

Joel

"The Day of the Lord"

Background Information

The name "Joel" means "the Lord is God."

At least 12 men in the Old Testament share the name Joel, and the book of Joel provides little information about the man other than his father's name (1:1).

Some references in the book suggest that Joel was not of the tribe of Levi; thus, not a priest.

During the reign of Joash is the leading timeframe given for the prophecy, but we cannot be completely certain of the date of this book. Still, the message is timeless.

The book of Joel is only mentioned once in the New Testament, but it is in the revealing of the beginning of the church (Acts 2).

Time Covered and Outline

We only know that Israel was weakened by both invasion (by Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia), and by a locust plague. However, these are not enough to give us the exact time, nor the exact length of time covered by the prophecy of Joel. Instead, Joel was using these events to forecast something greater that was coming, "the day of the Lord." There is no real "time" covered in his prophecy.

The book can be outlined using "The day of the Lord" as the major emphasis.

- I. The Day of the Lord Historically Experienced (chapter 1)
 - A. The devastation complete (1:1-12)
 - B. The people are called to repent in light of the devastation (1:13-20)
- II. The Day of the Lord: Transitional Information (chapter 2:1-17)
- III. The Day of the Lord: Fulfillment in the Future (chapter 2:18-3:21)

Major Themes

The Day of the Lord
God's punishment
God's forgiveness

Proof of the Importance of the Church

Joel's prophecy was filled with strong imagery, but Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, understood that this imagery was to fill the imagination of people to make God's message stick.

On the Day of Pentecost of Acts 2, he stated that what was occurring was that which was spoken of by Joel. When we study Joel, we need to see the power of his imagery and be reminded that the church had that type of strong, glorious beginning. The church is not some "afterthought" from the Lord; it was part of His powerful plan all along.

God's Character in Joel

Accessible (2:12)

Patient (2:13)

Merciful (2:13)

Wrathful (2:12-14)

Jesus in Joel

The book of Joel does not prophecy Jesus, *per se*, but it does prophecy the church that Jesus died to purchase (Joel 2; Acts 2).

Key Words in Joel

Spirit (Hebrew *ruach*); "to breathe." 2:28

Elsewhere in the World...

If Joel occurred during the reign of Joash, then about the same time in India, the caste system developed, which to this day causes severe racial segregation throughout that society.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

Again, if Joash was on the throne when Joel was prophesying, then his words would fit in with the accounts found in 2 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 24.