

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
JOEL
THE DAY OF THE LORD**

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AUTHOR

We know little about Joel.

His father's name is Pethuel of whom nothing more is known.

He may have been a priest, because he seems to be familiar with the temple.

DATE

Not definitely established, since there are no clear time indicators.

No reference to a specific king

The elders and priests were mainly responsible for the country.

Many parallels in thought and message with Amos.

Therefore, many commentators believe they were contemporaries.

No reference to Assyria or Babylon as enemies.

Named enemies are Phoenicia, Philistia and Egypt, implying an early date.

Therefore, perhaps Joel wrote early in the reign of Joash, about 835 B.C.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Joash began to reign as a small boy, at age seven, and reigned for forty years.

Jehoiada, the High Priest, controlled the country for him.

Athaliah, a daughter of Jezebel-

Married Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

Their son, Ahaziah, reigned as king for one year, before being killed by Jehu.

Their daughter, Jehosheba, married Jehoiada, the High Priest, and protected her nephew, Joash, the heir to the throne.

Athaliah tried to take over the throne after her son's death.

She tried to kill all the heirs to the throne, in order to rule herself.

She tried to destroy the faith of Israel and establish Phoenician (Canaanite) worship. (Like her mother Jezebel)

Jehoiada led effective reforms in Israel.

He stopped Athaliah's scheme for control by protecting Joash and having him proclaimed king.

He then became Joash's spiritual advisor.

Sin and idolatry were predominant throughout Judah, as in all pre-exilic books.

Occasion: A locust plague and a famine left the people ready to listen to God.

THEME AND PURPOSE

Joel's theme is based on a *locust plague* which has cost Israel a great loss.

The locust plague is used to predict a coming judgment, and subsequent deliverance.

The announcement of judgment was given to motivate Israel to repent and to return to Yahweh.

If they don't repent and turn back to God, there will be another invasion, like that of the locusts, but this time it will be armies that attack them instead of locusts.

This immediate situation is also used to predict the ultimate arrival of the Day of the Lord at some undetermined future moment.

The day is coming when God will have *HIS* day!

MESSAGE- - JUDGMENT IS COMING!

"The Day of the Lord"

Any day when the Lord intervenes in the affairs of His people.

Could be intervention - *to judge*.

Could be intervention - *to bless*.

In Joel the emphasis is placed primarily on coming *judgment*.

The subsequent blessing is also an important part of the message.

Specifically:

	<u>Immediate</u>	<u>Future</u>
Judgment	Coming judgment	Tribulation
Blessing	Restoration and Blessing to follow	Millennium

ORGANIZATION

ILLUSTRATION 1

Detailed literal description of the locust plague which has just struck the land.

REVELATION 2-3

The introductory illustration is compared to a coming invasion which God will send against His people to begin in the day of the Lord.

ARGUMENT

ILLUSTRATION OF THE LOCUST PLAGUE 1

Announcement of coming judgment based on locust invasion

DESOLATION–Condition of the land and the sorrow of the people 1:1-12

Introduction 1:1

The book's introduction names the prophet and states that the source of the message is not his own desire, but the Word of the Lord.

Description and lament 1:2-12

Joel describes the current situation in the land following the invasion by the locusts 1:2-20

He describes the condition of the land and the sorrow of the people (2-12)

CALL TO REPENTANCE 1:13-14

Joel exhorts the priests to call the people to repentance.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD 1:15-20

Based on the illustration of the locust plague, Joel introduces the day of the Lord, which will be the focus of the rest of the book.

While further describing the condition of the land, he tells them that this is an announcement of the day of the Lord which has come.

The source of the plague and the following drought is Yahweh.

REVELATION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD 2-3

Joel reveals the future events that will take place in the day of the Lord.

It will cover a long period of time

It was announced as present by the prophet.

Although the period ought not to be understood as continuous, but rather, perhaps, repeated, its conclusion has not yet occurred, and will not until the millennium.

As used by Joel, "the day of the Lord" refers to any period in which God is dealing specifically with His people.

It looked forward to events which would come to pass in the immediate future.

The specific judgment Joel warns them about is the invasion of a mighty army which will sweep down on them like locusts.

The immediate fulfillment is seen in the invasion of Israel by the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

The day of the Lord is not *finally* fulfilled until the millennium.

INVASION OF DESTRUCTION 2:1-11

The invasion is described and shown to be similar to a locust invasion.

The invaders are described and their destructive work pictured.

Description of the invasion 2:1-3

Description of the invaders 2:4-11

EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE 2:12-17

Following the description of the impending invasion, the people are given an opportunity to repent.

Whenever Israel repents, God will forgive them and begin the restoration described in the rest of the book.

It is at this point that the valley occurs between the near and far fulfillments of the prophecy.

RESTORATION PROMISED 2:18-3:21

The invasion has occurred.

God still waits for His people to repent and ask His forgiveness.

One specific opportunity was given them at Pentecost when Peter referred to this prophecy.

Had the people repented then, they would have entered into the benefits described in the remainder of the book.

Upon acceptance by Israel of the invitation, the other events will begin.

Blessings to be received in the future 2:18-32

[Peter quotes from this portion (2:28-32a) in Acts 2.
He didn't have to review it for his listeners
- they would have been familiar with the passage.
We may need a review!
We need to catch up to his listeners to understand his message.]

The blessings to be received by Israel are described.

Mercy for God's people 2:18

God's mercy results in forgiveness.

Restoration of prosperity 2:19

They will have their wealth restored and their enemies removed.

Removal of enemies 2:20

Peace and prosperity 2:21-26

They will be given peace and prosperity.

Presence of Yahweh 2:27

Yahweh Himself will be present in their midst.

Reception of the Holy Spirit 2:28-29

They will also receive the Holy Spirit.

Signs of final restoration 2:30-31

The signs which will precede their final restoration are given and the subsequent period of blessing is promised.

Salvation of the remnant 2:32

A remnant of the people, those who call on the name of the Lord, will be delivered from the judgment and regathered.

[Peter builds his argument around verses 27-29, and verse 32.

He includes the rest in order to develop his point concerning these verses.

His main idea is based on a verse he never mentions, but would assume they are familiar with:

Verse 27 promises that Yahweh will be present in their midst.

After Yahweh is present, the Spirit will be poured out on them.

If this is the coming of the Spirit, then Yahweh must have been present among them.

The resurrection, and the coming of the Spirit demonstrate that God has declared that Jesus, Whom they crucified is "Lord."

Five times in the preceding verses "Lord" has translated "Yahweh" in Old Testament quotes.

Peter wants them to know that Jesus is Yahweh, and they killed Him! (Acts 2:36)

They want to know what they should do (Acts 2:37)

Their question leads to Peter's use of the quotation from Joel 2:32: "*Whoever calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved.*"

They must change their mind about Jesus, and identify with Him.

They must call on His name.

If the generation to whom Peter was speaking had called on His name, the other blessings promised for restoration in the day of the Lord would have been fulfilled at that time also.

Since that generation rejected Him, the final fulfillment of this prophecy has been postponed until Christ comes again to establish His kingdom.

Judgments against the other nations 3:1-16

The judgments that will be directed against the nations are described.

Cause for judgment 1-8

Meeting for war 9-16

These events take place at the end of the great tribulation, when God will destroy those who have opposed Him and His people.

Gathering for judgment 3:1-2a

Cause for judgment 3:2b-8

Realization of judgment 3:9-16

Entrance into the promised kingdom 3:17-21

After this judgment has concluded, Israel will enter into the kingdom which God promised to her.

Blessing for Jerusalem 3:17

God *again* dwells in Jerusalem—at the second coming of Christ (17, 21b).

Blessing for Judah 3:18
Elimination of enemies 3:19
Permanence of possession 3:20
Forgiveness of guilt 3:21a
Presence of Yahweh 3:21b

SUMMARY:

Although in the immediate future, Israel would experience an invasion of armies similar to a locust invasion, God has not abandoned His people.

God controls history.

When they repent and turn back to Him, He will restore and bless them.