



Series: Bible Survey

Lesson: 43. Joel

- **Introduction**

- Author: Joel, most likely from in/around in Judah
- Date: Unknown, but most likely before the Exile (preferred) OR sometime after the Temple had been rebuilt
- Context:
 - If Joel was written before the Exile, then persistent wickedness was about to be judged, leading to warnings about how a judgment was coming that was bigger than previous instances.
 - If Joel was written after the Exile, then it was warning a weary people that future wickedness would lead to even bigger judgment.
 - A major locust plague and drought had recently taken place, and God was using them to illustrate a larger concept the people needed to know.
- Joel is written entirely in poetry, so the interweaving of literal and figurative language can be difficult in some places.

- Main theme: The Day of _____
 - This subject is mentioned in eight Old Testament books, but only Joel develops it enough to make it its main theme.
 - All other topics in the book are described in terms of this concept.
 - There is no focus on morality or ethics, just an emphasis on this event and how to respond to it.
 - It is viewed on three levels (per Wiersbe): Immediate, Imminent, and Ultimate

- **Chapter 1 – The Immediate Day of YHWH**

- Joel first addresses four groups to illustrate the seriousness of the plague: The elders, the drunkards, the land(?), and the farmers.
- It's unclear what the differences are between the kinds of locusts; the point is how extensive their destruction is.
- There is lots of wordplay—the Hebrew words for 'be ashamed' and 'dried up' are homophones.
- The priests are commanded to lead the people in lament for not only the plague, but also for the nearness of the Day of YHWH.
- These extreme circumstances are meant as warnings from God, even though they also had clear _____ causes.

II. Chapter 2:1–27 – The Imminent Day of YHWH

- There is a coming attack from an ‘invincible’ foe who will utterly destroy them.
- Luminaries going dark (v10) can be an *idiom* for extreme judgment for near fulfilments of the Day of YHWH that point toward a *literal* expectation in the ultimate one (cf. Is. 13:10; 34:4; Jer. 4:23; Ezek. 32:7–8; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 8:12).
- Under this threat of attack, the people are called to _____.
 - The coming Day of YHWH is supposed to be a wake-up call.
 - The seriousness of the crisis and the need for repentance are shown in the invitation being extended even to people who might not otherwise be expected to show up to a worship service.

Joel 2:12–13 – “Yet even now,” declares the Lord,
“Return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;
¹³And rend your heart and not your garments.”
Now return to the Lord your God,
For He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness
And relenting of evil.

- The major pivot in the book happens when God promises to restore His people, including a reversal of all judgments mentioned.

III. Chapters 2:28–3:21 (3–4 in Heb) – The Ultimate Day of YHWH

- Joel pivots from pouring rain on the drought-starved land to God pouring His Spirit on the people.
- The passage quoted by Peter at Pentecost was to show that ‘the last days’ had been _____, not that the Day of YHWH itself had occurred (cf. Acts 2:14–21).
 - Verse 31 says the Day of YHWH won’t occur until *after* all those listed events going from Pentecost through the Tribulation.
 - Joel is showing what signs will precede the ultimate Day of YHWH so that people will know it’s not just another Day of YHWH event that only pictures the ultimate one (cf. Matt. 24).
- The intent of the whole book is the appeal of 2:32—call on the name of YHWH to be saved from the terrible judgment that is coming.
- The final chapter reassures Israel that her enemies will be judged inescapably for how they treated her, leading to her restoration.

Discussion:

1. What should believers do with warning of Day of YHWH judgment?
2. How is the Day of YHWH a source of *comfort* for the faithful?

FOR REFLECTION: What serious circumstances in your life might God be using to make you think about even weightier spiritual concerns?

Blanks: YHWH (Lord), natural, repent, inaugurated