

## Joel Chapter 1

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### Introduction:

#### Authorship: Joel, “Jehovah is God.”

- We have absolutely no background information on Joel, only what we get from the text, that he is the son of Pethuel.

**Time Written:** Early 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, give or take **around 830 BC**, during the reign of king Joash, king of Judah.

- We’re not given an absolute time stamp, as in the reign of this king or that - the date is inferred by matching up historical events to the narrative. The prophet Amos quotes Joel in his prophecy, so we know that Joel was written prior to Joel.
- Joash’s reign is described in **2 Kings 11-12 & 2 Chronicles 22-24**. He was the only surviving heir of Ahaziah, he was hidden by the priests and protected from his evil grandmother Athaliah who had killed the other heirs and usurped the throne.
- After some time the priests set a trap for Athaliah, had her killed and set Joash on the throne at 7 years of age. He was subsequently mentored by Jehoiada the priest - being so young and in training, he’s not specifically mentioned by Joel.
- Joel was contemporary with Elisha as his prophecy corresponds with Elisha’s prophecies to the Northern Kingdom.

#### Type of Book: Prophetic, 2<sup>nd</sup> of the “minor prophets”

- Most of Joel’s prophecies relate to “*the Day of the LORD*” meaning the day of judgment, ending with Israel’s eventual restoration.

**Written To:** Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

**Theme:** The coming judgment. “*Day of the LORD*” - (5x’s - **1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14**)

Joel uses “*The Day of the LORD*” to describe 3 events that are all connected:

1. The plague of locusts is the immediate Day of the LORD.
  2. The invasion of Judah is the imminent Day of the LORD.
  3. The final judgment of the world, as the ultimate Day of the LORD.
- If you think it’s bad now, wait until the coming judgment, the great and terrible day of the LORD.

- Joel describes a present time of hardship, chastisement from the Lord, a plague of locusts that have devoured the land; a precursor to the real judgment to come via both the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
- Joel not only predicts a coming day of judgment, but also predicts the coming of the Gospel Age:

**Joel 3:31-32** <sup>31</sup>The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and terrible / awesome day of the LORD. <sup>32</sup>And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

### Key Verse:

**Joel 2:12-13** <sup>12</sup>Now, therefore, says the LORD, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. <sup>13</sup>So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.”

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V: 1 The Word of the LORD! Common to most of the prophets as an introduction to their respective prophecies.

**Isaiah 46:9-10** <sup>9</sup>Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, <sup>10</sup>declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.”

**2 Peter 1:20-21** <sup>20</sup>Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup>for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

- The son of Pethuel. This is all the biographical information that we have on Joel.
- Joel, “Jehovah is God.” Pethuel: “Persuaded by God.”

V: 2 He is speaking a broad message: hear this, take heed you elders - God is speaking through Joel to the leaders of the nation first, and also to the inhabitants of the land.

“Have you ever seen anything like this?” We can say the same thing about us.

- The pandemic, Woke-ism, DEI ideology, blatant communism, open borders, media collusion with politics, transgenderism, political polarization, law-fare, constricting personal rights and freedoms, social media influencers, rampant and open immorality, and violence in our society.

- Have you ever seen anything like this?

V: 3 It's important that we pass on the legacy of faith to our children and grandchildren the great things that God has done in our lives, our church, and nation.

**Exodus 10:1-2** “<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD said to Moses, go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, <sup>2</sup>and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.”

- As we'll read in a moment: the land is experiencing a plague of locusts - the locusts have come in such large numbers that they are consuming everything from off the land.
- Joel will use this current situation to describe a future time of judgment that will have a similar effect, everything being consumed from off the land.

V: 4 In the middle east, even to this day they have plagues of locusts every so often. I've seen video's of the locusts in Mecca during the Muslim pilgrimages where locusts cover the ground, the roads, everything - and eat what little is there.

- Chewing locusts - swarming locusts - crawling locusts - consuming locusts.
- The KJV breaks them down or describes them as different types of locusts or four stages of their development: Palmer worms, locusts, cankerworm, caterpillar.
- There are actually ninety kinds of locusts. Here, we see four.
  1. The palmer worm gnawed.
  2. The Hebrew word translated “locust” means “storming one.”
  3. “Canker” means “creeping one.”
  4. The Hebrew word translated “caterpillar” means “stripping one.”
- Thus, we see four waves of this invading army of insects. First came the gnawing, followed by the swarming, creeping, and stripping.
- This is a calamity that they were warned about, If they were disobedient this is what would befall them:

**Deuteronomy 28:38-42** “<sup>38</sup>You shall cary much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. <sup>39</sup>You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. <sup>40</sup>You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. <sup>41</sup>You shall

beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. <sup>42</sup>Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.”

V: 5 Unlike the other prophets thus far, Joel calls Judah out for her drunkenness as opposed to her idolatry.

- A drunkard is someone who is intoxicated and not aware of what is going on around them - which is the sad state of Judah at this time.
- The wailing comes when they are aware of their circumstances. In this case because their wine is going to be taken from them.
- The locusts will have gone through the vineyards, eating the grapes, eating the leaves, stripping the vine bare. The first one's impacted being those who drink wine.

V: 6-7 Now we move from the plague of locusts happening at that time to the coming plague or judgment as the Assyrians & Babylonians will eventually come and strip the land bare.

- The comparison to a lion, the fierceness and teeth of a lion - which is the symbol of the Babylonians.
- Even the bark will be stripped off the trees leaving them white.
- Typically when the bark is stripped off of a tree it dies.
- As He refers to “*My vine*” and “*My fig tree*” - these are both symbolic references to Israel.

**Isaiah 5:7** “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel...”

**Hosea 9:10** “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.”

**Jeremiah 8:13** “I will surely consume them says the LORD. No grapes shall be on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade;...”

V: 8-12 Now it is time to mourn over their sin and for the judgment that is coming.

- Lament like a young bride who has lost her husband.
- They no longer have the grain or the wine to make offerings to the LORD, and the priests mourn as a result.
- The field is wasted; the land is just stripped as a result of this plague of locusts.

**Isaiah 24:3** “The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the LORD has spoken this Word.”

- This is the very thing that God would have protected them from if they had sought to be obedient to His Word, had they not rebelled against His Word.

**Proverbs 8:32** “... blessed are those who keep My ways.”

- Be ashamed, you farmers - for the wheat and the barley has perished. Again because of their failure to keep God’s Word.
- No figs, no pomegranates, no palm trees, no apples - all those trees are withered up - and so has joy from the sons of men - hopelessness is setting in.

**Proverbs 13:13** “He who despises the Word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.”

V: 13-14 So, in response to this plague, and the desolation of the land, he calls upon the priests and the ministers to lead the people, in seeking God, turning to God, calling upon God, because the land is really wasted. The crops have been destroyed.

- They are in dire straights.

**1 Corinthians 9:13** “Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?”

- If the priests aren’t able to offer the sacrifices, they probably aren’t eating as well.
- He’s calling on the priests and the elders to actually do their job and be the spiritual leaders of the nation. It has to start with personal repentance leading to national repentance.
- The assumption here is that they wouldn’t just go through the motions, but that they would genuinely repent of their sins and turn fully to the LORD and consecrate themselves unto the LORD.

**2 Chronicles 7:14** “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

V: 15 Now Joel transitions from the immediate to the future; from their present circumstances to that great and terrible day of the LORD that we know as the great tribulation described in **Revelation chapters 6-18**.

- This is a coming judgment not just on Israel for its disobedience and rebellion, but a time of world wide judgment for their rebellion against God in rejecting Jesus - while it effects the whole world - it is once again pointedly focused on Israel, completing the 70th week of judgment described in Daniel ch. 9

**Daniel 9:24** “Seventy weeks are determined for your people (Jews) and for your holy city (Jerusalem) to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity. To bring in everlasting righteousness, so seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy.”

**Daniel 9:25-26** describes that 69 of those weeks have already passed. There is a pause for the church age - which we’re almost at the end of - then with the rapture of the church, that clock starts ticking away again entering into that final 7 year time period known as Jacob’s trouble. That coming time of desolation here described in Joel.

**Isaiah 13:6-9** “<sup>6</sup>Howl ye, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. <sup>7</sup>Therefore all hands will be limp, every man’s heart will melt, <sup>8</sup>And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames. <sup>9</sup>Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.”

#### V: 16 Describing the accompanying famine:

- Food is cut off, as is joy & gladness - no hope! Just the opposite had they been obedient.

Describes obediently offering sacrifices to God at His appointed place:

**Deuteronomy 12:7** “And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.”

#### V: 17-20 Crops fail, storehouses are empty and neglected.

- The animals and beast of the field are starving.
- The people cry out, the land is devoured by fire, it’s all burned up.
- There is drought, the water brooks and springs have dried up.
- This all covers at least 2 of the 4 horsemen of the Apocalypse!

**James 1:17** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”