

Welcome to the book of Joel!

We have chosen 2:31, 32 as key verses reflecting the theme of "The day of the Lord". "The favorable year of the Lord" is spoken of in Isaiah 61:1,2 and Luke 4:17-21. This is the period of time in which man is given opportunity to hear testimony from God and to respond in reverence and obedience. "The Day of the Lord" is the period of time in which the wrath of God will fall upon all who have not found refuge during the 'favorable year'. Man may spurn the favorable year but will in no way escape the 'terrible Day' of God!

JOEL Blow the Trumpet

Desolation:

BY NATURE

1:1-3,15,20

1

BY NATIONS

2:1,2,9-11

2

OF NATIONS

3:14,19-21

3

"Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes."

- 2:31,32

Also note the passages listed within the overview chart above. How does each passage relate to the corresponding section title? What word or phrase would you use to describe the Day of the Lord?

It is hard to comprehend the awesome magnitude of the judgment of God. As God-followers we can find comfort in escaping the wrath to come. Yet our responsibility to blow the trumpet both to the church and those lost in unbelief is a task we must not take lightly!

Open your heart as you read!

In what ways are you 'blowing the trumpet'? How often do you consider the Lord's Coming? Are you unmotivated and unaffected by world conditions and events, or actively preparing for the awesome day?

KEY BACKGROUND to help you in your study of Joel

The book of Joel reads like the screenplay from a disaster movie: locust swarms, drought, famine, raging brush fires, invading armies, catastrophes in space. But why all of these fireworks in Joel? One reason becomes apparent at the end of the book: So you shall know that I am the Lord your God (3:17). Man can sin and rebel and have his heyday but God will have His day.

AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE

Joel, the son of Pethuel, was a prophet to Judah in Jerusalem. He is possibly the oldest dated minor prophet. His name means 'Yahweh is my God'. It is possible that Joel's life overlapped those of Elijah and Elisha. He has been called the prophet of revival. The book was written in the first two decades of the reign of Joash (877 - 837 B.C.). Note 2 Kings 11:14 and context.

WHY STUDY the book of Joel?

The church today is in desolate condition. It has been laid waste by many spiritual foes, well described in 1:4. We study Joel for motivation in devotion to the true desires of God, redeeming the time, because His judgment will surely shake mankind from our complacency. The events of Joel give us cameo-insight into what we will study in the book of Revelation. How things will change upon the arrival of the King! Our fervor to blow the trumpet to the church and the lost must be rekindled. We cannot afford to be unresponsive in light of the coming Day!



Joel Chapter Chart

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Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		
2		
3		

Here are some questions that will encourage you to dig deeply for interpretation in the book of Joel. You may wish to answer these questions as you read and title chapters.

CHAPTER 1

1. What was to be the impact of the message on the listeners? How does God establish the weightiness of the message?
2. Circle the individuals or groups of individuals affected by this prophesied calamity.
3. What was the recommended response to these events and conditions?
4. What would you choose as your chapter title and key verse for chapter one?

CHAPTER 2

1. Note the term "Day of the Lord" in 2:1. Scan the entire book and circle this term at each occurrence.
2. What action is requested from the people by God?
3. Circle both uses of the term "blow the trumpet" in this chapter. What image does this place into your mind?
4. Read Acts 2 and compare it with Joel 2. Why do you think that Joel is quoted at this point in Acts?
5. What would you choose as your chapter title and key verse for chapter two?

CHAPTER 3

1. To what point(s) in history could 3:1 refer?
2. Circle every place the word valley is used. Where and what is the "Valley of Decision"? (Note Revelation 16:13-16; 19:20,21)
3. Reference Revelation 14:14-20. What are the comparisons between this chapter of Joel and this passage?

WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

Truly this will be a horrible day! Often in a crisis our first reaction differs from that of 1:14. What can we learn from this response to natural disaster that will help us cope properly with personal disaster?

Read Revelation 10:1-11 and examine your attitude toward the Day of the Lord. Do you feel that you experience the depth and balance of feelings that are revealed in the book of Joel?

CONSIDERING CALAMITY

Why all these fireworks in the book of Joel? Why this display of calamitous events? So you will know that I am the Lord your God... (3:17). You can't read Joel without coming to grips with an almighty God who controls the course of history.

In his graphic description of the destroying army, Joel says, 'And the Lord utters His voice before His army...' (2:11), thus emphasizing to the nation and us that the invading foe is acting under the direct command and control of God. What people today often refer to as 'fate', 'misfortune', 'jinx', 'unlucky', or 'the way the cards fall' is often without their knowing it as what insurance companies refer to in their policies as 'Acts of God'.

While it can be said that not all calamity that strikes is a direct act of God, this will be the primary thrust of the study guide, since the calamity in Joel was a direct act of God. For a balanced view's sake, however, the opening question will pertain to another cause of calamity to be considered.

1) Most people say that all of man's achievements, his blessings, and his progress are attributed to his own ingenuity and greatness. However, when calamity and disaster strike, he is quick to blame God. What do the following passages teach you concerning considering other causes of calamity besides God?

- Proverbs 19:15 _____
- Proverbs 15:20 _____
- Proverbs 22:3 _____
- Proverbs 11:24 _____
- 2 Peter 2:13 _____

2) In the book of Joel, the calamity that strikes is called 'the day of the Lord'. Five times in Joel, this phrase appears, and you'll find it more than 25 additional times in the Bible. Do a treasure hunt through the following verses to discover more about this Day! Write down observations concerning this calamity beside each passage.

- Isaiah 2:12; 13:6,9 _____
- Amos 5:18 _____
- Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3 _____
- Zephaniah 1:7, 14 _____
- 2 Thessalonians 2:2 _____
- 2 Peter 3:10 _____

3) From the following passages consider what God's purpose for calamity might be:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Genesis 6:17 | Acts 8:1 |
| Genesis 50:20 | 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 |
| 2 Samuel 24:12-16 | John 9:2-3 |
| Nehemiah 9:26-27 | Romans 8:28-29 |
| Job 1:8-12 | 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 |
| Matthew 5:44-48 (tough one!) | Romans 5:3-4 |
| Revelation 6:1-2, 10, 15-16 | Acts 5:1-11 |

There is a lesson for us today from Joel. The Church is in a desolate condition. It is much like Noah's ark - if it wasn't for the storm on the outside, you couldn't stand the stench on the inside. We are dangerously close to being 'conformed to the world' in nearly every way. As a result, much of the church has been laid waste by many spiritual foes well described in Joel 1:4 - 'What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; and what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten.' There is famine and drought in the Church. If we will return to the Lord, He will fulfill His promise to us by His outpouring of the Spirit and then He will 'restore the years that the locust has eaten'. (2:25). Remember as you consider calamity 'If we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged'. (1 Corinthians 11:31).