons and your daughters"

Sabeans

the people of the land of Sabea

Joel 3:9

General Information:

Yahweh continues the speech he began in [Joel 2:25]

rouse the mighty men

"make the mighty men ready for action"

Joel 3:10

Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning knives into spears

These two phrases share similar meanings. Both of them instruct the people to turn their farming tools into weapons.

plowshares

tools that are used to break up the soil in order to plant crops

pruning knives

knives that are used to cut off small branches

Joel 3:11

General Information:

Yahweh continues the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

Hurry and come ... together there

These words continue the ironic call to battle that begins in [Joel 3:9]

gather yourselves together

The purpose of the gathering is for battle. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "gather yourselves together for battle"

Yahweh, bring down your mighty warriors

Possible meanings are 1) Joel is telling the people of Judah that this is what they are to "proclaim among the nations" (Joel 3:9) or 2) Joel interrupts the words of Yahweh and prays a short prayer.

Joel 3:12

General Information:

Yahweh finishes the speech he began in Joel 2:25, promising good things for the people of Israel.

Let the nations wake themselves ... all the surrounding nations

The words "the nations" and "the surrounding nations" refer to the same nations, those that surround Judah. Yahweh will judge them in the Valley of Jehoshaphat for what they have done to Jerusalem.

Valley of Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat, whose name means "Yahweh judges," was king of Judah before Joel lived. There is no known place with this name. It would be best to translate this as the name of a valley that people named after the man Jehoshaphat. See how you translated this in Joel 3:2.

Joel 3:13

Put in the sickle ... the winepress is full

Possible meanings are that Yahweh speaks of completely destroying the nations as if 1) he were harvesting all the grapes and all the grain or 2) he were harvesting quickly, while the grain and grapes are ripe.

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe

Yahweh speaks of making war against the nations as if he were using a sharp tool to harvest a field of ripe crops. If your readers will not understand the word "sickle," you may use the word for any sharp tool that your people use for harvesting.

Put in the sickle

"Swing the sickle to cut the grain." This is a metaphor for a soldier using a sword to kill people,

but it is best to use the word for a sharp tool used in harvesting.

sickle

a long curved knife that people use for cutting grain

the harvest is ripe

"the grain is ready to be harvested"

Come, crush the grapes, for the winepress is full

Yahweh speaks of the nations as if they were many grapes in a winepress, ready for people to crush them by stepping on them. Alternate translation: "Come, completely destroy the nations, for they are many, and they are helpless to resist you"

The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great

Yahweh speaks of the nations' wickedness as if it were the juice that flows from the winepress into storage containers, and more juice flows into the vats than they can contain.

Joel 3:14

a tumult, a tumult

A tumult is noise caused by a large crowd. This is repeated to show that the large crowds will make very much noise.

Valley of Judgment ... Valley of Judgment

This phrase is repeated to show that the judgment will certainly happen.

Valley of Judgment

There is no known place with this name. The abstract noun "judgment" can be translated using the verb "judge" or "punish." Alternate translation: "Valley Where Yahweh Judges"

Joel 3:15

General Information:

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Joel 3:16

General Information:

Yahweh begins speaking in verse 17.

Yahweh will roar from Zion, and raise his voice from Jerusalem

Both phrases mean Yahweh will shout with a loud, clear and powerful voice from Jerusalem. If your language only has one word for speaking very loudly, this can be used as one phrase. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will shout from Jerusalem"

Yahweh will roar

Possible meanings are 1) "Yahweh will roar like a lion" or 2) "Yahweh will roar like thunder."

The heavens and earth will shake

Joel speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were people who are shaking with fear. This can be translated as either a hyperbole, that Yahweh's roar is so frightening that even things that are not alive are afraid, or as metonymy, that the heavens and earth are metonyms for the beings who live there. Alternate translation: "Everyone in the heavens and on the earth is very afraid"

will shake

This word is the past form of the word translated "tremble" in Joel 2:10.

Yahweh will be a shelter for his people, and a fortress for the people of Israel

Both of these phrases mean Yahweh will protect his people. A fortress is a strong shelter used to protect people during war. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will be a strong fortress for his people, the people of Israel"

Joel 3:17

So you will know

"When I do these things, you will know"

foreigners will not pass through her

The city of Jerusalem is spoken of as if it were a woman. Foreign armies invading Jerusalem are spoken of as if they were people from another land coming through the city and doing whatever they wanted to do. Alternate translation: "foreign armies will not invade the city"

Joel 3:18

General Information:

God continues to speak about the day of the Lord.

It will come about on that day that the mountains

"This is what will happen on that day: the mountains" Translate "It will come about" as in Joel 2:28.

the mountains will drip with sweet wine

"sweet wine will drip from the mountains." This is an exaggeration to show that the land is very fertile. Alternate translation: "On the mountains there will be vineyards that produce plenty of sweet wine"

the hills will flow with milk

"milk will flow from the hills." The land being very fertile is spoken of as if the hills would flow with milk. Alternate translation: "on the hills your cattle and goats will produce plenty of milk"

all the brooks of Judah will flow with water

"water will flow through all the brooks of Judah"

water the Valley of Shittim

"will send water to the Valley of Shittim"

Shittim

This is the name of a place on the east side of the Jordan River. It means "Acacia Trees."

Joel 3:19

Egypt will become an abandoned devastation

"Everyone will leave Egypt and no one will live there"

Edom will become an abandoned wilderness

"Everyone will leave Edom and it will look like no people have ever lived there"

because of the violence done to the people of Judah

"because of the violent things Egypt and Edom did to the people of Judah"

because they shed innocent blood in their land

The word "they" refers to "Edom" and "Egypt" and is a metonym for the people of Egypt and Edom. The words "innocent blood" are a metonym for innocent people whom they have killed. Alternate translation: "because the people of Egypt and the people of Edom killed innocent people in the land of the people of Judah"

Joel 3:20

General Information:

Yahweh continues to speak about the day of the Lord.

Judah will be inhabited forever

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will live in Judah forever"

Jerusalem will be inhabited from generation to generation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "generation after generation, people will live in Jerusalem"

Joel 3:21

I will avenge their blood that I have not yet avenged

Blood is a metonym for death. Alternate translation: "I will punish the enemies who killed the people of Israel and still have not been punished"

