

Joel: Jesus the filler of His people

I. Chapter 1 A day in the life

II. Chapters 2-3 Destruction and restoration

This little three chapter book though small packs a powerful punch both for the nation's future as well as the history of man kind. Not much is known of the author other than what is revealed by him in the writing of this book. He was the "son of Pethuel" "persuaded by God" his name means "Jehovah is God". His frequent mention of Zion means that he most likely lived near Jerusalem. His statements with regards to the priesthood suggests that he was possible a priest. The internal evidence points to two possibilities as to the time in which he wrote:

- A. Some suggest that he wrote after the nation's exile to Babylon because he doesn't mention the northern kingdom of Israel, makes no mention of Babylon, Assyria or Syria.
- B. Others suggest that there are similarities between Hosea and Joel and as such would place his writing prior to the Assyrian invasion, sometime during the reign of Joash.

The truth of the matter is we don't know for sure and apparently the Lord wanted it that way. What we do know is that these chapters peel away the events and timing of the "Day of the Lord" (1:15) something that Peter spoke about in acts 2:16-21 and John saw in Revelation.

I. Chapter 1 A day in the life

The first chapter reveals two natural catastrophes:

1. Verses 1:1-12 Locusts

2. Verses 1:13-20 Drought

But from these two events Joel is given a vision of a yet future more devastating time which will leave the inhabitants not just of Judah but the world. He will repeat the phrase “Day of the Lord” five times in these three chapters. Joel starts out by asking in 1:2 *“Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?”* He then speaks of this event in 1:4 *“What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.”* Yet as devastating as this plague was God showed Joel that it was only a symbol of what awaited them as he describes this swarm in verse 1:6 as *“a nation has come up against My land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the fangs of a fierce lion.”* Clearly Joel sees an invading army as numerous as the locusts that devours people instead of vegetation. Joel goes on to speak of how such an invasion will affect the life of the nation personally, economically and spiritually. And in 1:12 he sums it up by saying, *“Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.”* Like many of you I have watched the devastation that has come upon that little Caribbean country of Haiti, it only took the ground’s shaking to cause 100,000 500,000 dead. Dear ones we live in a false sense of security if Jesus is not anchor of our souls.

Joel, tells the folks what to do in 1:13-14 saying, *“Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God.....Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.”* Joel tells them the locusts was a warning sign of something greater if they didn’t

get their hearts right. Lately I've been pressed by the Spirit of God to pray more and more for personal revival. I believe the things going on in our country are nothing more than a "locust's invasion" that is calling His people to do just what Joel told the nation to do.

What was "bugging" Judah was nothing compared to what awaited them if they didn't deal with their hearts which bugged God! Folks we look out and see a lot of things that are "eating at us" right now but could it be that these events that are causing "devastation" in our life and our security are a warning sign for us to get our hearts right with the Lord?

Joel tells them that if they don't get it right there awaits in 1:15 "*Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*" The day of the Lord is in contrast to the "day of man" (1 Cor. 4:3) which we are now in as His patience has come to an end. Soon upon the horizon will be the "Day of Christ" which is when our Groom Jesus will come to snatch away His bride the Church. This will cause the final "Day of the Lord" to come which Joel speaks of. Joel sees the after effects of the Locusts being a drought upon the land. In 1:16 Joel says, "*Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?*" Drought has led to a devastating grass fire. Such as scene points to what John records in Revelation 6:5-6, 7:1, 8:7 and 11:3,6 that being global fires which are a result of "true global warming" during the tribulation period, (1:19-20).

II. Chapters 2-3 Destruction and restoration

Here Joel leaps over history to the "end of days" as he uses the invasion of the locusts as a picture of an invasion of a great army. He says in 2:2 that "*A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the*

mountains. *A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations.*” Ezekiel saw them as well in 38:9 as this invading army drawn down into Israel, where according to 2:3 “nothing escapes them”. To leave no doubt that he is not speaking of bugs he describes them in 2:4-5 saying, *“Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run. With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array.”* These are the same demonic hoard that will be unleashed upon the earth at God’s 6th trumpet in Revelation 9:13-19. As powerful and menacing as this army is Joel sees another army in 2:11 where *“The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?”* Joel tells them what to do in 2:12-13 saying, *“Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” So 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; and He relents from doing harm.”* God speaks through Joel saying, *“Drop religion and Churchianity; come before me in real brokenness”!* Joel sees a future repentance of Israel in 2:21-24 saying, *“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done marvelous things! Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; for the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you-- the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.”*

Such will be the complete restoration in 2:25 that the Lord “*will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you.*” When will that time be? Well Joel says in 2:27 that it will be a time when “*I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.*” Specifically a time when according to verse 28-29 God will “pour out His Spirit on all flesh”. The partial fulfillment of this happened at Pentecost but that was not upon “all flesh” until the tribulation as verses 30-32 clearly reveal.

The third chapter opens with a repatriation of the land promised to Abraham. Looking carefully at the text Joel sees the land still divided even though in 1948 the Jews started coming back. That’s because the land given to Abraham went from the Nile river to the Euphrates river and at the present time is divided between Israel and Jordan after world war II. Joel looks into the future (our history) and sees the 1000’s of years the nation of Israel was enslaved and taken away into foreign lands. Joel sees a time when Israel will again be powerful as they repatriate the land and according 3:10 “*Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.*” He further sees the final battle in verse 13-14 and hears that they are to “*put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe*”. A time when “*Multitudes, multitudes are in the valley of decision*”. It will be at this time according to 3:16 that “*The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*” In verses 18-21 we are given a glimpse of life during the millennial reign of Christ.