

***Joel: Prophet of the Holy Spirit***  
*Minor Prophets: Past, Present, & Future*



Key Verses 2:12-13 “turn to me with all your heart”

Key theme: Motivating Repentance

Key Audience: The nation of Judah. Scholars do not agree on the date. Some make Joel as the first of the writing prophets in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC and some as late as the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Locust plagues and droughts are not always recorded in historical records. What is recorded and verified is that Joel was recognized as a legitimate prophet from the Lord in the Jewish canons of scripture through Peter’s quote of his prophecy at Pentecost.

For a historical setting 835-796 bc in the time of Joash as king of Judah seems to fit well. Joash became king at age 7 (2 Kings 11-12; 2 Chronicles 22-24). Jehoiada was both high priest and mentor to Joash. Between the kings youth and Jehoida not being a king but a priest, there were no eyes focused on the historical situation. God sent Joel to give clarity and call the people to repentance. Joash reigned for 40 years and was considered a good king.

Joel writes to a people not aware of what was happening around them. They were told the day of the Lord was upon them. It was as if they were drowsy and drunk, buzzed and fuzzy in their thinking. Their senses were numb, and their awareness dull as to all that was happening around them. A similar message is found in the letter to the church in Sardis in Rev. 3:1-6.

Calls: To hear 1:2-3; to wake up 1:5; to lament 1:8-14; to repent 2:12-13; to celebrate 2:21-24; to know the hope of God’s promises 2:25-32; and to the nations a call to war 3:9-13

**Chapter 1 Wake Up, Sober Up, Pay Attention, and Lament your Actions**

**Immediate Day of the Lord** - The locust invasion (1:4, 2:25) along with the drought was not to be seen as just another natural event to endure and survive. It was both an immediate day of the Lord and a harbinger of a future Day of the Lord. It was a prophetic message about a military invasion that would be sent by the Lord.

Locusts are destructive, but they are a warning of a greater judgment that shall come one day.

1:4 Speaks of chewing, swarming, crawling and consuming locusts

Chewing Hebrew gazam = caterpillar stage

Swarming Hebrew arbeh = migratory locusts as in exodus 10:4

Crawling Hebrew yeleq = young locusts, unwinged locusts

Consuming Hebrew chasil = grasshopper or adult stage, the most destructive; in 2:25 chasil is the destroyer locust

Did they not notice the plague of caterpillars with the later stages to come?

Are we alert to what is going on around us? 1 Chronicles 12:32 Sons of Issachar who knew their times; the Bereans Acts 17:11; Ephesians 5:16 *making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*; Colossians 4:5 *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.* Isaiah 33:6 *He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.*

## **Chapter 2 Respond to the Alarm with Repentance and God will Restore**

**Imminent Day of the Lord** - A worse judgment was near from a human army 2:1-11. Before this great army that stands before them they are called to repentance. The promise for them repenting is restoration. The "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (2:31) is coming and they are called to get ready. (As is the church in 2 Peter 3:10-11)

After Jesus taught His disciples about the end times as recorded in Matthew 24, He then told them no one knows when (24:36) so: Keep Watch/Be Alert 24:42; Be ready 24:44; Faithful & Wise 24:45. Blessed is the servant whom the Master finds doing His job when He comes" 24:46. He follows with the parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and goats judgment, as illustrations

Key Verses: 2:12-14 *Even now—this is the LORD's declaration— **turn to me with all your heart**, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. <sup>13</sup> Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the LORD your God. For he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and he relents from sending disaster. <sup>14</sup> Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him, so you can offer a grain offering and a drink offering to the LORD your God.*

Part of the message of restoration is of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all the people. We know this passage from Peter's quotation in his sermon at Pentecost, Acts 2: 17-21. He said that Jesus had ushered in the "last days" and it was time to repent

before the Lord Acts 2:38. A tie between the two passages was the reference to the disciples being drunk as the people heard them speaking in tongues. See Joel 1:5 & Acts 2:13. Peter was saying that the disciples were not drunk, but alert and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit, not just on prophets or anointed leaders like King David, but upon all the people, comes true through faith in Christ. Romans 8:9b *If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.* 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, <sup>22</sup> set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

In a recent poll some 62% of self-identified born-again Christians contend that the Holy Spirit is not a real, living being but is merely a symbol of God's power, presence, or purity. How can our nation have revival when the majority of the "Christians" do not even believe in the Holy Spirit?

The church is being called to wake up, get sober, pay attention, lament their actions, and repent!

1 Peter 4:17 *For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?*

Our nation is being called to return to: *In God We Trust.*

### **Chapter 3 Judgment will Come to the Nations**

**Ultimate Day of the Lord** - With the promise of restoration, Joel now turns to the nations around them and their judgment. Pay back time 3:1-16.

Remember, the Great Commission calls us to "Go to the nations" with the gospel and "make disciples", for judgment is coming for all people. We must tell them! That is our role as the people of God, as salt and light to the nations, as those who give reason for the hope that is inside us.

3:14 *Multitudes, multitudes stand in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near.* Will we give witness to Jesus as the Savior?

How shall we respond to the warnings of the scriptures? Will we wait in silence and do nothing or will we engage in the mission of the church as a people of hope giving witness to Christ as the Savior from sin and the Hope of eternal life?

3:17-21 Through Joel as a faithful prophet a message came from God in a time of absence of good government leadership. The people were simply going through the motions of life oblivious of what was about to happen. But it will not always be that way. God is sovereign and these closing verses speak of a new day of the Lord that will not bring fear but delight. That is not meant to lead us to lay back and take it easy, but to be faithful to God Almighty, full of love and a heart to bless.

We have two stories to tell of judgment for sin and restoration by grace. God is love!