

JOEL (Yahweh is God)

- 1) Probably written around 400-350 BCE, making it the last book of the OT. The Babylonian exile and the dispersion are past (3:1-3). The walls of Jerusalem have been restored by Nehemiah (2:7-9). The book relies heavily on Obadiah, which was not written earlier than the 5th century BCE.
- 2) 1:4 – The plague prophesied by Moses in Deut 28:38 as God’s covenant was upon the apostate people. (Does God use natural disasters to call us to repentance as in the days of Joel?)
- 3) 1:8, 13 – Sackcloth was a rough burlap material, worn around a man’s waist with the chest bare so he can beat his chest (the meaning of “lament”) and was rarely worn at night, so this was special act of contrition.
- 4) 1:15 – The belief in a “day of the Lord” began during the time of judges (1220-1020) and Saul’s reign (1020-1000). God fought with supernatural means. The Israelites believed that a day would come when all enemies would be defeated, ushering in a time of peace and prosperity. Amos (5:18-20), Zephaniah (Chap 1), Isaiah (2:5-20), Ezekiel (Chap 7), and Malachi (4:5) disputed this. But Joel revives it.
- 5) 2:13 – The heart symbolized what the brain symbolizes today – the seat of will and intellect.
- 6) 2:18 – “Jealous” can also be translated “zealous.”
- 7) 2:20 – The “northerner is Jeremiah’s “mysterious foe” (Jer 1:9-15 and note #3), and Ezekiel’s eschatological God (Ezek 38:14-15).
- 8) 2:23b – The NAB inserts at this point, “He has given you the teacher of justice.” A play on words: “moreh” is “teacher,” and “yoreh” is “early rains.” Also may have a messianic connotation: the founder of the Essenes was call “the teacher of justice.”
- 9) 3:1-3 – Jehoshaphat means “the Lord judges.” Probably the Kidron valley. Three charges against the nations: 1) Scattered God’s people in 722 (Assyria), 597, 587, 582 (Babylonia). 2) Annexation of land considered by the Israelites as belonging to God under Israel’s stewardship. 3) sold inhabitants as slaves for the price of a harlot or a draft of wine.
- 10) 3:7-8 – Sabeans from Sheba – now southern Jordan. Joel’s point is that it is far away and in the opposite direction of Greece. The beginning of the notion of personal judgment. See also Jer 31:29, Ezek 18:2.
- 11) 3:9-12 – God speaking except for 11d. He is calling all nations to war against himself. They should beat their ploughshares into swords, etc., a deliberate and ironic reversal of Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3. God will respond with angelic hosts.
- 12) 3:13-16b – Remarkably similar to Jeremiah 25:30-31. V 16 cites Amos 1:2. Achtemeier: “...the pictures that Joel...and Revelation give us of God may be too bloody for our tastes (but) they nevertheless encompass the truth that on the day of judgment God will destroy these enemies.”
- 13) 3:18 – Called the valley of Acacias in NIV. Probably the Kidron Valley that was usually dry but acacias grew in abundance.
- 14) 3:21 – NIV: “their blood guilt which I have not pardoned, I will pardon.”