

# Joel

## Introduction

-The name Joel means "*Jehovah is God*"

-He was probably a prophet in Judah or even Jerusalem

Setting for the book: Great panic over a locust plague (maybe similar to a stock market crash today)

Joel did not date his book according to the reign of a particular king

-However, the date is considered to be about 830 BC

Reasons for that date:

1. Location between *Hosea* and *Amos* (before the Babylonian captivity or "pre-exile")
2. The enemies of Judah in *Joel* are given as Philistines, Edomites, Egyptians, Phoenicians, not Assyrians, Babylonians (Chaldeans), or Persians
3. The government seems to be similar to *2 Kings 11.4* (Joash the king)

There are several similarities between the books of *Joel* and *Amos*:

-*Joel 3.18* – *Amos 9.13*

-*Joel 3.16* – used in *Amos 1.2a* (beginning of the prophecy)

-Similar in the New Testament to *2 Peter* and *Jude*

Preachers may quote Batsell Barrett Baxter, J. W. McGarvey, etc. They also quote from other preachers of today – this is what happened with Joel and Amos

Theme: the "Day of the Lord" and salvation from the Lord

## Joel 1.1-3

**V1** – What was the source of Joel's prophecy? The word of the Lord

**V2** – To whom was the book addressed? The elders and all the inhabitants of the land

-**Were there elders in the Old Testament?** Yes – *Exod. 3.29, 12.21, 24.9, Num. 11.25* – about 70 of them – these elders became the Sanhedrin in the New Testament

-**Will there be elders in heaven?** Yes – *Rev. 5.8* – 24 elders in heaven

-**Had they ever had anything like this before?** No, never

**V3** – Who would they tell about it? Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren

-People love to brag about events like this

-Older people always talk about living through the Great Depression (saving scraps of clothing to sell to the scrape collector who came by once a week), or World War II, or living through a terrible snowstorm or a hurricane

## Joel 1.4-7

**V4** – Four stages of a locust attack? Gnawing, swarming, creeping, stripping

-Some liberal theologians say that this description is all symbolic, that it really didn't happen

-**How would you answer that?** Joel described it in great detail; very precise, very accurate

- There are 9 Old Testament words for *locusts* (very precise)
- Here Joel uses the correct terms for the 4 stages of the locusts
- Cutting (gnawing) locusts, swarming locusts, creeping locusts, stripping locusts
- See** *National Geographic* article on *Joel*, 1915, also: *National Geographic*, 8-1989, p. 202ff
- also: *Beacon Bible Commentary*, V, p. 90a
- also: *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, p. 263ff (a locust attack in the U.S.)

**V 5 – How bad was the locust attack?** The winos noticed it

- Why?** No more wine to drink (crops had failed) – they were desperate for a drink

**V 6 – How are locusts pictured?** An invading army with sharp teeth – they were a "nation" of invaders

**V 7 – What had the locusts done to Joel?**

- Destroyed his vines and trees – even the bark has been destroyed
- What does this say about the next few years?** A famine (the trees would have to be replanted)

## **Joel 1.8-13**

**V 8 – How bad was the locust attack?** Similar to young lady crying because she couldn't get married

- Sackcloth was worn in the Old Testament as a sign of mourning and sorrow

**V 9 – What else happened?** No more offerings (because there was no grain)

- It was such a disaster that the Levitical law was suspended (no more grain offerings, etc.)

**V 10 –** The fields were ruined; no grain or oil

**V 11 – What else was destroyed?** Wheat, barley, grape vines

**V 12 – What else was destroyed?** Fig trees, pomegranates, palm trees, apple trees

- The rejoicing dried up

**V 13 –** General wailing because of the locust

- On whom does Joel call on to plead with the Lord?** The priests of the people

## **Joel 1.14-20**

**V 14 – What did Joel say to do (to begin with)?** Have a fast throughout the land

- What was the significance of a fast?** Try to persuade God with their humility (there was really not a command to fast in the Old Testament)

**V 15 –** Very important: Joel sees the day of the Lord as a judgment of God on the country, that God had visited their country in his anger

-In other words, the locust attack was just a foretaste of God's anger  
-**What does this tell us about the power of God over the natural world?** He is in control  
-**Any references to this in the New Testament?** Calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, water to wine, etc.

**V 16** – The food had been destroyed – **What else?** Gladness and joy

**V 17** – **What else was destroyed?** Seeds, storehouses, barns, grain

**V 18** – **What else was suffering?** Cattle and sheep

**V 19** – **What was the locust attack similar to?** A fire that destroys everything (a possible reference to a terrible drought that followed the locust attack)

**V 20** – Animals and brooks needed God's help

### **Lessons from of *Joel 1*:**

1. *V 15* – The judgment of God on the nation because of its transgressions
2. *V 14* – The call to prayer, fasting, and repentance for the sins of the nation
3. *V 19a* – The source of deliverance is God alone.

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