

I. NAME AND PERSONALITY OF THE PROPHET.

- A. We know very little historically or Biblically about the man named Joel. This is common in the OT.
- B. *Joel* means "Jehovah is God."
- C. *Pethuel* means "Persuaded of God."
- D. Because of Joel's interest in the temple some have felt he was a priest, but this is not likely (1:13-17).
- E. Joel was a man of prayer, a seer, and a prophet.
- F. The people did not repent at the time of Joel's preaching but did repent later when Tiglath-Pileser entered the land.

II. TIME OF THE BOOK AND PROPHET.

- A. Some scholars place the writing of the book at late as 400BC, (see 3:5-7).
- B. A more accurate date is around 830BC because:
 - 1. The enemies of Israel are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Edomites.
 - 2. No reference to Assyria, which emerged by 760BC.
 - 3. No reference to Babylon which soon followed but perished by 536BC.
 - 4. Amos, who undoubtedly wrote in the 8th century BC, seems to quote Joel.
Compare Amos 1:2 with Joel 3:16.
 - 5. The place assigned to the book in the Hebrew bible shows the Jews' belief in its early date.

III. OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JOEL.

A. Short outline:

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| I. The Plague (Warning) | Chapter 1 |
| II. The Fast (Promise) | Chapter 2 |
| III. The Future (Blessing) | Chapter 3 |

B. Supplemental Outline:

- I. The Locust plague and drought call the people to repentance (1:1-2:27).
- II. The day of Jehovah, heralded by the outpouring of the Spirit (2:28-3:16).
- III. The glorious future of Judah and Jerusalem (3:17-21).

C. Long Outline:

- I. The Plague of Locusts--Contemporary Events (1:1-2:27).
 - A. Superscription (1:1).
 - B. A contemplative call (1:2-12).
 - C. The locust plague produces humiliation (1:13-20).
- II. A Second Description of the Locust Plague--"Day of the Lord" Is Presented (2:1-27)
 - A. The "day of the Lord" described (2:1-11).
 - B. The nation is called to repentance for God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounds in steadfast love (2:12-17).
 - C. The Lord promises to forgive following repentance (2:18-27).
- III. The Future "Day of the Lord" Will Bring Blessings and Judgment (2:28-3:21).
 - A. The day of Pentecost and the judgment of the nation in 70AD depicted (2:28-31; Ac. 2:17-21; Mt. 24:1-34).
 - B. The twofold nature of the "day of the Lord" further illustrated (3:1-21).

IV. THE THEME AND THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK.

- A. The theme of the book of Joel is: **the Day of Jehovah (judgment and salvation).**
- B. The message of the book of Joel is: **natural and national calamity causes repentance.**
- C. Any other Bible writer, when wanting to refer to a judgment of God during "earth time" will use the imagery found in the book of Joel, (Ex.: Mt. 24 and the city of Jerusalem; Revelation and the city of Rome).

V. LESSONS OF PERMANENT VALUE.

- A. Disasters serve to turn men to God and prepare their hearts to hear Him.
- B. Judgment upon the wicked nation is inevitable.
- C. An awakened sense of dependence upon God makes for a genuine religious experience.
- D. The character of the Day of Judgment depends on the attitude of the heart. It may be a day of terror or a day of blessing.
- E. God delights to include all men everywhere in His great gift of the Spirit.
- F. God has a plan, and He is ever moving and directing the affairs of men to bring it about.
- G. The term "day of Jehovah" is explained in this book.
- H. Joel teaches there is great power in repentance.
- I. There is a double fulfillment in the "outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh."

VI. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

- A. What are the three important events that for Joel were all "the day of the Lord?"
- B. Who are the people today most likely to accept someone issuing an urgent warning of impending calamity? Who are the most reluctant to believe? Which are you?
- C. What natural calamities or troubles have reminded you of your total dependence on God?
- D. How does knowing the character of God (Joel 2:13) affect your repentance (see also 1Jn. 1:9)?
- E. It seems that the NT apostles believed the end was very near in their lifetime. Were they wrong about their urgency? What is a proper attitude about the "when" of the end?
- F. How might the theology about the end times differ for people living in areas which have for many years been places of violence, terror, and unrest?
- G. Joel begins with tragedy but closes with triumph. How does this help you when you think of the things that are to come?