

Isagogical Study of Joel

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Introduction

יְוָה “Jehovah is God!” With this beautiful title the 29th book of the Old Testament draws our attention. The book of Joel is the second of the twelve “minor prophets.” Many times I fear the last few books of the Old Testament are allowed to become dusty and yellow with age before we or our lay members come to see the wealth of treasure found in these books. The prophet Joel is no exception as we shall see. It too contains verses rich in teaching for our day as does all of God’s Word.

In the Old Testament Hebrew Canon the prophet Joel is located in quite a different place. There we find it among the *Nebiim Acharonim* or the “latter prophets” listed after Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea. It is the 16th book of the Hebrew Canon. Its acceptance as part of the Old Testament Canon has never been questioned.

Author

Concerning the person of Joel we know very little. As with many of the other minor prophets, only their name is given or the name of their father. We are told, that his father was Pethuel. Due to the many references to Judah and Jerusalem, he was no doubt a resident of Judah, perhaps even of Jerusalem itself. His work and prophecy was directed primarily at the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

Time of Writing

The exact time of Joel and his writing is uncertain. From within the book itself, the evidence would seem to point toward an early date among the writings of the minor prophets. In chapter 3:2 we hear the “valley of Jehoshaphat” mentioned. This would mean that Joel lived after the time of Jehoshaphat (872-852 BC). Joel mentions the enemies of Judah as being the Phoenicians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Edomites (5:4, 19). During the reigns of Joram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah (852-839) these peoples did on occasion rise up against Judah and cause problems. If we go much later in history, however, we would expect Joel to mention the Syrians and Assyrians as being enemies of Judah also, but no mention is made of them in his writing. Neither do we find any reference to the later world powers of Babylon and Persia. The Syrians began to bother Judah in the middle of Joash’s reign over Judah (839-800), so in all probability the prophecy of Joel took place between 840-830 BC. This also fits well with the fact that the book of Joel presupposes the correct order of divine worship. During the first two decades of Joash, while he was being tutored and guided by Jehoiada, the high priest, the correct form of worship was observed.

Among the minor prophets themselves, there is also evidence which points to the fact that Joel was one of the earlier writers. Amos who lived in the days of King Uzziah (785-747), is apparently aware of the writing of Joel and refers to it by using a few phrases from Joel within his prophecy:

Joel 3:16 – The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.

Amos 1:2 – The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.

Joel 3:18 – and it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine ...

Amos 9:15 – Behold the days come ... ; and the mountains shall drop sweet (new) wine...

On the other hand Obadiah, who apparently wrote during the reign of Joram of Judah (852-845) appears in certain phrases in the prophecy of Joel:

Joel 2:52b – for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Obadiah 17 – But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

Joel 3:3 – And they have cast lots for my people ...
 Obadiah 11 – and cast lots upon Jerusalem ...
 Joel 5:19 – ... for the violence against the children of Judah.
 Obadiah 10 – For thy violence against thy brother Jacob ...

This also places Joel into that period of time parallel with Joash, probably about 840-830 BC.

The Purpose of the Prophecy

The purpose of Joel's prophecy is to draw the attention of the people of Judah to its need of repentance and humility. They are to be aware of the certainty of coming judgment. At the same time however, Joel reminds them of the promises of God and that they should remain faithful to Him. Joel tells them of the coming salvation and the destruction of the enemies of God's people.

Other Points

The book of Joel is quoted twice in the New Testament. St. Paul quotes from Joel 2:32 as he writes to the Romans, chapter 10:13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The Apostle Peter also quotes from Joel 2:28 in his great Pentecost sermon in Acts 2. This passage from Joel 2:28 is perhaps the most familiar from the writing of Joel as he speaks about the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh.

I. Joel Declares the Judgments of the LORD (1:1-2:17)

The Superscription

As Joel begins his prophecy there can be no doubt as to whose message it is. The words that he is speaking are not his thoughts or plans but "the word of the Lord." It is by inspiration that Joel here spoke and wrote these words of prophecy and comfort. As they are the Lord's Words they are sure and unchangeable. The promises contained within that Word will come to pass as spoken and written. The way or manner by which the Word came to Joel is not told. Whether it was by vision or dream or spoken directly to Joel makes no difference. Whatever way it may have been, it is still the "Word of the Lord" which Joel now proceeds to speak and write to the people of Judah.

The Destructive Force of God's Present Judgment (1:2-12)

Much of the writing the prophets was in the form of warnings and admonitions. Many times it described an impending disaster which would befall the people. Joel is no different. He also speaks of a disaster which the people will experience because of their sinful actions. Joel speaks so vividly of this disaster that it might very well have been occurring at the very time Joel received this Word from the Lord.

This is no ordinary disaster, or everyday misfortune, but it will be the most terrible plague in the memory of the people. The old men would not be able to remember such devastation nor would they have heard of such a devastation from their fathers like unto the present turn of events. So great a calamity it would be that its fame would be spoken about for generations to come also. The purpose of coming generations hearing about this great disaster would be to remind them and warn them not to turn away from the true God. They were to learn from the experience of their fathers, but so often the words and actions of past generations are not heeded. The lessons of the past never seem to be fully learned by the people of a new age.

The judgment of God in this particular case upon His fallen people was to be locusts and accompanying drought. The "palmerworm, cankerworm, caterpillar, and locusts" in verse 4 probably all refer to the same insect, the locust. The names may refer to different stages of development of different species of the locust, or may be names which are used to further describe the complete havoc brought about by the invasion of the

locust. Each stage in succession devours that which the former left behind until finally nothing but debris remains for man and animal.

So great is the plague that those who love wine will no longer find it to drink. The locusts have devoured the vines along with all the fruit of those vines. No new wine can be produced. Not only the vines but also the trees have been laid bare. The locusts have “barked” the trees, stripping them bare, right down to the white pulp. In doing this, the trees would also die having been stripped of their protective covering of bark. Such destruction could only be done by those with strong teeth. So the teeth of the locust are compared in strength to the teeth of a lion, mighty and powerful. But so small are the teeth of the locust that to carry out such destruction, “a nation” of locusts has descended upon the people of Judah. Millions of small teeth grinding away at tree and vine, lay waste to the land of Judah.

Who suffers from this plague of locusts? The entire nation of Judah. Everyone is instructed to lament by Joel, for everyone is affected. No one is spared the hardship and suffering the locusts bring with them. They should all lament as a virgin laments for her betrothed husband who is taken from her before the marriage. She has never had the opportunity to live as wife with the man she has loved from youth. She has been robbed of that pleasure. So now the people of Judah have been robbed of their pleasures, wine, food, and plenty by the locusts. The Priest should lament for the offerings for the Lord will not be coming into the temple. The meat offering, flour and oil, and the drink offering, wine, will not be coming for there is nothing to bring. The sacrifices of the Lord can not be carried out as prescribed. This would also mean that food for the priests might be in short supply. For part of the offerings were to be for their livelihood. The farmers and vineyard owners should also lament for the locusts have destroyed the wheat and barley as well as the vineyards and all the trees of the field. Everyone should lament this terrible devastation which has fallen upon them.

But to merely feel sorry over ones present plight, and lament the hardships which they had to endure would neither solve the situation nor get to the root of the problem. What was needed was a true sorrow from the heart, not over their sad circumstances, but over their sins of pride and rebellion from God.

The Priests are Urged to Proclaim a Solemn Fast (1:13-20)

In times of national crisis people turn to the Lord. Joel directs the priests first; of all to adorn themselves with the proper apparel for mourning and turn to the Lord, to ask Him for mercy, forgiveness, and deliverance from this plague. Then the priests are to turn the attention of the people to the Lord by calling for a fast among the people and an assembly of the people before the temple. This assembly was not just to be the men, but also the women and children. “All the inhabitants of the land were to appear before the Lord at His temple. The entire land was to “cry unto the Lord.” This cry was to ask for relief from the present calamity, which was a sure sign of “the day of the Lord.” The temporal judgment of God upon a sinful people was present. It was a just judgment from the Almighty. It was a judgment evidenced by the lack of food; by the lack of a new crop due to drought conditions which did not allow the seed to germinate; by the starvation of cattle and sheep because the pastures had been eaten bare by the locusts and were now burnt brown by the drought. Even the streams and ponds were dried up by this judgment of the Lord upon His people.

It was the sin of the people, idolatry and pride, for which not only the people are feeling the weight of God’s judgment but also the cattle and nature. St. Paul reminded the Romans of this fact when he wrote, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). The sin of man has brought suffering upon all creation, nature, animal, and man. The sin of the people had brought this plague.

Repent! The Day of the Lord’s Judgment Is Here (2:1-11)

To make all the people realize that the “day of the Lord” is near they are to blow the trumpet in Zion and to sound the alarm from the Holy mountain. Both the short blasts of the rams horn and the continuous sound of the alarm horns were to be heard from Jerusalem and the temple. All people from Judah and Israel should heed the alarm that calls them to Jerusalem to repent for the day of the Lord was near.

The locusts and drought were temporal judgments which were a picture of that great and final day of the Lord's judgment. But notice how great and terrible even the temporal judgment of the Lord appears. As the locust appeared on the horizon the sun was darkened. So great was the army of locusts that they appeared as thick clouds which hid the sun in midday, making it no lighter than the early hours of twilight before the sun rises. So great and strong in numbers are the locusts that they have never been seen in such proportions before in the land of Palestine. Perhaps in Egypt, at the time of the plagues, such numbers of locusts were seen, but never had this happened in Palestine before. Their great numbers coupled with the drought brought complete devastation to everything, just as a fire so completely destroys all things in its path. Compared to what remained the land appeared as the Garden of Eden before their arrival. Now nothing was left untouched by the army of locusts.

The appearance of the locusts is then described by Joel as that of an army. Because of this description and a later reference to the army of the north, some people view this not as locusts but rather as a real army, perhaps the Syrians or Assyrians. The entire context however tends more toward viewing this merely as a description of the hordes of locusts which swept in upon them like an army. First their appearance was like horses. There is an old Arabian proverb which describes the locust as the following: "The locust has the form of ten of the giants of the animal world, weak as he is – face of a mare, eyes of an elephant, neck of a bull, horns of a hart, chest of a lion, stomach of a scorpion, wings of an eagle, thighs of a camel, legs of an ostrich and tail of a serpent" (Dr. Theo. Laetsch, *The Minor Prophets*, p. 119). We note that their face is described like that of a mare with its long narrow head.

The noise of the myriads of locusts winging their way across the sky sounded like the thunder of chariots rushing into battle, or the noise of a raging conflagration as it sweeps across a prairie or through a forest. At the sight and sound of this the people are filled with fear and panic and the dark lines of gloom and sorrow are seen upon their face. As the locusts approach they appear as a disciplined army. They never break rank but continue on a steady course marching along. Each has its position which it holds and there is no panic or desertion in the ranks of the army of locusts. If one falls by the wayside due to injury, the gap is quickly filled so that the ranks are never broken. The invasion is very thorough as they ravage not only the country but also the city, the walls of the city, the houses of the city, even entering into the houses wherever they can find entrance. As the locusts fill the sky, the lights of the heavens are blocked out. The pulsating waves of approaching locusts on the horizon create the visual effect of the earth shaking and trembling. This was the Lord's army which brought destruction upon Judah. Man can not defend against this great and terrible judgment of the Lord.

Repent in the Heart and Turn to the Lord (2:12-17)

The only way to ward off the great and terrible day of the Lord is to repent and plead for mercy from the Lord. So Joel turns the attention of Judah to repentance, true repentance which is found not just in outward signs of mourning and crying, but which comes from the heart. Joel's cry is, "rend your heart, and not your garments" (13). Joel knows that true repentance from the heart will turn the wrath of God away and again they will experience God's love and mercy. He borrows from the words of Moses (Ex. 34:6) when he tells the people, the Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." This truth of God endures forever. The God of all grace and kindness does not want man to be destroyed but yet at the same time His holy and just will must also be observed. But God's abundant mercy and grace is showered upon man time and time again for "where sin abounded, grace does much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). Whenever sinful man turns to the Lord for help, help both spiritual and physical is waiting in abundant measure. Here physical help for Judah meant relief from the locusts and drought; a return of crops so that the meat and drink offering might be offered unto the Lord once again. Joel is also to tell them of their great spiritual Helper.

At this point it would also be well to remind ourselves of the meaning of the word repent when used in reference to God. It certainly does not mean that God was sorry for the plague of locusts and drought which He sent upon Judah. God can not be sorry, for such a thought would mean that He had made a mistake. God's

immutable holy will contains no mistakes and is not subject to change for God changes not. When the holy writers speak of God repenting they are referring to the fact that God's course of action may change to accomplish His will which remains unchanged. Therefore Joel speaks of God perhaps leaving a blessing in place of the plague as the people cry unto the Lord for forgiveness.

As Joel closes this first section, he again instructs the priest to summon the people a together with the blowing of the trumpet and to call for a solemn fast. All people, from babies to the elderly, the bridegroom and the bride, should respond to the call. The priests are to prostrate themselves before the altar of the Lord and ask for mercy. They should remind the Lord that Judah is His chosen people. For the sake of His name and His glory He can not let His people remain so oppressed, lest the heathen nations mock and ridicule the God of Judah.

Here ends the first portion. Joel has declared the judgments of the Lord. The invasion of locusts and drought were temporal judgments of the Lord which all so pointed toward the great judgment day of the Lord. There would be other judgments in the lives of these people for which this plague of locusts should have served as a due warning. But Judah did not learn from experience. They fell away from the Lord at various times and through the nations of Syria, Assyria, and Babylon destruction and devastation were brought upon the land of Judah and its people, God's people.

II. Joel Declared the Salvation of God for His People (2:18-3:21)

No sermon would be complete if only the Law, God's wrath over sin, were preached and nothing more. The Gospel message of Gods love must be present in plenteous portion. Thus far the words of Joel have been speaking about the wrath of God being vented upon Judah by locusts and drought because of a falling away of the people from the Lord. Joel now continues in his prophecy by proclaiming the grace and mercy of God as humble contrite sinners turn to the Lord for help. God's mercy and grace are evident not only in the return of physical blessings, but also in the promise of great spiritual blessings brought about by the "teacher for righteousness" and the outpouring of the " Spirit upon all flesh" culminating in the great deliverance of God's people at the final judgment of the Lord.

The Plague Is Removed and the Blessings Restored (2:18-22)

Joel begins the message of good news by assuring the people that the Lord will hear their prayers and answer them. We too are reminded that the Psalmist tells us, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Ps. 50:15). He assures them that the army of locusts will be driven off into the seas, the Salt Sea to the south east and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. All that remains of this once so powerful army is the stench of those killed in the streets of the cities. The great northern army has been defeated and as a result corn and wine shall again be plentiful. The God of Israel will again be feared by the heathen peoples and not mocked as in the day of destruction.

As for the land and its inhabitants, they should now rejoice in the Lord. The beasts of the Field need no longer groan for the fields shall be green with grass and the trees shall bear their fruit. The blessings of the land shall be restored in answer to the prayers of the people.

The Promised Teacher of Righteousness Who Pardons Sins (2:23-27)

Physical blessings are only a small portion of God's kindness toward those who call upon His name. God's people, Zion, have a greater cause for rejoicing for the Lord will send them "the Teacher for Righteousness." Most commentators and exegetes agree that the better translation for (אֶת־הַמּוֹרֶה לְצַדִּיקָה) verse 23 is "the Teacher for Righteousness" rather than "the former rain moderately" as we find it in the King James version.

Dr. Martin Luther translates it in the German as “*Lehrer zur Gerechtigkeit*.” Grammatically speaking “Teacher for Righteousness” is the most correct and fits well with the thoughts although some argue that it introduces a new and unrelated thought in this context. Those who prefer to translate it as “the former rain moderately” wish to limit the blessings spoken of only to the physical sphere. As we view it though, physical blessings would be worthless were it not for the great spiritual blessing which is ours in and through “the Teacher for Righteousness.”

There is disagreement though as to who this “Teacher for Righteousness” refers. Some men say Joel himself, for he taught the people to turn to the Lord where they might find righteousness. Others say the term applies to a long list of prophets who taught the people, coming to a climax in the promised Messiah. The best and greatest gift which the Lord God has given to men was not Joel, neither was it long lines of prophets, but the Prophet of the Highest whom Moses foretold. “The Teacher for Righteousness” is Christ Himself. He brought the righteousness of God down to men through His suffering and death upon the cross. We have been made “the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor. 5:21). It is for His sake that the Lord has also showered physical blessings upon His people. To sustain His people so that in the fullness of time the promised “Teacher for Righteousness” might arise, the Lord also sends the early and later rains to nourish the crops and satisfy the needs of the people.

The results of the Lord physically blessing His people for the sake of His promised “Teacher for Righteousness” are that the granaries are full and wine and oil are in abundance. What the locusts have destroyed, the Lord will restore in such portion that all will be satisfied. The people will respond with thanks and praise to the name of the Lord God, and God’s people shall have nothing to be ashamed of. The presence of the Lord is evident by the physical blessings and promise of great spiritual blessings in the future. All Israel shall know that He is truly the Lord God. The Lord will not forsake them so that they must hang their head in shame. He will stand by them and they shall rejoice in Him.

The Coming of the Holy Ghost (2:28-32)

If you are following along in the Hebrew or German please note that this section had been divided into a chapter by itself. Thus in the Hebrew and German we have four chapters in Joel compared to three in the English translations.

The following words of Joel refer to the great day of Pentecost and succeeding times. That these words refer to that event can be no more fully affirmed than by listening to the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost. He cites this prophecy of Joel as being fulfilled on that day of Pentecost as the Holy Ghost was poured out on the disciples and the entire Christian Church. Peter told the assembled crowd that these disciples who were speaking in foreign languages were not drunk, “but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16).

The chronology of events is also foretold by Joel for he says, “afterward,” after the previous event. That which Joel had just spoken about was the sending of the Teacher for Righteousness,” Christ the Messiah. After His time, then the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all men. Of this fact Jesus assured His disciples by telling them that He would send them the Comforter who would guide them in all truth. He instructed them not to leave Jerusalem until they had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. It was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church.

“All flesh” in the New Testament church would be privileged to look back with the eyes of faith to those stirring events which brought them salvation. True, it was the work of the Holy Spirit which brought the Old Testament people to faith also, yet only a few of them were given the special privilege to see the events of their salvation as prophesied through their writings. Today all Christians have the privilege to know and see the accomplished fact of their salvation in greater detail than any of the prophets. Young and old, Jew and Gentile, rich or poor, slave or free, all have this privilege, a result of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all people. That those early Christians were given special powers by the Holy Spirit is also true. They could speak in foreign languages without study. They could heal and perform other miracles as well. These were special gifts

of the Holy Spirit so that the early Christians might have a means whereby they could verify their preaching. Today God's Word is our verification. We need nothing else.

Also consider the Marvelous visions and pictures of heaven which we have before our eyes today. For us these things are much clearer than they were for the Old Testament people. We have the hope of eternal life in our possession. Christ has given that to us, His Word tells us of the mansions of heaven. The picture of heaven painted by the Apostle John in Revelation 7 is clearer than the Old Testament references and pictures of heaven. It also tells us about those things that shall take place before the end of the world. Faith, the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, gives the knowledge of forgiveness and the vision of eternal life to all believing Christ Christians.

When this event has occurred then mankind can look for the great Day of the Lord. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will usher in the last days of the world. There shall be signs in the heavens and the earth to announce this coming day of the Lord. To see more clearly what Joel was speaking of we turn to the words of Jesus in St. Matthew chapter 24 and read about wars and rumors of wars, fighting of every type and nature, famines, earthquakes, and pestilence which shall usher in the last day. We can not escape the foot that we are living in the last days before the great day of the Lord. When these things have all come to pass then, "shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light" (Matt. 24:29). Notice the thoughts of Joel in verse 31, "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord."

But even though these signs are so ominous, and many might consider that last day the "terrible day of the Lord," yet there is hope for all men. For "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered" (32). All men who by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit have come to faith in the Lord Jesus need not fear or tremble at the final and great day of the Lord, but shall rejoice at that final deliverance from sin and the evils of this present world. Again we notice the close relationship between the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and the final deliverance. It is only by the work of the Holy Spirit that a person can call on the name of the Lord. Only in the name of the Lord can mankind have salvation and eternal life and face the "day of the Lord" unafraid.

The Coming Day of Judgment (3:1-21)

Joel now continues in his prophecy to the end of time. "In those days and in that time," certainly refer to the age of the New Testament Church when the bondage of sin is broken by the Savior and all men are set free in Christ to be the children of God by faith. It is in the age of the New Testament church that the great day of judgment, just described, will take place. It is referred to as the gathering of nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat. It was in this valley that the Lord destroyed the forces of Moab, Ammon and Edom (2 Chron. 20:1-30), enemies of God's people. This gathering of nations in this valley now becomes the final Judgment, the day of revenge, where the enemies of God's Church shall be punished. The Phoenicians of Tyre and Sidon, the Philistines of the coast will be repaid for the crimes they have perpetrated against God's people. Those that have mistreated God's people by selling them into slavery in distant lands and plundering the riches of the temple shall receive their due reward. They shall suffer punishment at the hands of the Lord.

Today also the enemies of the church may seem to have the upper hand at times, but in the day of the final gathering of all nations the Lord will repay His enemies with their rightful lot. This is the way it will be, "for the Lord hath spoken it" (8).

As the nations gather, the Lord now issues a challenge to the "Gentiles," heathen. They are to prepare for the final showdown. Every available enemy is to come forward to fight against the Lord and His people, the Church. Every resource of theirs is to be used. They are all to father around against God's people. Against such opposition what chance do the people of God have? They have every chance for the Lord God, the Almighty One, is on their side. Against the forces of the Lord, no army, no matter how great, can fight and win.

The time is right now for the final defeat of God's enemies. In the valley of Jehoshaphat the Lord will sit as judge to pass sentence upon the opposing forces. The wickedness of the enemies is ripe unto destruction. As

a sickle is put to the ripe grain, so the enemies of God are cut down. As ripe grapes are placed into the press and stamped out, so also the enemies of God are stamped out.

During all this time however, even though the opposition seemed tremendous, yet the Lord is the hope and strength of His people. For as the multitude gather in the “valley of decision” and as the signs of the last great day of the Lord appear, the sun and moon becoming dark, and the terror and dread which that day shall breed in the hearts of many people, yet the people of God will be unafraid. That same voice of the Lord which creates fear and terror in the heart of the enemy will bring joy, hope and strength to His people. God’s people will no longer be assailed by the enemy but will dwell in the holy mountain, in the new Jerusalem of heaven. The Church Militant will become the Church Triumphant. Strangers or hypocrites will no longer be mingled with the believers. God and His people shall live together in Zion, the city of God.

Upon His people the Lord now showers His blessings forever. The glorious picture of heaven is described in terms of earthly joys. We remind ourselves of John’s in description in Revelation 7:16-17 where he speaks of no thirst or hunger, no heat or sun, but only living fountains of water and being fed by the Lord. The blessings and joys of heaven are beyond human description .

The enemies of God’s people will no longer be a worry either. Egypt and Edom represent those enemies which are now destroyed. They no longer exist as they are forever separated from God in eternity. Judah and Jerusalem, representing God’s people, shall dwell forever in the presence of the Lord. The martyrs, those whose innocent blood has been shed, will likewise dwell with the Lord and the Lord shall avenge the shedding of their blood. For He is the Lord, and He dwells in Zion, within the Church, among His people.

In closing I would like to read a prayer which Luther used to end His commentary on Joel (*Minor Prophets*, pg. 135):

O eternal Father of our Lord and Liberator Jesus Christ, we know what is the lot of Thy Church in this life and the manifold “troubles she must endure from Satan and the world. Therefore we pray Thee for the sake of this Thine only-begotten Son that Thou wouldst above all strengthen our minds by Thy Holy Spirit so that we shall not succumb in so many dangers; and then, that Thou wouldst frustrate the plans of the enemies and by Thy faithful and marvelous help wouldst declare to all the world that Thou watchest over Thy Church and wilt rule, protect, and save her, who livest and rulest, one eternal God, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.