

Restoring the years that the locust has eaten - Joel 2:25

The promise from God for in this season is...

...that God will restore what the locusts have stolen!

Locusts as God's punishment...

...devouring everything in its path

1 Blow the ram's horn trumpet in Zion! Trumpet the alarm on my holy mountain! Shake the country up! God's Judgment's on its way - the Day's almost here! 2 A black day! A Doomsday! Clouds with no silver lining! Like dawn light moving over the mountains, a huge army is coming. There's never been anything like it and never will be again. 3 Wildfire burns everything before this army and fire licks up everything in its wake. Before it arrives, the country is like the Garden of Eden. When it leaves, it is Death Valley. Nothing escapes unscathed. 4 The locust army seems all horses - galloping horses, an army of horses. 5 It sounds like thunder leaping on mountain ridges, Or like the roar of wildfire through grass and brush, Or like an invincible army shouting for blood, ready to fight, straining at the bit. 6 At the sight of this army, the people panic, faces white with terror. 7 The invaders charge. They climb barricades. Nothing stops them. Each soldier does what he's told, so disciplined, so determined. 8 They don't get in each other's way. Each one knows his job and does it. Undaunted and fearless, unswerving, unstoppable. 9 They storm the city, swarm its defenses, Loot the houses, breaking down doors, smashing windows. 10 They arrive like an earthquake, sweep through like a tornado. Sun and moon turn out their lights, stars black out. 11 God himself bellows in thunder as he commands his forces. Look at the size of that army! And the strength of those who obey him! God's Judgment Day - great and terrible. Who can possibly survive this (Joel 2:1-11 – The Message)?

A punishment that puts priorities in perspective...

...and sets the stage for a greater blessing (v. 14)

12 That is why the Lord says, "Turn to me now, while there is time! Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. 13 Don't tear your clothing in your grief; instead, tear your hearts." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful. He is not easily angered. He is filled with kindness and is eager not to punish you. 14 Who knows? Perhaps even yet he will give you a reprieve, sending you a blessing instead of this terrible curse. Perhaps he will give you so much that you will be able to offer grain and wine to the Lord your God as before (Joel 2:12-14 – NLT)!

The restoration process

1. Declare that God will not be mocked (remember Sennacherib - Isaiah 35-36)

15 Blow the trumpet in Jerusalem! Announce a time of fasting; call the people together for a solemn meeting. 16 Bring everyone... 17 The priests, who minister in the Lord's presence, will stand between the people and the altar, weeping. Let them pray, "Spare your people, Lord! They belong to you, so don't let them become an object of mockery. Don't let their name become a proverb of unbelieving foreigners who say, 'Where is the God of Israel? He must be helpless (Joel 2:15-17 – NLT)!"

2. Receive God's deliverance

18 Then the Lord will pity his people and be indignant for the honor of his land! 19 He will reply, "Look! I am sending you grain and wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy your needs. You will no longer be an object of mockery among the surrounding nations. 20 I will remove these armies from the north and send them far away. I will drive them back into the parched wastelands, where they will die. Those in the rear will go into the Dead Sea; those at the front will go into the Mediterranean. The stench of their rotting bodies will rise over the land." Surely the Lord has done great things (Joel 2:18-20 – NLT)!

3. **Begin to live in God's provision... eat the locusts!**

21 Don't be afraid, my people! Be glad now and rejoice because the Lord has done great things. 22 Don't be afraid, you animals of the field! The pastures will soon be green. The trees will again be filled with luscious fruit; fig trees and grapevines will flourish once more. 23 Rejoice, you people of Jerusalem! Rejoice in the Lord your God! For the rains he sends are an expression of his grace. Once more the autumn rains will come, as well as the rains of spring. 24 The threshing floors will again be piled high with grain, and the presses will overflow with wine and olive oil (Joel 2:21-24 – NLT).

Recipes (note that Locusts are classified as "clean" according to Leviticus 11:21-23)

- Tswana: Remove the wings and hind legs of the locusts. Boil in a little water until soft. Add salt, if desired, and a little fat and fry until brown. Serve with cooked, dried mealies (corn).
- Uganda: Clean the locusts by removing the legs and wings. Fry them with some chopped onion and season with curry powder.

4. Don't get comfortable with eating the locusts!

5. Sow where you had great loss

- Plant where you had failure
- Pray for healing where there was none
- Pray for family members who you have given up on
- Pray for provision where there was great loss
- The Lord will give back what the locusts ate...

...so that His people will not be disgraced!

25 The Lord says, "I will give you back what you lost to the stripping locusts, the cutting locusts, the swarming locusts, and the hopping locusts. It was I who sent this great destroying army against you. 26 Once again you will have all the food you want, and you will praise the Lord your God, who does these miracles for you. Never again will my people be disgraced like this. 27 Then you will know that I am here among my people of Israel and that I alone am the Lord your God. My people will never again be disgraced like this (Joel 2:25-27 – NLT).

"O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health... You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy..." – Psalm 30:2, 11 (NLT)

6. **Ask God to use the past losses for greater fruitfulness in the future**

51 Joseph named his older son Manasseh, for he said, "God has made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father's family." 52 Joseph named his second son Ephraim, for he said, "God has made me fruitful in this land of my grief (Genesis 41:51-52 – NLT)."

- Then God will pour out His Spirit on everyone...

...and we will be ready for greater usefulness for God's Kingdom

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, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls (Joel 2:28-32 – NKJV).