

# JOEL

## INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – Joel's name means, "Yahweh is God" or "The LORD is God." The prophet is introduced as the son of Pethuel (1:1), but nothing else is recorded about him.
2. DATE – Very few clues are given in the book about the date and those that are given are unclear. See 3:17,19. Joel is usually placed around 840 BC possibly during the reign of King Joash.
3. READERS – The book is usually regarded as an early call to the nation of Judah to repent.
4. THEME – The message of Joel centers on the "Day of the Lord." It is a day that will be devastating for the opponents of the Lord, but a day of deliverance for those who trust in Him.
5. KEY VERSES – 2:12-14, 2:32, 3:16

## OUTLINE

The prophet Joel used the news event of a recent invasion of locusts to depict the destruction by an invading army of the future to carry out God's punishment on Judah.

1. HEADING OF THE BOOK. CH 1:1
2. JOEL CALLS ON THE PEOPLE TO REPENT. CH 1:2-2:17
  - A. An invasion of locusts pictures the destruction possible. Ch1:2-12
  - B. Prepare for the coming Day of the Lord. Ch1:13-20
  - C. The locusts picture the Lord's army as it invades. Ch2:1-11
  - D. There is still time to repent. Ch2:12-17
3. REPENTANCE WOULD BRING GOD'S BLESSING. CH 2:18-3:21
  - A. The Lord will bless the land and restore it. Ch2:18-27
  - B. He will also bless with His Spirit and salvation. Ch2:28-32
  - C. But His judgment will fall on the nations. Ch3:1-13
  - D. The Lord will bless Judah, but punish her enemies. Ch3:14-21

## IMPORTANCE OF JOEL

1. Joel's message is two-sided, with the same "Day of the LORD" bringing destruction on Judah's enemies but vindication for God's people. Christians look forward to the same kind of day in the future.
2. The prophet effectively interprets an everyday event, the invasion of the locusts, to introduce and illustrate his message of judgment and repentance. We too should look for everyday events to give us the opportunities to witness God's Word.
3. The prophet sees the locusts as the first stage of God's judgment, but even then calls on God's people to repent and be blessed. 2:12
4. Peter finds the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29 in the events of Pentecost. See Acts 2:16-21 where he quotes Joel 2:28-32.
5. Again Deuteronomy's blessings and cursings on the land and crops are seen as God dealing with His people. See Deuteronomy 28-29.
6. Joel is often interpreted as having signs that are still to be fulfilled since many of his signs are repeated in the book of Revelation. Another view would be that the signs of Revelation were fulfilled in the days of Christ and the apostles.

## JOEL

Joel is a godly blend of righteousness that shows in judgment and grace that both holds out the offer for repentance and change as well as the promise of blessings that will come if they do change.

1 – The invasion of locusts is a picture of the advance of the judgment of God on the nation that has sinned against him. The call is for repentance even as the destruction is near at the door. Educators tell us that the more detail a child shows in their artwork, the more intelligence it shows. The same could be said for those who write. The more detail they show, the more they feel. The prophet shows detail in putting forth a number of people groups that were affected by this tragedy of the locusts. Drunkards, farmers, priests, and celebrators were all affected. There were no crops to harvest, so no wine was made and no offerings were brought to the temple. All of it was because of the “Day of the Lord” which Joel announced is arriving. It means that the Lord is the focus, not his people. It means that he will be vindicated by judgment on those who oppose him and vindication for those who trust him. This is a clear call to repent of opposing God and turn and trust him. Note also the detail of the devastation of the locusts. V19 “To you, O Lord, I call. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has burned all the trees of the field.”

2 – This is an incredible chapter of change. In the early verses of the chapter, the devastation by the army is thorough and detailed. V10 “The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.” Then there is the statement of the awesome power and judgment of the Lord in V11. “For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?” Even though the judgment was right on the doorstep, the invitation and call to repent was still offered. The Lord can do this because this is his army. He is in control of them and they approach for judgment. V12 “‘Yet even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.’” Everyone is called to join the “Sacred assembly.” V18 shows the change. “Then the Lord became jealous for his land and had pity on his people.” The entire scene changed from that point on to one of blessing and abundance of provision. See it in V23. “Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.” The crops and life will be restored too, as before or even better. The blessings that are promised are so great that it is not fulfilled until the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Peter preaches that Joel 2:28-29 are being fulfilled that day.

3 – The blessing is summed in V17, 20-21. “So you will know that I am the Lord your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it... But Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the Lord dwells in Zion.” The judgment against foreign nations brings about the vindication of God’s people. These nations might as well “beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.” The idea is that every one of them might as well join and use whatever they possess to fight but it will not do them any good at all against God and his army. God will harvest them as a crop. V16 “The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.” The nations around will fall forever but the land of Judah and Jerusalem will prosper, “For the Lord dwells in Zion.”