

JOEL

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE

The book identifies its author as “**Joel** son of Pethuel” (1:1), but little beyond that is known except that his name means “Yahweh is God.” The text of Joel provides little information about when it was written, for no names of kings or key events are mentioned. However, it is commonly believed that because Joel references active temple worship of God which was restored by the high priest Jehoiada during the reign of Joash, the approximate date is **835-805 B.C.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

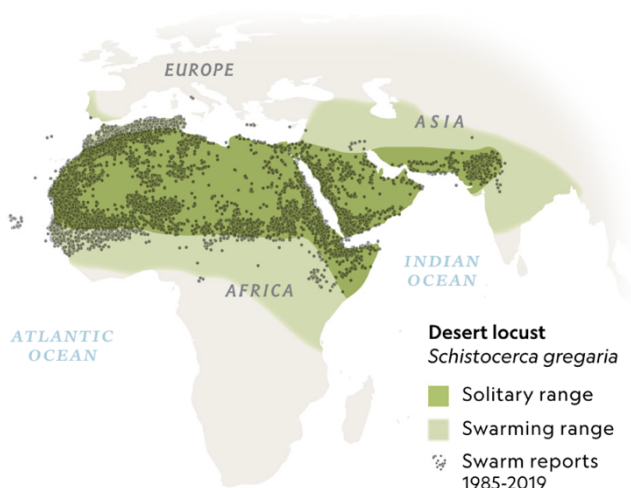
Many believe that Joel is one of the earliest of the major and minor prophets. Why?

Look up the following verses and note the similarities/differences:

Amos 1:2 and Joel 3:16

Isaiah 13:6 and Joel 1:15

Isaiah 2:4 and Joel 3:10



CATASTROPHIC DEVASTATION

Locust plagues do not belong to ancient history alone! In fact, the desert locust threatens more than 60 countries, a fifth of the world’s land area and a tenth of the world’s population.

(Ntl. Geographic, “Locusts”)

Joel prophesied to Judah during a time of great hardship from a locust invasion causing drought and famine. It was the worst locust invasion anyone had known. Yet this is not the first mention of locusts in the Bible.

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Look up the following verses and take note of what locusts are associated with and how to get rid of them.

Deuteronomy 28:15-45

1 Kings 8:22-40

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

- **Time changes** -- Chapter 2 is filled with frequent changes in time, using "now", and "then." Sometimes "then" refers to soon fulfilled judgment, but may also mean the more distant "day of the Lord." Make note of what element of time Joel is referring to as you read.
- **Early and Latter Rain** – Former/ early rain reflects the autumn rains which came at planting time. "Latter rain" refers to the spring rains occurring just before harvest. The outpouring of refreshing rain renewed the parched ground prior to the harvest coming in.
- **Valley of Jehoshaphat** – Literally means "Yahweh is Judge." This valley is both a physical place outside Jerusalem, but also a metaphor for the day when all nations and individuals are gathered for judgment.

LITERARY STRUCTURE

The book of Joel consisted of four chapters in the original Hebrew text. English translations condensed the second and third chapters, leaving us with a three-chapter book today.

*By Reasons for Hope*Jesus*

Part 1: Desolation (1:1-2:17)

Part 2: Deliverance (2:18-3:21)

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- Describe the destruction of the locusts.

- Joel makes no specific reference to a national sin, contrasted from Hosea's pointing out Israel's adulterous ways. What then are we to make of Joel's (and God's) call for the nation to repent?

- If Joel were alive today where you live, what calamity do you think he'd use to convey this message of God's coming judgment?

- What do you learn about the "day of the Lord?" How is it described? What happens? How does it compare to other natural disasters and calamities?

- Is there a recent disaster in your community or nation which you believe to be God's judgment? If so, why? How did (or could) you communicate God's truth through that disaster?

- Given that tearing of garments in Hebrew society symbolized great grief, mourning, and sorrow over sin, what does Joel 2:12-14 really mean? How can you apply that to your life today?

- Make note of the “I will / I will not...” statements. What will God do or not do? What can you learn from these statements? *(Use a separate sheet if needed.)*

- Read Joel 2:28-32 and Acts chapter 2.
 - How does Peter use Joel’s prophecy to explain what was happening? What is yet to be fulfilled from Joel’s prophecy?

 - What was the effect of the Spirit being poured out on:
 - Recipients of the Spirit

 - Hearers of Peter’s sermon

 - Community of believers

- With the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the age of the Church began as Joel described (nearly 800 years before it happened, and almost 100 years before Isaiah prophesied of the coming “Suffering Servant!”). What is your understanding of the Holy Spirit, how He relates to you, and you to Him?

- How does the reality of the future “day of the Lord” impact your desire to share your faith?

KEY WORD:

KEY VERSE:

KEY CHAPTER:

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