

OT-OV

Lesson 124

1. Last week I completed an overview of the book of Daniel and the book of Hosea. When time expired we were about to begin an analysis of the book of Joel.
2. The prophet deals with the judgment of God on both Jew and gentile and the coming blessing when the Messiah shall reign on planet earth.
3. Joel wrote the book of Joel according to Joe 1:1 and Acts 2:16.

Joel 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

Acts 2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Acts 2:19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Acts 2:20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Acts 2:21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

4. There is no other reference to Joel in the Old Testament but his writings indicate he was the only son of Pethuel and lived in Judah, probably in Jerusalem.
5. There are those who make a case for an early writing of the book in c. 835 B.C. and a later writing in c. 400. I think one could make a case for a 586 date.
6. Some consider Joel non-historical. They assert his name (Jehovah Is God) is only indicative of the prophecy's theme (Joe 2:26-27).

Joe 2:26 You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed.

Joe 2:27 Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.

7. Since the New Testament refers to Joel as an historical character--he clearly was historical. Let's take a look at the Book of Joel since we know so very little about Joel himself.

The Book of Joel

1. The author cannot be identified with any of the other Old Testament persons bearing this name.

2. He was the son of Pethuel and Peter speaks of him as the author of the book (Acts 2:16). Joel wrote of conditions in Judah when Judah was in need of discipline.

Acts 2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

3. Date

3.1 With only internal evidence, dating is the greatest problem of the book. Suggestions range from c. 830, c. 586 and/or c. 400.

3.2 So far scholars have not been able to agree on the dating of the book of Joel. However, of the various dates proposed, there are, in Wycliffe's view, two primary suggestions:

3.3 "An early date, during the reign of Joash (or Jehoshaphat) in Judah, about 830 or

3.4 a post-Exilic date, about during the Persian period. There are some logical arguments to support both dates.

3.5 Reasons for a later dating:

3.5.1 There is no reference in the title verse (Joel 1:1) to the ruling king, as in pre-Exilic books. Also, the northern kingdom is not mentioned, so perhaps it had long been extinct.

3.5.2 Joel uses the word Israel for Judah, which no pre-Exilic prophet would have done. The term was used only for the ten northern tribes prior to 722 (the fall of Samaria).

3.5.3 Also Joel 3:1, 2, and 17 indicate that the captivity had already occurred.

Joel 3:1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

Joel 3:2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Joel 3:17 So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

3.6 On the other hand arguments for a pre-Exilic date are strong.

3.6.1 The prominence of the priests and the absence of the nobles and king are due to the fact that Jehoiada the high priest was ruling for the boy king, Joash (835-796).

3.6.2 The argument from silence (i.e., no mention of Samaria) is weak, for the author was not primarily concerned with the events of the Northern Kingdom but what was occurring in Judah.

3.6.3 The term Israel could be used appropriately of Judah as the rightful heir of the spiritual blessings of Jacob.

3.6.4 Bring back the captivity (Joel 3:1) might simply mean "to restore the fortune." There is no description in Joel 3 that will not fit pre-Exilic times.

3.6.5 The enemies mentioned by Joel are not countries of the Exile (Assyria, Babylonia, and Samaria), but pre-Exilic countries (Phoenicia and Philistia).

3.6.6 I could even make an argument that Joel was written just after Judah's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586.

3.6.7 There is no overwhelming information to support either the early date or the later date but most scholars select 830 as the most likely date.

3.7 The question as to when the book was written, oddly enough has little effect on the interpretation of the Scriptures penned by Joel. Joel paints a picture of major discipline for a "near term" Israel and an eschatological Israel; since Israel was often in need of discipline, the near term swarms of locust depicting foreign armies destroying Judah would fit either Assyria in about 700, Babylon in 586 and Rome first in 60 B. C. or later in A.D. 70.

3.8 Clearly the eschatological discipline for Israel is unaffected regardless of when the book was written.

4. Occasion and Purpose

4.1 While a recent locust plague and drought were surely involved as illustrations, the occasion for Joel's prophetic message is most properly seen in the spiritual conditions of the day.

4.2 The people needed revival in the light of the coming day of the Lord and Judah was often in need of discipline for their failures.

4.3 While continuing to observe the mechanics of the old covenant, they often were thoughtless in their understanding and careless in their liturgical practices. They were spiritually fruitless and dabbled with idolatry.

4.4 Joel is convinced Judah's apostasy cannot long be tolerated because the day of the Lord is coming when God will make a final disposition of Judah.

4.5 Joel not only draws attention to Judah's present spiritual need and the terribleness of the day of the Lord, he also sees a glorious future for those who will return to the Lord.

4.6 The purpose of this prophecy, then, is to call Judah back to God before the day of the Lord comes, to assure the return of God's blessings, and to promise future restoration and vindication.

5. Outline of Joel - Joel's message is concerned primarily with Jerusalem and Judah. His references to the land and city suggest that he was a citizen of southern Palestine and probably a resident of Jerusalem. He demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the Temple, its services and personnel.

I. The Judgment of Israel in the Near Term - Joel 1:2 - 2:17

A. The First Locust Plague; A Near Term Judgment - Joel Chapter 1:2-12

Joe 1:2 Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your forefathers?

Joe 1:3 Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.

Joe 1:4 What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.

Joe 1:5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine; wail because of the new wine, for it has been snatched from your lips.

Joe 1:6 A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness.

Joe 1:7 It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white.

Joe 1:8 Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the husband of her youth.

Joe 1:9 Grain offerings and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests are in mourning, those who minister before the LORD.

Joe 1:10 The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up; the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails.

Joe 1:11 Despair, you farmers, wail, you vine growers; grieve for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field is destroyed.

Joe 1:12 The vine is dried up and the fig tree is withered; the pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree-- all the trees of the field-- are dried up. Surely the joy of mankind is withered away.

B. A Call To Repentance In The Near Term - Joel 1:13-20

Joe 1:13 Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God.

Joe 1:14 Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

Joe 1:15 Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Joe 1:16 Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes-- joy and gladness from the house of our God?

Joe 1:17 The seeds are shriveled beneath the clods. The storehouses are in ruins, the granaries have been broken down, for the grain has dried up.

Joe 1:18 How the cattle moan! The herds mill about because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

Joe 1:19 To you, O LORD, I call, for fire has devoured the open pastures and flames have burned up all the trees of the field.

Joe 1:20 Even the wild animals pant for you; the streams of water have dried up and fire has devoured the open pastures.

C. The Future Locust Plague in the Day of The Lord - Joel 2:1 -11

Joe 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand--

Joe 2:2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.

Joe 2:3 Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste-- nothing escapes them.

Joe 2:4 They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry.

Joe 2:5 With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

Joe 2:6 At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.

Joe 2:7 They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course.

Joe 2:8 They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks.

Joe 2:9 They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.

Joe 2:10 Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.

Joe 2:11 The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

D. A Call For A Future Repentance During The Day of The Lord - Joel 2:12-17

Joe 2:12 "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."

Joe 2:13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Joe 2:14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing-- grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.

Joe 2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.

Joe 2:16 Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber.

Joe 2:17 Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

End Lesson