

THE GREAT AND AWESOME AND DAY OF THE LORD
PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: JOEL
Joel 2:28-30

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A locust plague has just devastated Judah, destroying all the vegetation and making it impossible to offer grain offerings to God. As bad as the situation is, it is a prophetic sign that God is about to bring even greater judgment on Judah. An army will attack from the north and bring even greater destruction. Judah's only recourse is to repent before the day of judgment hits. God will destroy His enemies but bless those who faithfully obey Him.

B. TITLE

1. HEBREW

- **Yo'el** = "Jahweh is God"

2. SEPTUAGINT

- **Ioελ**

3. LATIN AND ENGLISH

- Joel

C. PLACE IN HEBREW BIBLE

1. PART OF 15 LATTER PROPHETS—TRUE 'PROPHETIC' BOOKS OF THE OT
2. SECOND OF THE MINOR PROPHETS

D. AUTHORSHIP

1. ATTRIBUTED TO JOEL—**1:1**
2. AUTHORSHIP NOT DISPUTED BY MODERN SCHOLARS—BUT THEY DISAGREE ABOUT WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN—AND EXACTLY WHO JOEL WAS

E. JOEL THE AUTHOR

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- a. Son of Pethuel—**1:1**—meaning 'persuaded of God'
- b. Probably lived near Jerusalem
 - Several references to 'Zion'—**2:1, 15, 23, 32; 3: 16, 17, 21**
 - Several references to the 'house of the Lord'—**1: 9, 13, 14, 16; 3:18**
- c. *Possibly* a **priest** also—he refers to priests three times

- Describes how they mourn—**1:9**
- Calls them to declare a fast—**1:13-14**
- Urges them to gather the people and weep—**2:15-17**

2. DATE

a. Arguments for **late date**—possibly post-exilic

1. No mention of the Northern Kingdom—destroyed 722 BC
2. Mentions priests, but not kings
3. No mention of Assyria, Syria, Babylon—which already may have been overthrown
4. Explicit texts hint at later date
 - a. **3:2**—allusion to Babylonian Captivity?—*On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided My land.*
 - b. **3:6**—refers to late-coming Greeks—*and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to removed them far from their territory.*

b. Arguments for **early date**—9th century

1. No need for Joel to mention Northern Kingdom—his message was directed to Judah.
2. Why Joel did not mention kings
 - a. Other prophets do not mention kings—Obadiah, Habakkuk, Jonah, Nahum
 - b. Fits situation after the death of Ahaziah
 1. Wife—Queen Athaliah usurped the throne (841-835)
 2. Her son—Joash came under the protection of the priest Jehoida
 3. When Joash became king (835-796)—he was under Jehoida’s priestly influence
 - c. Also—no mention of idolatry
 - ▲ Would fit the situation under Joash—after he and Jehoida purged the idols
3. Why no mention of Assyria, Syria, and Babylon
 - a. Possibly too early—they had not yet risen to power
 - b. Instead, he mentions powerful 9th century nations—Philistia, Phoenicia, Egypt, Edom
 - c. If post-exilic—why is Persia not mentioned
4. Biblical references

- a. **3:3**—is not about current Babylonian Captivity—but is prophetic about either that exile or another event that has not yet occurred
- b. **3:6**—mention of Greeks is not unusual at an early time—they are mentioned in Assyrian records as early as 8th century

5. Context and Style

- a. Style is similar to 8th century prophets Hosea and Amos—not post-exilic writers
- b. Apparent borrowing by Amos from Joel

1. **Joel 3:6**—*The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem*

✧ **Amos 1:2**—*The Lord roars from Zion and from Jerusalem He utters His voice*

2. **Joel 3:18**—*And in that day the mountains will drip with sweet wind, and the hills will flow with milk*

✧ **Amos 9:13**—*When the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved*

F. SETTING

- IN JUDAH—PROBABLY EARLY IN JOASH’S REIGN—ABOUT 835
- CONTEMPORARY OF ELIJAH—BEFORE HOSEA (JUDAH) AND AMOS (ISRAEL)

G. STYLE

DRAMATIC NARRATIVE DESCRIBING NATURAL DISASTER, INVADING ARMIES, AND CELESTIAL PHENOMENA—AND PROPHETIC PROLCAMATIONS OF JUDGMENT AND BLESSING

H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. THE DAY OF THE LORD

- a. In the Old Testament—18 times
 - 1. Isaiah—3 times—**2:12; 13:6, 9**
 - 2. Jeremiah—1 time—**46:10**
 - 3. Ezekiel—2 times—**13:5; 30:3**
 - 4. Joel—5 times—**1:15; 2: 1, 11, 31; 3:14**—and ‘that day’ **3:18**
 - 5. Amos—2 times—**5:18, 20**
 - 6. Obadiah—1 time—**1:15**
 - 7. Zephaniah—2 times—**1:7, 14**
 - 8. Zechariah—1 time—**14:1**
 - 9. Malachi—1 time—**4:5**
- b. In the New Testament

1. Peter's usage—pertaining to **Pentecost**—**Act 2:20**
2. Paul's usage—pertaining to the **Second-coming**
 - **I Cor 5:5**—judgment—Paul delivered the immoral church member to Satan, so that his spirit may be saved in the 'day of the Lord Jesus'
 - **II Cor 1:14**—reunion before God—Paul expects to be proud of the Corinthians—in the 'day of our Lord Jesus'
 - **I Th 5:2**—suddenness—the 'day of the Lord' comes as a thief in the night
 - **II Pe 3:10**—suddenness and destruction—the 'day of the Lord' will come as a thief in the night, the heavens will pass away, and all the elements and the cosmos will be consumed with fire
3. Jesus usage—pertaining to His second-coming
 - **Mt 24** and **Mk 13**—quote imagery in **Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15**—to describe heavenly signs associated with His coming—the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light

2. WHOEVER CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED

- a. Peter's usage—at Pentecost—**Acts 2:21**
- b. Paul's usage—universal invitation to salvation—**Rom 10:13**

I. THEMES

1. THE DAY OF THE LORD—**1:15; 2:1-2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18**—POINTS TO THREE THINGS
 - a. God's coming judgment—**1:15; 2:1-2, 11; 3:14**
 - b. End times—**2:31**
 - c. God's blessing—**3:18**—and the context behind **2:28-29**
2. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER NATURE—AND USES IT TO REVEAL HIS WILL
3. GOD SENDS JUDGMENT UPON THE UNFAITHFUL
 - Upon Israel—**2:1-11**
 - Upon all nations—**3:1-17**
4. GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO REPENT—**2:12-17**
5. THOSE WHO REPENT—WILL BE BLESSED—BEYOND THE JUDGMENT
 - With **salvation** and **prosperity**—**2:18-32**—**3:18-21**

J. OUTLINE

1. THE PAST DAY OF THE LORD—**Chapter 1**

- a. The Plague of Locusts—**1:1-12**
 - b. The Drought—**1:13-20**
2. THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD—**Chapters 2-3**
- a. The Immediate Day of the Lord—**2:1-27**
 - 1. Imminent Invasion of Judah—**2:1-11**
 - 2. Promise to Save Judah—**2:12-27**
 - b. The Ultimate Day of the Lord—**2:28-3:21**
 - 1. Events preceding the final Day of the Lord—**2:28-32**
 - 2. Events on the Day of the Lord—**3:1-21**
 - a. Judgment of Gentile nations—**3:1-16**
 - b. Restoration of Judah—**3:17-21**

II. BIBLICAL TEXT

Joel 2:28-32—**28** *It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all humankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 32 And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.*

III. OUTLINE OF TEXT

- A. GOD'S PROMISE—*I will pour out my Spirit*—**v28a**
 - God's Personal Presence
 - God's Universal Provision—available to all humankind
- B. GOD'S PURPOSE—TO EQUIP HIS PEOPLE—**vv28b-29**
 - 1. Our Responsibility—to do these things
 - Prophecy—tell forth—preach
 - Dream—receive God's oracles/understanding of reality
 - Envision—receive God's vision
 - 2. Our Privilege—is unbounded
 - By age
 - By gender
 - By social status

- **By culture/nation/ethnicity**

C. THE IMMINENT COMING OF THE LORD—vv30-32

- **Bringing judgment and destruction**
- **Bringing blessing and salvation**

IV. EXPOSITION

A. GOD'S PROMISE—*I will pour out my Spirit*—v28a

- **God's Personal Presence**
- **God's Universal Provision—available to all humankind**

1. IN THE LAST DAYS

a. Points to three things

1. Hope of Israel's restoration
2. Inauguration of new age
3. Eschatological completion

b. Hope of Israel's restoration

1. Expectation restoration of **nation** Israel

- a. Expressed by prophets: Isaiah—Hosea—Micah—Daniel
- b. Some expected broader restoration—of a New Eden

2. Continued expectation in Jesus' day

- Apostles—*Is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom of Israel*—Acts 1:6

c. Inauguration of new age

- Fulfilled at Pentecost—foundation of Church [New Israel]

d. Eschatological completion

- Future—final consummation—Christ's second-coming

2. POURING OUT OF THE SPIRIT

a. Other NT references

- **Acts 2:33**—after Christ was exalted, the Spirit was poured forth
- **Acts 10:45**—on Cornelius
- **Rom 5:5**—God poured out His Spirit in our hearts
- **Titus 3:5-6**—washing/regeneration Spirit, whom He poured out upon us

b. Language here fits **water analogy** used by Jesus earlier

- **Acts 1:5**—John’s baptism was of water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

c. Spirit’s presence marks the eschatological people of God

1. God’s chosen people—the remnant
2. For the new age—Israel now becomes the church
3. His shekinah—symbolically present in the old Temple—departed
4. Now His presence returns and resides in a new temple—in the believer

3. ON ALL HUMANKIND

a. People of all **nations**—all ethnic groups

- Including both genders, all ages, and every social status—in **vv28-29**

b. Fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy—spoken by John the Baptist—**Lk 3:6**

- **Is 40:5**—*And all flesh will see the salvation of God*

c. Later addressed in Peter’s sermon

- **Acts 2:17**—quoted at the beginning of His Pentecost sermon

- **Acts 3:29**—at the end of the sermon—Peter quotes **Is 57:19**—*For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself*

d. Not just an individual gift—but also for the whole prophetic community—the Church

e. Result—this gives prophetic witness—to all nations—and all creation

B. GOD’S PURPOSE—TO EQUIP HIS PEOPLE—vv28b-29

1. OUR RESPONSIBILITY—TO DO THESE THINGS

- **Prophecy**—tell forth—preach
- **Dream**—receive God’s oracles/understanding of reality
- **Envision**—receive God’s vision

a. Prophecy

1. Prophets—divine messengers

- a. As seers—**foretelling**—God’s oracles—usually through dreams and visions

- b. As proclaimers—**forth-telling**—God’s news—expectations, judgment, blessings

2. Moses’ prayer

- a. Moses prayed that all Israel would become prophets—**Nu 11:29**

- b. His request is answered in Joel’s prophecy—fulfilled at Pentecost
3. Expectation of prophecy in Jesus’ day
 - a. By the first century—**rabbis** taught that ‘prophecy’ had ceased!
 - b. Still a popular acceptance of continuance—not at same level as OT prophets
 - c. So—renewal of prophecy—was quite a claim!
 4. This new prophecy—revelation from Holy Spirit—became New Testament text

b. Dreams and Visions

1. Like dreams/visions—and their interpretation—in the Old Testament

- Joseph for Pharaoh
- Daniel for Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar

2. New Testament examples

a. Matthew emphasizes dreams—before pouring out of Spirit

- ▲ Joseph’s initial dream (Mt 1)
- ▲ The Magi warned not to return to Herod (Mt 2)
- ▲ Joseph in Egypt—told to return (Mt 2)
- ▲ Joseph told to go to Galilee (Mt 2)
- ▲ Pilate’s wife warns him not to harm Jesus (Mt 27)

b. Luke emphasizes more spectacular visions—mostly *after* Pentecost

- ▲ Zacharias (Lk 1)
- ▲ Stephen (Acts 7)
- ▲ Saul on road (Acts 9)
- ▲ Cornelius and Peter (Acts 10)
- ▲ Macedonian vision (Acts 16)
- ▲ Paul encouraged in Corinth (Acts 18)

2. OUR PRIVILEGE—IS UNBOUNDED

- **By age**
- **By gender**
- **By social status**

a. By the aged and the young

1. In the Old Testament

- OT youth—Jeremiah (**Jer 1:6**) and Samuel (**I Sam 2:18** and **chapter 3**)

➤ OT aged—Moses 120 (**Dt 34**) and Ahijah’s eyes dim with age (**I Kgs 14:4**)

2. In the New Testament

➤ Simeon and Anna—aged—**Lk 2**

➤ Philip’s daughters were virgins—so young—**Acts 21**

b. Women prophets

1. OT—Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Isaiah’s wife

2. Rabbinic sources—Sarah, Hannah, Abigail, Esther

3. NT—Anna (**Lk 2**) and Philip’s daughters (**Acts 21**)

4. Paul says—women who prophesy should do so only with heads covered—**I Cor 11:5**

c. Bond-servants

1. Could be literal slaves—or servants of God

2. Servants of God

➤ Mary—called herself ‘maid-servant’—**δουλη**—**Lk 1**

➤ Simeon—called himself ‘bond-servant’—**δουλος**—**Lk 2**

3. Slave—NT—Onesimus—in **Philemon**

C. THE IMMINENT COMING OF THE LORD—vv30-32

○ **Bringing judgment and destruction**

○ **Bringing blessing and salvation**

1. THE DAY OF THE IS BOTH ‘GREAT’ AND ‘AWESOME’

a. Great

1. Hebrew = **gadowl**

- Large—loud
- Intense—important

2. Greek = **μεγας**

- Massive
- Magnificent—splendid

b. Terrible

1. Hebrew = **yare**

- Revered—fearful—cause to stand in awe

2. Greek = **επιφανης**

- Conspicuous—notable
- Giving light—illustrious

2. COSMIC SIGNS OF COMING DESTRUCTION

- a. This parallels Jesus' prophecy of end times—**Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21**
- b. Later New Testament witness
 1. Sudden (like a thief) **destruction** of the earth—**II Pe 3:7,10**
 2. **Suddenness** of second-coming (like a thief)—**I Thes 5:1-3**
 3. **Suddenness** of second coming (like a thief)—**Rev 3:3; 16:14**
 4. **Ethical responsibility** in preparation for **new heaven/earth**—**II Pe 3:11-13**
 5. **New heaven and new earth**—the old has passed away—**Rev 21:1**

3. CALLING UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD

- a. Rabbinic tradition—forbidden to pronounce the name Jahweh
- b. God's name was associated with His presence
- c. Shifts in the New Testament
 1. God is now present among His people—in His Holy Spirit
 2. His people now have access—through pronouncing His name
 3. Now encouraged—to call openly on His name
 4. The name of salvation has been revealed—it is Jesus Christ
 5. Three-fold injunction
 - a. Call upon His name to be saved—**Acts 2:21**
 - b. Be baptized in his name—**Acts 2:38**
 - c. Previously—Jesus said—ask anything in My name—**Jn 14:13-14**

4. THE PRIMARY BLESSING—SALVATION

- a. Salvation—for **individuals**—who repent
- b. Salvation—**corporate**—the Church—the entire community that repents

5. UNIVERSAL OFFER OF THIS BLESSING

- a. For **all** who call upon the name of the Lord

- b. Repeated by Peter at Pentecost—**Acts 2:21**
- c. Centerpiece of Paul's explanation of salvation

Rom 10:11-13—*For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.; For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.*