

## Chat with the Children

- [Tearfund Harvest video](#)

### Introduction

- Locust plague striking this recently returned from exile community
  - locusts stripped all the joy and hope in life away...
  - when **surely the joy of mankind is withered away** (1:12), where are we turning? **To God?**
  - the people Joel was writing to were, rightly, more worried about losing touch with God - which had led to exile - than about the locusts
  - are we more concerned to remain in close touch with God than anything else?
  - then came God's promise of **relief** from the locusts, **restoration** the way things should be, and **repayment** for the years the locusts had stolen, all signs of the **reality** of God's **presence** with this people
  - promised through the coming Holy Spirit, **personally present, profusely given, powerfully able to change and transform, and protecting his people**
- But that coming of locusts was potentially a sign of the **day of the Lord**, when God shows up in power
  - God's breaking into time and space to bring things to the way they should be...
  - and its that theme that Joel picks up and finishes with...
  - God promises his Spirit, he pours himself out on his people...
  - but what else happens on this day of the Lord...
  - (separation of Christ's first and second coming)
- *Some themes in these verses...*

### Reversal

- When God shows up, fortunes are reversed for God's people
  - its all been downhill up to now, they are the small nation, they've even had the locusts bringing them to the brink of famine...
  - they are weak and vulnerable - effect of locusts worse on them since they are a weak nation
  - and made so by the surrounding nations...
  - and so there is a reversal, whereby God will bring up those who are in his family, and bring down those who have rejected the welcome into his family
  - see **v.1**, and the whole change in dynamic between the surrounding nations and Judah/Israel
  - the other nations have profited from Israel's misfortune, but implicitly that situation is going to be turned around... (**v.8**)

### Repayment

- That reversal will include a paying back for the wrongs done, a balancing of the scales of justice
  - for these other nations, in their rejection of God, are not morally neutral
  - they have aligned themselves, allied themselves, with all that rejects God
  - with prostitution, slavery, sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, land theft, Temple desecration (**vs.2-6**)
- Ploughshares into swords! (**v.10**)

### Refuge

- In the midst of God bringing his all encompassing judgement - **v.13** - he will shelter his own people
  - God will provide refuge, safety for his people (**v.16**)

- That is part of the picture the NT paints of what Christ's death on the Cross has achieved for us:
  - there is judgement coming against all who sin
  - but in Christ, in relationship with him, we are provided a refuge, a safe place...

### Redemption

- And deal with his people's bloodguilt, redeeming them back to himself, into his presence, pictured in "Promised Land" terms... (18-21)

### Conclusion

- Do we know the reality of this relationship with God:
  - a refuge in God, redemption
  - with the promise and confidence of a reversal of fortunes for those who trust in him, the expectation of justice done and evil repayed