

NAME

The word "Joel" means "Jehovah is God."

AUTHOR

Very little is known about Joel. All we really know is the brief statement of 1:1. He was the son of Pitheuel. Judging from his concern with Judah and Jerusalem it seems likely that he lived in that area. He seems to have been either a priest or in some way closely associated with the priesthood. Joel is quoted in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:16). He could possibly have known Elijah (875-848) or Elisha (848-797) in his youth.

DATE

Joel is thought to have been one of the earliest writing prophets. There is no indication in the book as to when it was written. Generally it is considered to have been written in the time of King Joash (835-796) and so about 830 B.C., or possibly in the reign of King Uzziah (792-740) and so about 750 B.C. Some interpreters dates the book as late as the postexilic period (6th century) after Haggai and Zechariah. In either case, its message is not significantly affected by its dating.

NASB - Introduction to Joel:

The book of Joel has striking linguistic parallels to those of Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The literary relationships of these books are determined by one's view of the date of Joel. If it was written early, the other prophets borrowed his phrases; if it was later, the reverse may have taken place. Some scholars maintain that all the prophets drew more or less from the religious literary traditions they and their readers shared in common - liturgical and otherwise.

THEME

Type of Literature: Prophecy / Minor Prophet

Halley (page 43): *"Prediction of the Holy Spirit Age"*

Jack Kaiser: *"Past Failures, Future Promises" / "Hope For Young People"*

Mitchell: *"The Nature of the Day of The Lord"* - introduced by judgment culminated by blessing.

The phrase "Day of the Lord," occurs five times in this little book (1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14). It refers to a time of bitter judgment as well as a time of gladness and rejoicing. It involves both the future tribulation and kingdom of God.

Unger's Bible Dictionary:

Day of the Lord is the protracted period commencing with the Second Advent of Christ in glory and ending with the cleansing of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the new heavens and the new earth of the eternal state (Isaiah 65:17-19; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). The Day of the Lord as a visible manifestation of Christ upon the earth is to be distinguished from the Day of Christ. The latter is connected with the glorification of the saints and their reward in the heavenlies previous to their return with Christ to inaugurate the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord thus comprehends specifically the closing phase of the Tribulation and extends through the Millennial Kingdom. Apocalyptic judgments (Revelation 4:1-19:6) precede and introduce the Day of the Lord.

Day of Christ is the period connected with reward and blessing of saints at the coming of Christ for His own. The expression occurs in 1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6,10; 2:16. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2 the A.V. has the Day of Christ incorrectly for the Day of the Lord. The Day of Christ is not the Day of the Lord. The latter is connected with earth judgments (Revelation 4:1-19:16), which come after the out-taking of the church, the body of Christ, and its glorification and judgment for works at the judgment seat of Christ. The Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; Revelation 19:11-21) cannot occur until after the church is completed (2 Thessalonians 2:1 cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:2-12).

Key Word (Nelson's): The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord - The key theme of Joel is the day of the Lord in retrospect. Joel uses the terrible locust plague that has recently occurred in Judah to illustrate the coming day of judgment.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"The Lord utters His voice before His army, for His camp is exceedingly great; He who executes His word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11)

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out My Spirit" (Joel 2:28,29).

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 2 - The prophet calls for Judah's repentance and promises. God's repentance (2:13,14) from His planned judgment upon Judah if they do indeed turn to Him.

Outline:

- I. The Proclamation of Ruin 1:1-2:11
 - A. The fact of the plague 1:1-14
Typical of the devastation of the Day of the Lord (cf. 1:2 with Mathew 24:21)
 - B. The meaning of the plague 1:15-2:11
Eschatological judgment like nothing before it
- II. The Plea For Repentance 2:12-17
- III. The Promise of Restoration 2:18-3:21
 - A. The restoration of the Lord's elect 2:18-32
(cf. Ezekiel 39; Daniel 11)
 - B. The rout of the Lord's enemies 3
When God will judge the Gentiles (cf. Matthew 25:31-36)

RECIPIENTS

The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem are called upon to lament and return to the Lord during a time of huge national calamity. That Joel is prophetic gives it increased relevance for us as well.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

Mitchell:

The book is specifically noted for four things:

1. It contains the grandest description in the Bible of locust devastation (1:6-12; 2:1-10)
2. It gives the earliest insight into the Day of the Lord
3. It gives the first intimation of the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh (2:28,29)
4. Its prophecies are remarkable for their scope extending from Joel's own day to the end of time (1:15; 3:14)

God's hand of government may bring disaster but his hand of grace brings deliverance.

The blessings of the Kingdom:

1. Remnant into eternity
2. The Lord to dwell in Zion
3. Fertility / productivity

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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