

Joel

Original Historical Setting

Author: Joel

Written: Hard to pinpoint, possibly ~830 B.C.

Audience: Israelites living in Judah

Occasion: Joel warned Judah of a coming day when God would judge His people comparing it to a terrible locust invasion that had fairly recently swept through the land.

Timeline:

- ~835 BC – Joash becomes king of Judah
- ~830 BC – Possible option for Joel's ministry
- 722 BC – Israel destroyed by Assyrians
- ~600 BC – Possible option for Joel's ministry

World Events that occur simultaneously

- 800 B.C. – Greek city of Corinth is founded
- 753 B.C. – Rome founded by Romulus
- 716 B.C. – Ethiopia starts 50-year rule of Egypt
- 660 B.C. – Legend says Japan founded

Features and Structure

- Containing only 73 verses, Joel has three main sections:
- **Outline**
 - Ch **1:1-1:20** –Past day of the LORD-Locusts
 - Ch **2:1-2:27** –Near future day of the LORD-Human Invasion
 - Ch **2:28-3:21** –Far future Day of the LORD-Judgment/Deliverance

Key text(s)

2:11 – The great and terrible Day of the LORD

2:28-29 – “I will pour out MY Spirit”

3:10 – Beat plowshares into swords/pruning hooks into spears

Genre/Literary style

Prophecies written in Hebrew poetry

What to look for

- Even though Joel is a short book it still contains two classic elements of Hebrew prophecy: 1) a call for repentance 2) prophecy of future events such as the coming Day of the LORD.
- Notice the use of sarcasm. God summons the nations to assemble for their own destruction in 3:9-11.
- Notice the repeated use of the term "the day of the Lord." It seems to have arisen from the popular concept in the ancient Near East that a really great warrior king could consummate an entire military campaign in one single day. Thus, as the Israelites used the term in relation to Yahveh, it reflected His greatness and pointed to His swift and effective dispatch of His enemies on a given occasion.
- Notice the prophecy in Ch 2 where God says He will pour out His Spirit. Peter preaches a sermon in Acts 2 in which he explains that the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost was a fulfillment of that prophecy.

Interesting facts

- Joel means “Yahveh is God.”
- Although there are several other Joels in the Bible, the prophet Joel is known only from the book of Joel.
- The term “Day of the Lord” is used only in the books of prophecy in the Old Testament. In general terms it refers to God intervening to accomplish His Kingdom plan whether through blessing or through judgment. In specific terms it refers to the coming judgment at the end of the age and the blessings of the Millennium Kingdom.

Memory Verse: Joel 2:13