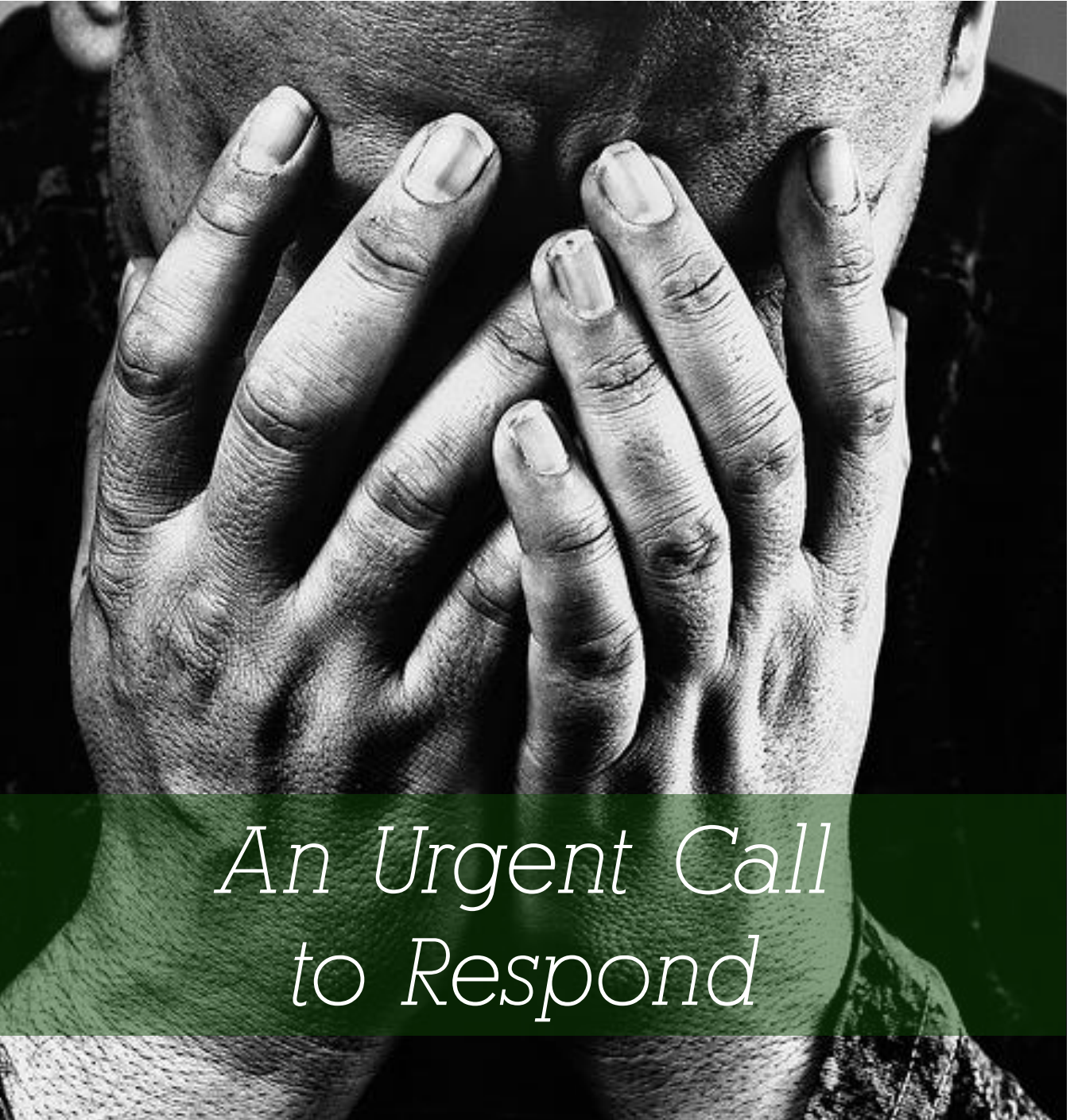
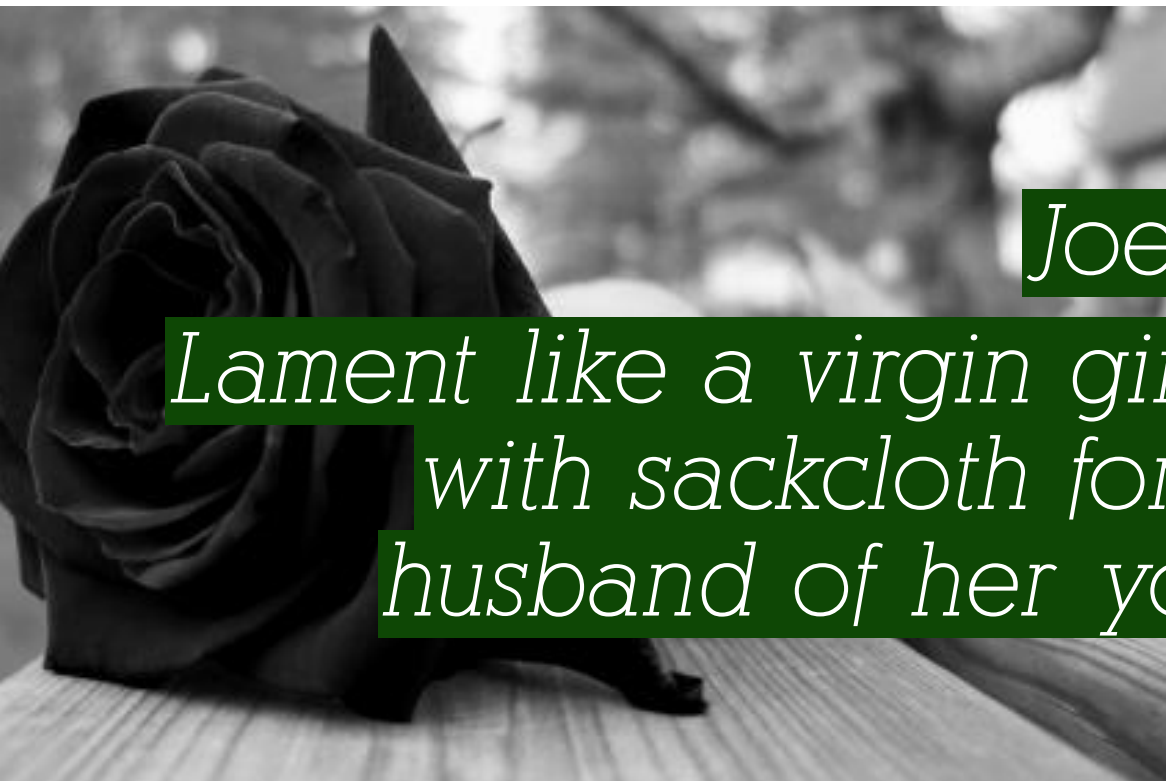


Week 15

Joel 2 Lifestyle



*An Urgent Call
to Respond*

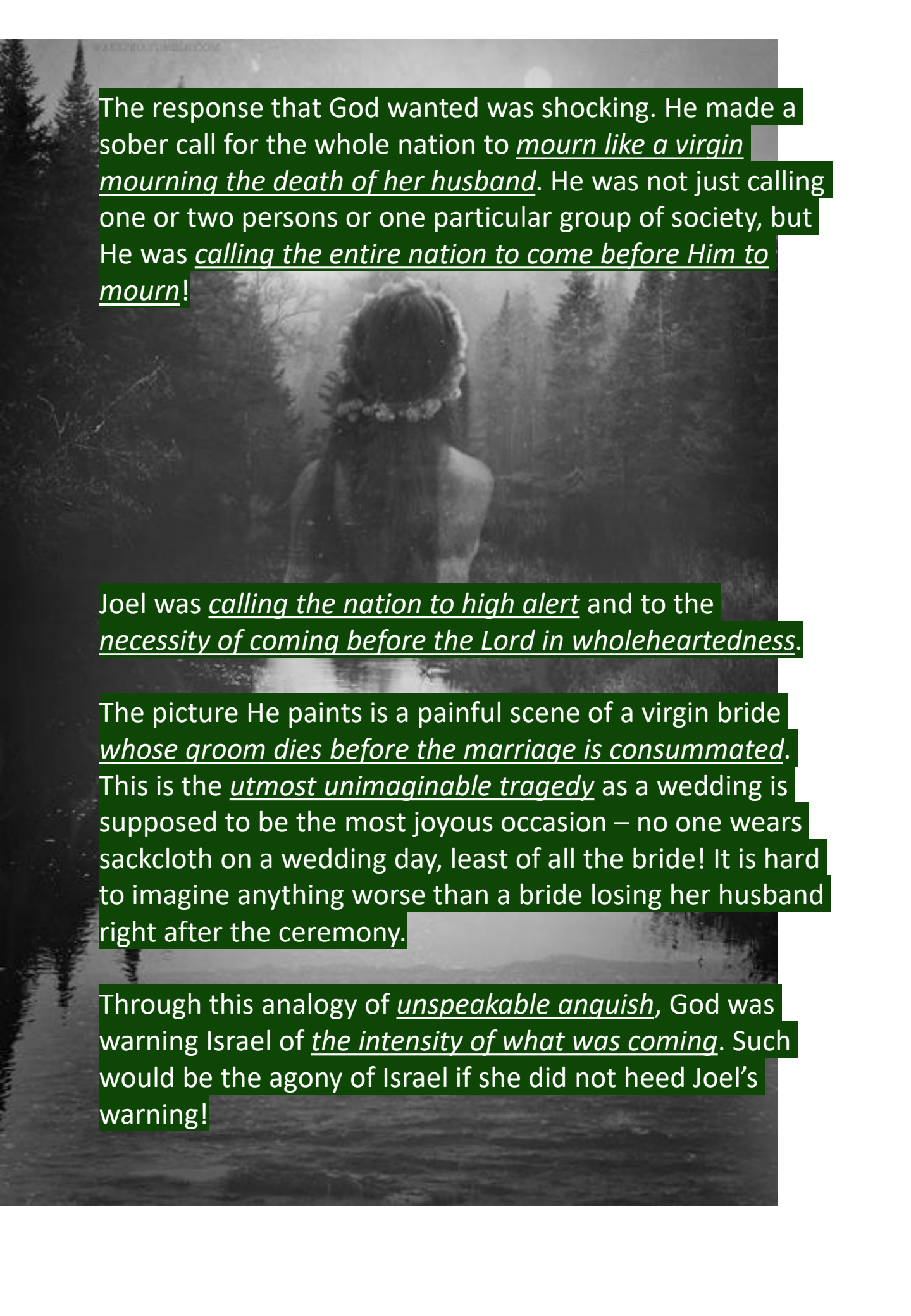


Joel 1:8

*Lament like a virgin girded
with sackcloth for the
husband of her youth*

The devastating effect of the locust plague affected people from all classes of society (Joel 1:5, 11, 13). Joel 1 mentions the different categories of people - “drunkards”, farmers and priests. From the homeless to the working class to the spiritual leadership, no one was spared!

Joel’s urgent call in this passage is that the people of God must make it a top priority to respond to God concerning the coming crisis. God wants this to be our number one agenda. The seriousness of what was coming to Israel was compared to the death of a young bridegroom on his wedding night!

A woman in a white wedding dress stands with her back to the camera in a misty forest. She is wearing a large, ornate floral crown. The background is a dense forest of evergreen trees, and the ground appears to be covered in fallen leaves or pine needles. The overall atmosphere is somber and ethereal.

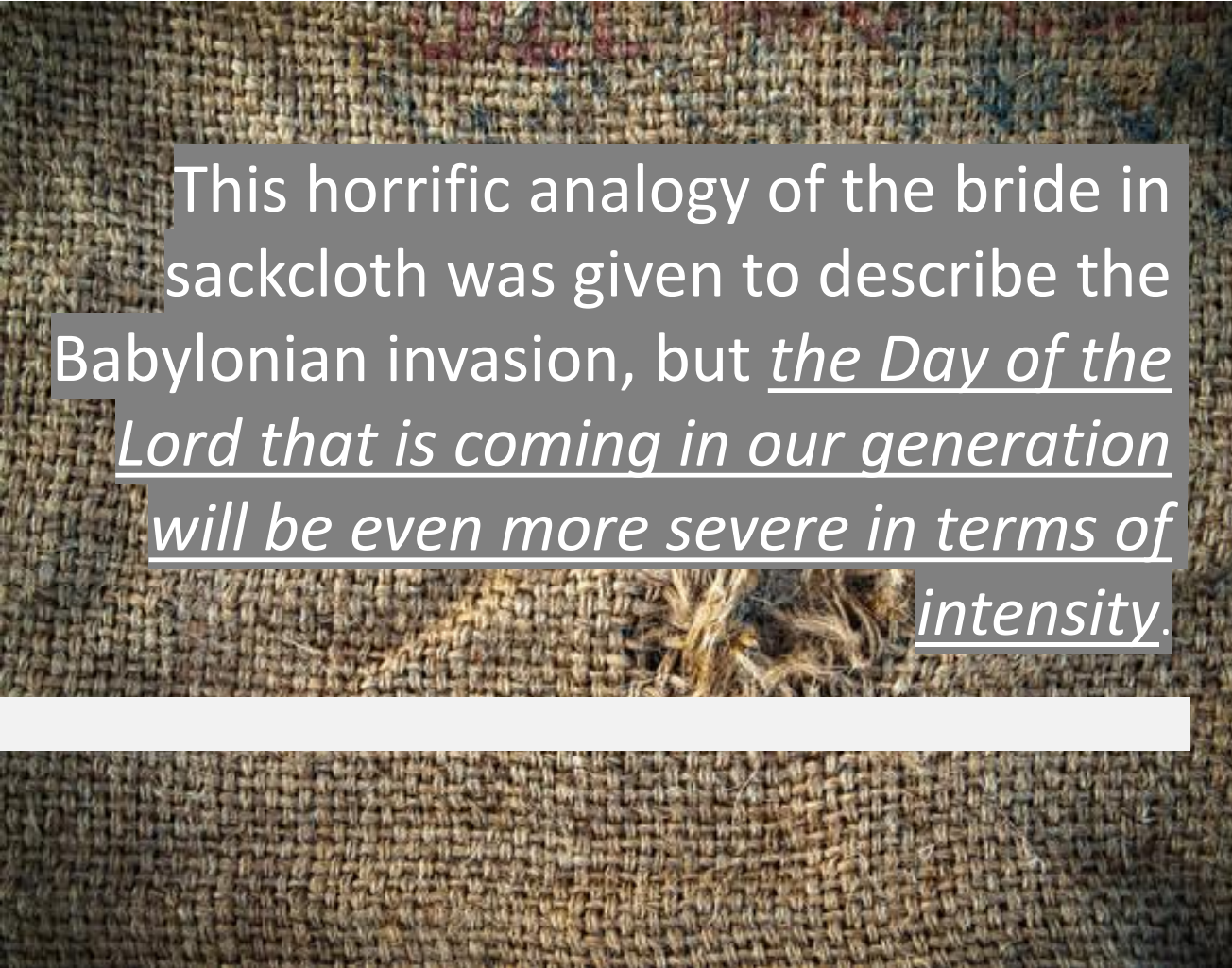
The response that God wanted was shocking. He made a sober call for the whole nation to mourn like a virgin mourning the death of her husband. He was not just calling one or two persons or one particular group of society, but He was calling the entire nation to come before Him to mourn!

Joel was calling the nation to high alert and to the necessity of coming before the Lord in wholeheartedness.

The picture He paints is a painful scene of a virgin bride whose groom dies before the marriage is consummated. This is the utmost unimaginable tragedy as a wedding is supposed to be the most joyous occasion – no one wears sackcloth on a wedding day, least of all the bride! It is hard to imagine anything worse than a bride losing her husband right after the ceremony.

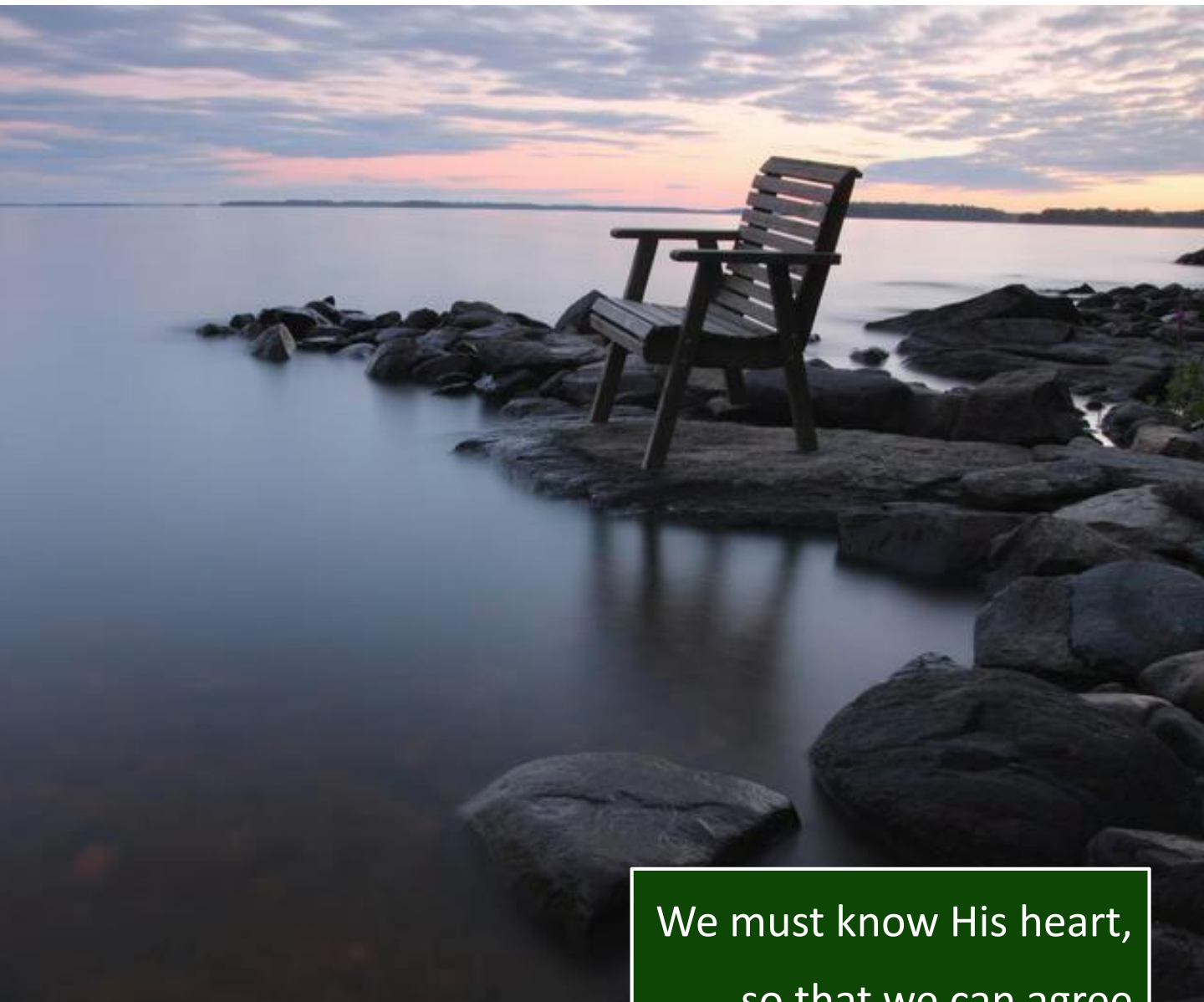
Through this analogy of unspeakable anguish, God was warning Israel of the intensity of what was coming. Such would be the agony of Israel if she did not heed Joel's warning!

The analogy was also the appropriate picture for how the whole nation would feel when the crisis hit them. The anguish described in Joel 2 was so unspeakable that it could be likened to a bride in sackcloth on her wedding day.



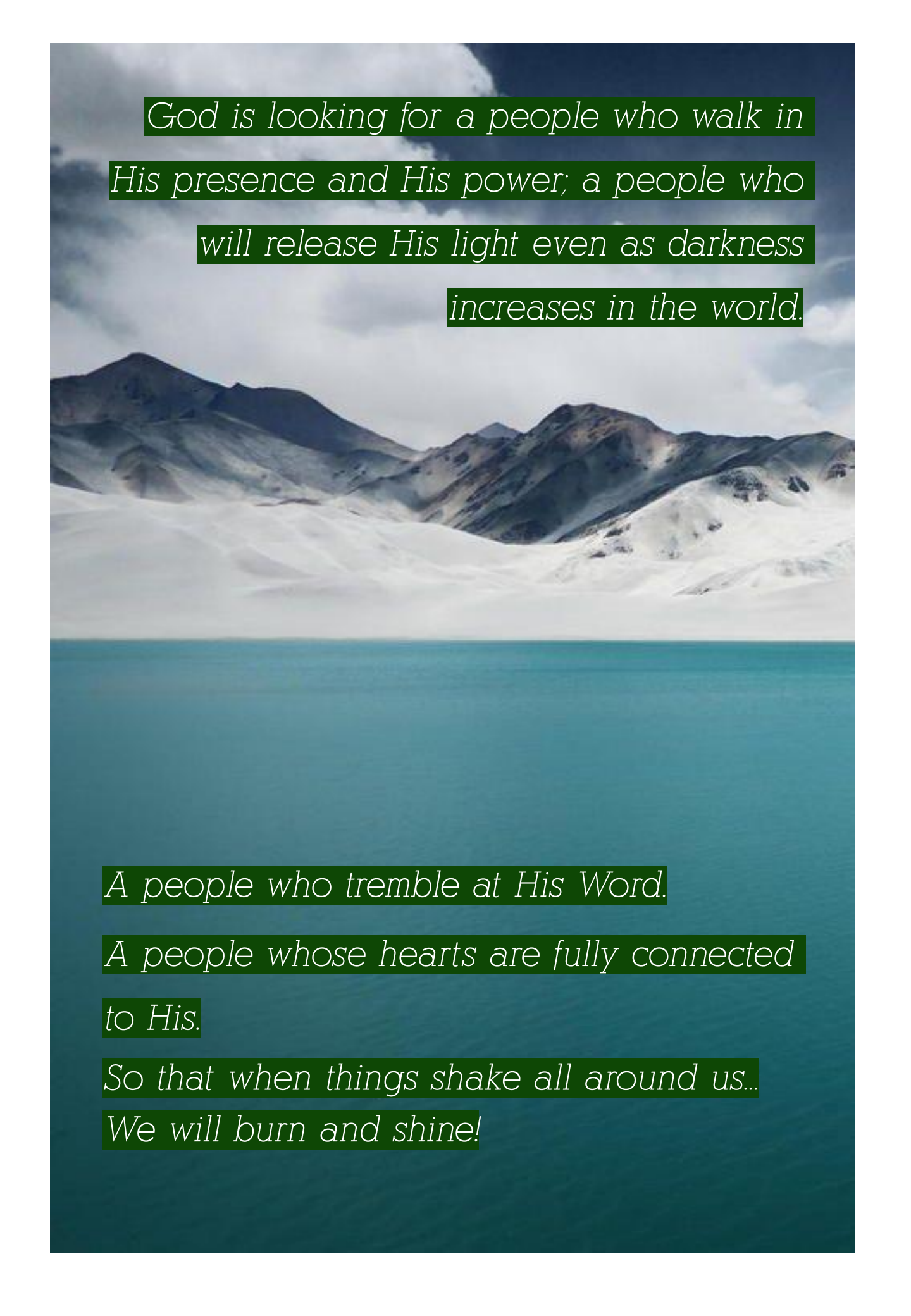
This horrific analogy of the bride in sackcloth was given to describe the Babylonian invasion, but the Day of the Lord that is coming in our generation will be even more severe in terms of intensity.

We must take heed of the message of Joel now. We must begin to develop a personal and corporate history in God today. If we do not respond to God with our whole heart now, we will not be prepared when calamity hits us. As a community of God, we must cultivate our history in God before the crisis crescendoes all across the earth.



We must spend time with God. We want to grow to know Him intimately so that we will have confidence in who He is, and stand firm even in the midst of shakings.

We must know His heart, so that we can agree with Him in intercession, and contend for His will and His plans to be done here on earth as it is in heaven.

A landscape photograph featuring snow-capped mountains in the background, a wide expanse of turquoise water in the middle ground, and a cloudy sky above. The text is overlaid on the image in white, italicized font, with each line of text enclosed in a dark green rectangular box.

*God is looking for a people who walk in
His presence and His power; a people who
will release His light even as darkness
increases in the world.*

A people who tremble at His Word.

*A people whose hearts are fully connected
to His.*

So that when things shake all around us...

We will burn and shine!



Readings and Prayers for the week

Readings for Week 15

Isaiah 60:1-2 tells us that the darkness will get darker, but it also promises that light will shine brighter. How can we be a bright and shining light in the midst of the increasing darkness?

Prayers for Week 15

Using John 17:24, pray for the Church to know God intimately. Pray that we will be the ones who understand His heart and be aligned with His will.

Pray that the Church will be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16).