

Tapes For Growing Christians

Study Guide for  
**JOEL**

Growing Christians Ministries  
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## lesson 1

# The Account of a Severe Locust Plague that Came Upon the Land of Israel Joel 1:1-14

### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### doctrinal / teaching points

1. God uses natural disasters to speak to a nation.
2. God uses natural disasters to speak to His people.

### practical application

1. Remember Mount St. Helen's.

### questions

1. What do we know about Joel?
2. Read Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; and 3:14. What is the theme of Joel's prophecy?
3. Most likely, the prophecy of Joel was written between 835 and 830 B.C. How was this date determined?
4. What is the difference between the historical aspect of the day of the Lord and the eschatological aspect of the day of the Lord?
5. Name two of the earliest written prophetic books.

**answers**

1. Only what is in Joel 1:1 – that he was the son of Pethuel and that this prophetic book was the word of the Lord.
2. The theme is “the day of the Lord.”
3. One indication is the mention of Tyre and Sidon, cities of ancient Phoenicia. Phoenicia and Philistia were enemies of Israel early in her history as a nation. Also, Edom’s violence against Judah occurred early in Israel’s history as a nation.
4. The Day of the Lord can be defined as a time when the Lord intervenes in the affairs of a nation, bringing judgment or blessing. The historical aspect is that some of the prophecies have already been fulfilled. The eschatological or future aspect is that part of the prophecies that awaits fulfillment.
5. Joel and Obadiah.

**discuss / consider**

1. Joel describes a devastating locust plague in the land of Israel. Because of this plague, every realm of life was disrupted in the land. God used natural disasters to speak to nations in the past. He used them to cause people to realize that they are not independent of Him. Do you believe that God is using natural disasters today to speak to nations? Discuss some of the natural disasters that have occurred in recent years.
2. Israel would have known that God was speaking to them with this locust plague. In the Mosaic Law, God had said that if His people would not trust and obey Him, He would send the consuming locusts as discipline. See Deuteronomy 28:38. In this case, it had a good result. The people realized that God was speaking and they responded with prayer and fasting (Joel 1:13). The principle of 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 still applies today. We should call for a national day of prayer? What about each of us as individuals? Do you fast and pray when you believe that God is speaking to you?

**challenge**

1. The eruption of Mt. St. Helen’s in 1980 in Washington state was a natural disaster. God used this eruption to denounce the false theory of evolution. (Review notes on practical application in this lesson). Do you look for God’s voice in natural disasters?

**memorize**

*“...the locusts have eaten the land.” Joel 1:4*

*“...the harvest of the field has perished...all the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away...” Joel 1:11-12*

*“...lament...wail...come...Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly...gather all into the house of the Lord, and cry out to the Lord.” Joel 1:13-14*

lesson 2

**A Description of Events in Reference to the Day of the Lord,  
Both the Historical and the Eschatological Aspects of the Day of the Lord  
Joel 1:15-2:17**

**background notes**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**doctrinal / teaching points**

1. The day of the Lord was partially fulfilled in the past.
2. The day of the Lord will be completely fulfilled in the future.

**practical application**

1. Rend your heart and not your garments.

**questions**

1. What is does “the day of the Lord” mean?
2. Is the prophetic day of the Lord a day for blessing or for judgment?
3. Why is the concept of the day of the Lord sometimes confusing?
4. Explain why the prophets, in some cases, didn't distinguish between current and future prophecy.
5. Did the military invasion in Joel 2 already take place in history, or will it take place in the future?

### answers

1. In general, the day of the Lord is any time that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of nations.
2. The day of the Lord could bring either blessing or for judgment.
3. It is confusing because there is both a historical aspect and an eschatological aspect to the day of the Lord. In the Old Testament, it can be confusing when both aspects are present in the same passage.
4. The prophets themselves did not always know.
5. Many of the conditions described in the early part of Joel Chapter 2 have already been fulfilled in history, with the Assyrian invasion of the land in the 8th Century B.C. and the Babylonian invasion in the 6th Century B.C. But there is more to come for Israel.

### discuss / consider

1. The prophet Joel realized that the locust plague of Chapter 1 had been a precursor of the coming day of the Lord. The day of the Lord would involve the invasion of Israel by a military army. There had been a famine of both food and joy because of the locust plague. These sad conditions foreshadowed the military invasion which was to follow. Do you see precursor today that point to the day of the Lord?
2. Read Matthew 24:24-30 and Joel 2:30-31. Notice the eschatological language that our Lord used in the Olivet Discourse when he spoke of His second coming. Does Joel 3:2 sound like the future judgments of the nations Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25? Remember, the day of the Lord will be completely fulfilled in the future.

### challenge

1. Refer to Joel 2:12-13. *"Rend your heart and not your garments."* A second call was made for national repentance, just as it was after the locust plague. This call for repentance was in view of the judgment to come upon the nation through the invading enemy army. God used the plague and the invasion to discipline His people. Re-read the signs of true repentance in Joel 2:13-14. True repentance means returning to the Lord based on His grace and mercy alone and not our own merits. Joel 2:17 points out that true repentance is more concerned about the glory of God than our own reputation. Is God using something in your life to discipline you and bring you back to Himself? Is there an area in your life right now where you need to repent?

### memorize

*"Alas for the day! The day of the Lord is at hand; coming as destruction from the Almighty." Joel 1:15*

*"The day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?" Joel 2:11*

*"Return to Me," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Joel 2:12*

*"Rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Joel 2:13*

*"Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Joel 2:17*

### lesson 3

## A Turning Point in Joel's Prophecy – from Desolation and Devastation for Israel to Deliverance and Blessing Joel 2:18-32

### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### doctrinal / teaching points

1. There will be material blessing and deliverance for Israel in the future.
2. There will be spiritual blessing and salvation for Israel in the future.

### practical application

1. Let the Lord restore your locust years.

### questions

1. What caused the devastation to Israel in Chapter 1?
2. What would cause the devastation to Israel in Chapter 2?
3. When will most of the prophecy of Joel be fulfilled?
4. When will the nation of Israel be delivered from all her enemies?
5. Should the prophetic verses of Joel 2:18-19 be spiritualized to the church today?
6. In Joel 2:20, what is the name of the eastern sea, and what is the name of the western sea?
7. Why is Joel known as the Prophet of Pentecost?

**answers**

1. The invasion of the locusts.
2. Invading armies.
3. Most of the prophecy of Joel concerning the day of the Lord is still future, awaiting fulfillment in the end times.
4. In the day of the Lord in the end times.
5. No, they refer to the literal land of Israel and the literal nation of Israel in the future.
6. The eastern sea is the Dead Sea and the western sea is the Mediterranean Sea.
7. Because Joel 2:28-32 was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost. See Acts 2:17-21.

**discuss / consider**

1. There will be material blessing and deliverance for Israel in the future. Even in recent years, the land of Israel has become more productive as the early and latter rains return to the land. But this is just a foretaste of the material blessings and deliverance of Israel in the future. The northern army will invade Israel, but the Lord will deliver them. Read Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39 and Daniel 11:40-45. What other evidences do you see as a foretaste of the Lord's zealously for the land and for His people, Israel?

2. *"I will pour out My Spirit."* Compare Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:17-21. Spiritual blessing and salvation are coming for Israel in the future. Pentecost was an illustration of what it will be like in the last days for Israel. In the future many Jews will turn to the Lord for salvation. See Joel 2:32 and Romans 11:26. The Jews coming to Christ today are only a foretaste of what's to come in the future.

**challenge**

1. The Lord will restore to Israel the years that the locusts have eaten. Perhaps your life has been "eaten by locusts", but the Lord can restore the lost years when you turn to Him. Your life can be restored and can bring a blessing.

**memorize**

*"Rejoice in the Lord your God, for He has given you the former rain and the latter rain." Joel 2:23*

*"I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten." Joel 2:25*

*"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God." Joel 2:26*

*"I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh." Joel 2:28*

*"I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth." Joel 2:30*

*"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Joel 2:32*

## lesson 4

# A Description and Reasons for the Judgment of the Nations Which Will Take Place in the Time of the End Joel 3:1-11

### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### doctrinal / teaching points

1. At the time of the end, the nations will be gathered together for war.
2. At the time of the end, the nations will be gathered together for judgment.

### practical application

1. Remember, you will get a free trip to the Holy Land.

### questions

1. What is the theme of Joel's prophecy?
2. Describe the difference between the historical aspect of prophecy and the eschatological aspect of prophecy.
3. There will be both a judgment of the nations and a war among the nations. What will be the end result for the nation of Israel?
4. Is there a contradiction between Joel 3:10, Isaiah 2:4, and Micah 4:3? Why or why not?
5. What is the Millennium?

**answers**

1. The day of the Lord.
2. The historical aspect means that the prophecies have already been fulfilled in history. The eschatological aspect means that the fulfillment is yet to come.
3. Blessing and deliverance.
4. No, these are two different phases of the day of the Lord. Joel 3:10 is concentrating on the tribulation period of the day of the Lord, a time of war. Isaiah and Micah are looking on to the millennium.
5. The wonderful 1,000-year period when Christ will reign as King of the earth from Jerusalem.

**discuss / consider**

1. It is God who will gather the nations for war. See Joel 3:9-11 and Revelation 16:16. But God will intervene and deliver Israel. (See Zechariah 12:9.) What does all of this mean for Israel?
2. The nations will be gathered together for judgment. Notice why the nations are being judged – because of the way they treated the land of Israel and the Jewish people. In the future judgment of the nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, all anti-Semitism and sins against God's chosen people will be judged. This judgment of the nations is called the Judgment of the sheep and the goats in our Lord's Olivet Discourse. See Matthew 24-25. Does this affect your view and treatment of Jews today?

**challenge**

1. When the Lord returns, believers will be with Him. If you are a believer, you will get a free trip to the Holy Land. Do you have your complimentary ticket? You only have to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

**memorize**

*"Behold, in those days and in that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel." Joel 3:1-2*

*"I will return your retaliation upon your own head." Joel 3:7*

*"Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spear." Joel 3:10*

*"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." Isaiah 2:4*

*"They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." Micah 4:3*

## Lesson 5

# A Further Description of the Final Judgment of Nations And the Wonderful Blessings that Will Come Upon Israel in the Future Joel 3:12-21

### background notes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### doctrinal / teaching notes

1. The future day of the Lord will mean judgment for the nations.
2. The future day of the Lord will mean blessing for Israel.

### practical application

1. Make your decision before the Lord makes His decision.

### questions

1. "The day of the Lord" is a topic that is found frequently in the prophets of the O.T. How frequently?
2. "The day of the Lord" is the main theme of which two books?
3. Define "The day of the Lord".
4. Have "the day of the Lord" prophecies been fulfilled in history?
5. How does the New Testament shed light on "the day of the Lord" prophecies?
6. How are "the day of the Lord" prophecies divided?
7. When will the future "day of the Lord" prophecies of judgment take place?
8. When will the future "day of the Lord" prophecies of blessing take place?

**answers**

1. It is found in eight (half) of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. It is found in six of the twelve minor prophets.
2. Zephaniah and Joel.
3. "The day of the Lord" is any time that the Lord of heaven intervenes in the affairs of man on earth.
4. Some of them, but most of them await to be fulfillment in the end times.
5. We can look back and sort out the day of the Lord prophecies to see what has been fulfilled, what has been partially fulfilled, and what is yet to be fulfilled.
6. They are divided into prophecies of judgment and prophecies of blessing.
7. During the future tribulation period after the rapture.
8. During the future millennial kingdom of Christ, which follows the tribulation period.

**discuss / consider**

1. The judgment of the nations follows the great battle of Armageddon at the end of the seven-year tribulation period. Jesus refers to this judgment of the nations as the Judgment of the sheep and the goats, in the Olivet Discourse (see Matthew 25). This judgment will be based on how the nations treated the Lord's chosen people. Consider this- it is more than a matter of anti-Semitism. Those who stand against the anti-Christ in the last days and help this believing Jewish remnant will be risking their lives, and it will be evidence of their true faith.
2. Joel 3:17-21 is a wonderful description of the millennial blessing that will come to the land and the believing nation of Israel in the future. Recall the many times throughout the history of Jerusalem and the land of Judah that they have been attacked and invaded. But this will never happen again once the Lord sets up His kingdom.

**challenge**

1. Make your decision before the Lord makes His decision.  
Multitudes in the valley of decision will find that it is too late to decide to follow the Lord. At this time the Lord will decide who in these multitudes will enter heaven and who will not. Right now the door of decision is still open. See 2 Corinthians 6:
2. Make sure you decide before it is too late.

**memorize**

*"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge..." Joel 3:12*

*"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The day of the Lord is near..." Joel 3:14*

*"The heavens and earth will shake, but the Lord will be a shelter for His people..." Joel 3:16*