

**Pray for your time together!**

**Read passage out loud as a group.** Option: Give group 5 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

**This Week's Passage**

**Scripture Reference: Joel 2**

**1** Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand— **2** a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come.

**3** Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste—nothing escapes them. **4** They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. **5** With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

**6** At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. **7** They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. **8** They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. **9** They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.

**10** Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. **11** The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty is the army that obeys his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

**Rend Your Heart**

**12** “Even now,” declares the LORD,  
“return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

**13** Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. **14** Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.

**15** Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. **16** Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. **17** Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is

their God?””

### **The LORD's Answer**

**18** Then the LORD was jealous for his land  
and took pity on his people.

**19** The LORD replied to them:

“I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.

**20** “I will drive the northern horde far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land; its eastern ranks will drown in the Dead Sea and its western ranks in the Mediterranean Sea. And its stench will go up; its smell will rise.”

Surely he has done great things! **21** Do not be afraid, land of Judah; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD has done great things! **22** Do not be afraid, you wild animals, for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches. **23** Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. **24** The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

**25** “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten— the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm— my great army that I sent among you. **26** You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. **27** Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.

### **The Day of the LORD**

**28** “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

**29** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

**30** I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. **31** The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. **32** And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

### **Discussion**

**Ask the Group:** What about this passage stood out to you?

*Leaders' Note: This question gives your group the opportunity to explore their own ideas before leading them down specific discussion.*

**Ask the Group:** What does this passage say about the God's character? How these characteristics contrast and what do they say about the overall character of God?

*Leaders' Note: Think about the contrast between a God who is both inviting and one to be feared, a God who is both wrathful and forgiving, etc.*

**Ask the Group:** The passage mentions the “day of the LORD” several times (vs. 1, 11, 31). What is the “day of the LORD” and what does the passage say about it?

**Ask the Group:** What is Joel exhorting the people of Israel to do? What does he mean when he says to “rend your heart and not your garment?” (v. 13)

Read Acts 2:14-41. This is Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost where he directly quotes vs. 28-32.

**Ask the Group:** What does the passage in Acts tell us about the fulfillment of Joel’s prophesy? How does the life, death, and resurrection of Christ point toward the “day of the Lord?” How does the Holy Spirit play into this?

**Sub-question:** How is it that Peter can claim that this old testament prophecy has been fulfilled through Jesus?

*Leaders Note: Talk about how Christ’s life, death, and resurrection usher in the beginning of the “day of the Lord”.*

**Ask the Group:** Like Joel, Peter also makes an exhortation to the people (Act 2:41). What is it? How does it compare/contrast to the exhortation of Joel?

### **Application**

**Ask the Group (small or large):** How can you respond to Peter/Joel’s exhortation this week? Is God calling to you rend your heart in any specific way? Is there something you need to repent of?

**Ask the Group (small or large):** What changes should you make in light of the fact that God’s own Spirit has been poured out on you?

*Suggestion: Send these application questions and challenge out through email or The City during the week to encourage your group.*

Today we’ve seen the difference between how people respond to situations and how God calls us to respond. Think about your upcoming week, how will this study change how you respond to the challenges you encounter?