

Joel the Prophet the day of the Lord



Lakeshore Community Church of Christ

Bible Bites

Teaching series through the book of Joel
by L-T Hopper

Joel Introduction

Joel breaks up into four sections. The first two deal with an enemy's invasion of Jerusalem and Judah. The second two deal with the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem and the judgement of the invading nations.

1:1-20 The Invasion

This section deals with the invasion of Israel by the enemy. Traditionally this section has been taken as a description of a locust plague, but this view is too narrow to deal with all the evidence. First, Joel's language seems to suggest that the invasion was without precedent (1:2-3), but locust plagues were quite common in this part of the world. Additionally, human armies are sometimes compared to locust plagues in the OT (Judges 6:5; 7:12; Hab 3:15-16; Jer 46:23).

Secondly, the way in which the book ends, with a description of God's judgement of the nations, also suggests that more than a locust invasion is on view in chapter one.

I think Joel is describing the invasion of an army and he uses the metaphors of a locust invasion, a drought and judgement to do so. Israel has been ignoring Yahweh but they can do so no longer. As judgement devastates the land they must mourn their sin and call upon the Lord.

2:1-17 Sound the Alarm

This section has two sub-sections. Verses 1-11 describe an unstoppable invasion, the long awaited Day of the Lord. The section begins by calling for the trumpet to be sounded to awaken the city to the disaster, and it ends by asking the question "Who can endure the Day of the Lord?" The second sub-section (v12-17) answers the question the previous sub-section ended with by calling upon everyone to repent. The proper response to an unstoppable invasion is unstinting repentance.

2:18-32 Restoration

The previous section ended with the priests asking "Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" Israel's defeat would have been God's disgrace, and in response to their repentance restoration is promised. This restoration is both material and spiritual. The invading army will be driven away, the land will again produce wine and oil and fruit, the rains will again be poured out to refresh the land. But best of all the spirit will be poured out on all people to refresh and save their souls.

3:1-21 Down with the Oppressor

The last section of the book brings it to a neat end. The book began with an invading nation licking the floor with Judah and Jerusalem, but it ends with them being licked by God. God assures his faithful ones that a Day of Judgement is coming when all the nations will be called to account before him. On that day, the Day of the Lord, the multitudes will wait on God's decision. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people.

Commentaries

If you are looking for a good **commentary** on Joel, can I suggest *The Message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk by David Prior*. Its published in the Bible Speaks Today series which is a great little series devoted to bringing to everyone the very best of biblical scholarship at the highest levels, in a way that they can enjoy.

The purpose of the bible bites

These notes are designed as an aid to personal bible reading through the week. If you work through these notes during the week you will be well prepared to hear the sermon on Sunday and to encourage your brothers and sister when you meet in a small group.

How to use these readings

- **With an open heart** Open with prayer asking the Lord to speak to you and to give ears to hear.
- **With 15-20 minutes** of peace and quiet.
- **With a notebook.** Even if you only jot down brief ideas, writing focuses the mind
- **As a guide and help, not a strait jacket.** Feel free to dig further into the passage, to notice and ponder things that the questions don't point to.
- **As a launch-pad for prayer.** Use the Prayer ideas at the end of each reading as a starting point for your daily prayer

May God bless you in your reading.

JOEL 1:1-20

Reading 1: Joel

Begin by reading the whole book.

Make notes of anything repeated words or phrases and recurring themes.

Ponder: Why do you think God gave his message to Joel?

Pray: That you will grow in your understanding and commitment to God from studying the book of Joel.

Reading 2: Joel 1:1

Why should we listen to the message of this book?
See also Hosea 1:1; Obadiah 1:1-2; Micah 1:1

How is this different to any other book?

Ponder: Do you respond to God's Word as if it is God's Word.

Pray: Pray that you will listen to God's Word and respond.

Reading 3 Reading 1: Joel 1

What is the major even of this chapter?

What does it represent?

What is the response the people are to have?

Ponder: Could God justifiably act in response people of the earth today.

Pray: Examine your life and confess any sin before God this day.

Reading 4: Joel 1:1-12

What is the response people are to have to this disaster?

Ponder: How are you responding to 'disasters' in your life?

Pray: that you will respond in humility to difficult things in your life.

Reading 5: Joel 1:13-20

What is the expected response to the disaster from these verses?

What will the 'the Day of the Lord' bring?

Ponder: Are you prepared for 'the Day of the Lord'?

Pray: Give thanks for the salvation Jesus provides through His death.

JOEL 2:1-17

Reading 1: Joel 2:1-17

What do you learn about 'the Day of the Lord'?

How can you be prepared?

Ponder: Why is God going to judge the world?

Pray: Pray that you take opportunities to prepare people for God's coming judgement.

Reading 2: Joel 2:1-17

What are the invaders like?

Whose army was this?

Ponder: What might our enemies be?

Pray: Ask the Lord for forgiveness for your failure before God.

Reading 3: Joel 2:12-17

How was Israel to prepare for the Day of the Lord?

Ponder: If "sin" is rebellion against God, how might we define "sins"?

Pray: Ask for forgiveness for times when you have given something or somebody else the love you should have given to God.

Reading 4: Joel 2:13

Reflect on what God is like from this verse and commit it to memory.

Ponder: Could the Sunshine Coast be described as a city under God's judgement?

Pray: for the Lord's mercy on the Sunshine Coast.

Reading 5: Joel 2:17

How are the leaders of God's people to model a right response?

Ponder: How might our approval of the sins of others be seen?

Pray: that the leaders of God's people today would be models of what it means to respond to God.

JOEL 2:18-32

Reading 1: Joel 2:18-32

What is God's promise?

Why will he act on people's behalf?

Ponder: Why are we so inclined not to believe the promises of God?

Pray: Pray that you would trust the promises of God.

Reading 2: Joel 2:21-27

How will God restore Israel?

What will be the result?

Ponder: Stop and reflect on the inheritance we have in Jesus stored up for us in heaven.

Pray: Give thanks for the hope we have in Jesus.

Reading 3: Joel 2:27

What is the goal of God's work from this verse?

Ponder: Are you living to show that there is only one God?

Pray: Ask the Lord to help you live for Him alone.

Reading 4: Joel 2:28-32

What spiritual promises will occur in the last days?

How do we get to be on the Lord's side?

Ponder: How merciful God is?

Pray: that we as a church would reflect the mercy of God.

Reading 5: Acts 2:14-21

How does Peter see the fulfilment of Joel 2:18-32 in the events in this passage?

Why is this so significant?

Ponder: If we believe in the 'prophethood' of all believers how are you being God's 'prophet' ie speaking His word?

Pray: that you will know God's and so then be able to speak it.

Notes

Prayer

JOEL 3

Reading 1: Joel 3

What is the key idea in this chapter?

How does it sum up the book?

Ponder: What truths you been reminded of in this book?

Pray: Give thanks for the privileged relationship with the living God that comes through having his word.

Reading 2: Joel 3:1-8

Where will all the armies be gathered in the day of the Lord?

What justice would God render to the nations?

Ponder: Is there a tension in God being both faithful to His promises and thoroughly just.

Pray: Give thanks to the Lord that you can rely on his word completely.

Reading 3: Joel 3:9-17

What will God do to the nations on His 'day'?

What will he do for his people?

Ponder: How will people escape?

Pray: that you would never take the forgiveness you have in Christ

lightly or imagine that continuing sin is not a serious matter.

Reading 4: Joel 3:18-21

What is Judah's destiny?

Why?

Ponder: "Humanity is by nature lost and under God's judgement". Do you agree?

Pray: that you would have a right appreciation of the world's need of Christ.

Reading 5: Joel 1-3

Think about Joel's message. How was the plague of locusts like the day of the Lord?

What does the book teach us about responding to God's judgment and is restoration?

Ponder: What you have learnt from the book of Joel?

Pray: Give thanks that it is through Christ's obedience not our own that we are saved.

Notes

Prayer
