

Minor Prophets: Joel

Background

Scholars disagree on the date of the book of Joel. The divide is easy to understand because neither Joel, nor his father Pethuel are mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. The two camps are divided between a date around the 7th century and the 4th century based on various text evidence that scholars use to support their cases.

- **Case #1:** 7th Century (800s B.C.)

Israel is no more, recently captured by Sargon II of Assyria. Judah is under the reign of a bad king and therefore isn't mentioned by name. The temple and priesthood are intact and the priests are God's leaders appealed to in the time of a delinquent king. The people have divided their attention between the true God, Yahweh, and the surrounding nations' idols. A recent horde of locusts become a poignant example of God's loving discipline of His people. The surrounding nations of Tyre, Sidon and Philistia have wreaked havoc and sold Judean slaves off to early sea faring Greeks.

- **Case #2:** 4th Century (500s B.C.)

Israel is a distant memory and Judah has come back from captivity in Babylon under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Judah is no longer a kingdom. The temple has been rebuilt and priests are serving again, leading God's people in the absence of a king. The people have begun to be tempted to give their attention not only to the true God, Yahweh, but also the surrounding nations' idols. A recent horde of locusts become a poignant example of God's loving discipline of His people. The surrounding nations of Tyre, Sidon and Philistia have wreaked havoc and sold Judean slaves off to sea faring Greeks prior to the rise of Alexander the Great.

Literary Characteristics

Either Joel borrows from other Old Testament writers or they borrow from Him. Joel is full of references to other parts of scripture.

- Joel 1:15 — Isaiah 13:6; Ezekiel 30:2-3; Zephaniah 1:7
- Joel 2:2 — Zephaniah 1:14
- Joel 2:3 — Isaiah 51:3; Ezekiel 36:35 (reverse imagery)
- Joel 2:6 — Nahum 2:10
- Joel 2:17 — Psalm 79:10 (this is a Psalm of Asaph in Book III of the Psalms (the Petitioning Psalms) addressing the destruction of Jerusalem)
- Joel 2:27 — Isaiah 45:5, 18; Ezekiel 36:11
- Joel 2:28 — Ezekiel 39:29
- Joel 2:31 — Malachi 4:5
- Joel 2:32 — Obadiah 17
- Joel 3:4 — Obadiah 15
- Joel 3:10 — Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3 (reverse imagery)
- Joel 3:16 — Isaiah 13:13; Amos 1:2
- Joel 3:17 — Ezekiel 36:11
- Joel 3:18 — Amos 9:13

Joel also figures large in the New Testament, with some 28 references; including the notable ones in Matthew 24 in the Olivet Discourse, Acts 2 at the day of Pentacost, Romans 10 concerning salvation by faith, and the book of Revelation. Joel is a seminal book for an understanding of the prophetic message.

the DAY of the LORD

JOEL



ISRAEL'S SIN LED TO DISASTER

BUT GOD'S MERCY CREATES HOPE

THE PAST BECOMES AN IMAGE OF THE FUTURE

1 A PAST DAY OF THE LORD

A RECENT LOCUST SWARM IN ISRAEL

REMEMBER THE PLAGUES ON EGYPT (see Exodus 10)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISASTER

AN IMMINENT DISASTER FOR JERUSALEM

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS DECENT: LORD CAN ENDURE IT? (2:1)

WHY: GOD IS GRACIOUS & COMPASSIONATE, SINGS TO ANGELS, FULL OF LOVE. -GOD'S MERCY IS THINE FATHERFUL THEN HIS WRATH

HOW: TEND YOUR HEARTS. NOT YOUR GARDENS. -GROWING CHANGE

CALL TO REPENTANCE

ACTS OF REPENTANCE

TO YOU, O LORD, I CALL!

STAKE YOUR PEOPLE, O LORD! (2:17)

QUOTATION OF EXODUS 34:6

2a A FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD

2b GOD'S RESPONSE

2c-3 THE FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD

DEFEAT OF THE INVADERS (2:20)

RESTORATION OF THE DEVASTATED LAND (2:25)

DIVINE PRESENCE AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE (2:27)

GOD WILL CONFRONT EVIL AMONG ALL NATIONS (3:1-16)

RENEWAL OF ALL CREATION (3:17-21)

A NEW EDEN (3:18)

GOD'S SPIRIT WILL FILL ALL HIS PEOPLE (3:20-21)

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Major Theme of Hosea

The Day of the Lord

- The phrase is repeated 4 times, day is repeated 10 times.
- Ultimately, it is a day in which the LORD brings righteous judgment against sinners. Those who repent are spared.
 - This is seen as being “near” against His own people
 - This is seen as a promise to the nations
- Cause: 2:27 “You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and **there is none else...**” Basically, the assumption is that you are already aware of Israel’s history.
- The day of the LORD is near, but can be stayed off by repentance of His people
 - Reminiscent of “the day in which you came out of Egypt” in Exodus 13
 - God dealt decisively against the evil in Egypt, delivering His people and making His name great above all the Egyptian idols.
 - He “passed over” the doors of those who responded to Him in faith painting their doors with the blood of the lamb.
 - This became Passover
 - The day of the LORD seems to have been in different times in Israel’s history. Ezekiel 13:5 mentions that day of the LORD when Ezekiel prophesies that all of Judah will be exiled to Babylon after a second deportation.
- Joel 2:28-30 is referenced by Peter in Acts 2. Peter brings accusation against the Jews and offer of repentance, which 2,000 accept on that day.
 - God’s glory seen as cloud and fire filled the temple in the OT (Exodus 40:34, 2 Chronicles 7)
 - Here, in Acts 2, the glory of God is filling His people, the new temple
 - The Day of the LORD seems to be partially fulfilled here.
- Revelation 14:14-19 quotes Joel 3:13. It seems to be that the Day of the LORD has an end time culmination.
- The Day of the LORD seems to be a repeated motif throughout the Bible. There a sense in which it is “already” and “not yet”.
- As we looked at last week with Hosea the over-arching theme of Holiness is at play here as well. As Judah comes in contact with a Holy God, it is either consumed or repents. If it repents, it is transformed by Yahweh. The nations who have abused God’s people will be consumed in the wake of God’s justice because they have committed sin against Him.
- Ultimately, the Day of the LORD and the book of Joel are about God’s glory being declared by all peoples. Mankind is offered a choice it can repent like Judah, and be transformed by the Savior into God’s Holy temple, or it can be stiff necked like the nations and be crushed by the holy and righteous Judge of the universe.

As believers, we are the temple, made Holy by our Savior. God’s justice was poured out on Him, and we have gained Christ’s righteousness. We can live with Him in us, “knowing that He is the LORD God and there is none else and we will never again be put to shame.”