

Joel

The Ultimate Attention-Grabber



Bible Studies for Ashfield Presbyterian Church
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Joel 1:1-2:17: The Ultimate Attention-Grabber

There are no firm indications about when Joel lived and prophesied, or when the book was written. It seems that Joel was probably written in the time leading up to an invasion of Jerusalem by foreign forces. This gives it a possible dating of before the Assyrian invasion of 701BC, or the Babylonian invasions of 598BC or 588BC. His interest in Jerusalem suggested he lived there. However heeding its message doesn't depend on having a solid grasp on dating. The first half of the book deals with present distress, the second with future deliverance.

A crisis can capture anyone's attention. But the response to a crisis can vary greatly from person to person. Some become bitter and hardened. Others quietly endure but learn nothing from the experience. A few, however, find their lives are purified, deepened and strengthened. In Joel 1 a major crisis has occurred—a swarm of locusts has invaded the land, with devastating results. In the aftermath of the devastation, Joel appears with a word from the Lord.

1. What is the most traumatic event you have seen during your lifetime? Explain.

2. **Read Joel 1:1-12.** Describe the tragedy that has happened.



3. How will the plague affect the drunkards (v. 5),

the priests (vv. 9, 13)

and the farmers (v. 11)?

4. Why do you think these groups are singled out?

5. **Read Joel 1:13-2:17.** What does Joel warn is coming?

What will it be like?

It seems probable that the army of locusts of Ch 1 has already happened. Joel uses that as a metaphor to warn of the coming invading foreign army in Ch 2.

6. Whose day will it be (1:15; 2:1,11)?

7. What are the two ways God communicates to his people in these two sections?
8. Who CAN endure the day of the LORD (2:11)? How?
9. How do we sometimes serve God outwardly rather than from the heart?
10. In what ways does God discipline his people today, either individually or corporately?
11. Can God use natural events today to make us pay attention? (**Read 1 Cor 11:27-30; James 5:13-16; Heb 12:7-11**).

Is it right for Christians to proclaim a message of repentance in the face of natural disasters?

12. Joel describes the invasion as "the day of the LORD" (1:15; 2:1-2, 11). What can we learn about that day from these verses?
13. How can the day of the Lord be a warning against spiritual complacency?
14. "Even now," what hope does the Lord offer his people, and why (vv. 12-14)?
15. How do verses 12-17 help us understand repentance?
16. **2 Peter 3:10-15** describes another, ultimate "Day of the LORD" that Joel's "day" points towards (see also 1 Thess 4:13-3:4). How is this "day" similar to Joel's "day"?

How is it different?

How is the prospect of its coming to influence our behaviour?

PRAYER POINTS

Ask God to show you where your inner life is in crisis and how you need to repent. Take time to "praise the name of the LORD your God" for the wonders he has worked for you (v. 26).

Joel 2:18-3:21: Promises, Promises

1. **Read Joel 2:18-27.** If his people repent, what promises does the LORD make (vv. 18-27)?

2. What does it mean that God is jealous for his land?

While we often use jealousy and envy interchangeably, they are directed at different targets. A husband is jealous of his wife's love. If another man shows interest, his jealousy is aroused to protect the affections of his wife. He is not envious of the other man. If the other man pursues something else that is not the husband's, such as a new yacht, the husband may be envious of the man, but not jealous.

3. What is the end result (v27) intended by God's answer to the priest's prayer (v17)?

4. **Read 2:28-32.** What signs will precede the "coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD"? What time is he speaking about?

5. Look at Acts 2:1-21; 38-40. When was this promise by God to pour out his Spirit on all people fulfilled?

6. What is God promising here for those who are:
Spiritually dry?

Spiritually proud and exclusive?

Fearful?



7. How should the Spirit-filled Christian church work to break down barriers?

8. How does this picture of "the day of the LORD" differ from the previous one (2:1-11)?

9. **Read 3:1-21.** What time is being referred to here?

10. What have the nations done to provoke the Lord's judgment (3:1-8)?
11. The Lord commands the nations to prepare for war (3:9). How does their battle relate to the Lord's judgment (3:9-16)?
12. Joel describes the Lord as a lion, a thunderstorm, a refuge and a stronghold (3:16). What do these images reveal about the God we serve?
13. What primary lesson does God want his people to learn from his actions (3:17)?
14. If the presence of God in Jerusalem makes it holy (17), what does the Lord's presence, by his Spirit, in your life mean?
- What evidence is there of this?
15. What blessings does the Lord promise his people (3:16-21)?
16. What has Joel taught you about preparing for the day of the Lord?
17. What steps do you need to take to be prepared?

Responding in Prayer

Ask God to make you always ready for his return.