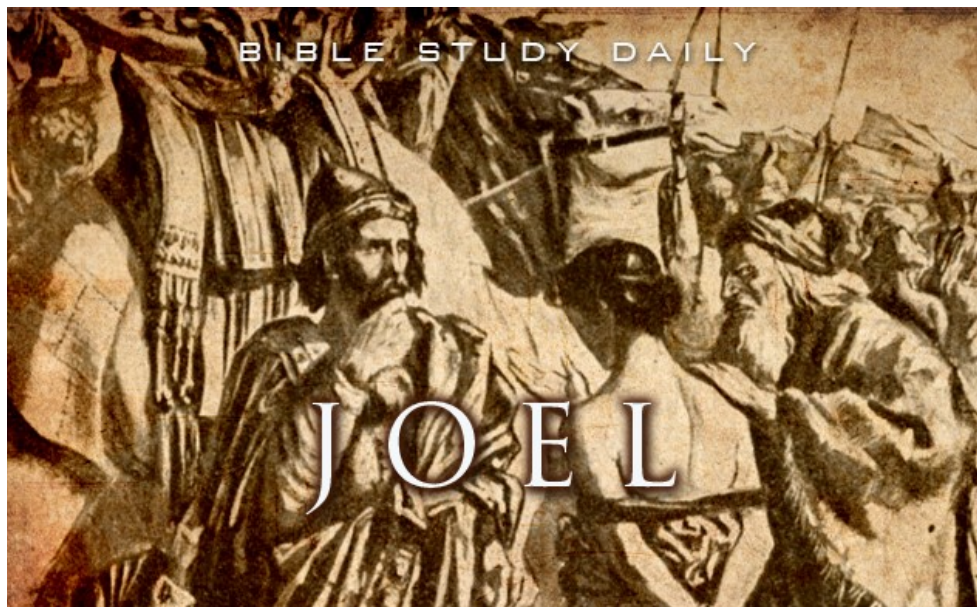




# BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Joel as well as my study notes for the book.

## Name

The book of Joel is named for its author, Joel, son of Pethuel. Joel means “Yahweh is God.”

## Author

Joel, the son of Pethuel, received the word of prophecy from the Lord (v. 1). Among all the many Joels in Scripture, the book of Joel is the only reference to this Joel and it provides no biographical data other than the name of his father.

## Genre

Prophecy (second of twelve books commonly referred to as the “Minor Prophets”).

## Literary Form

Prophetic poetry except for a short section of prose in chapter 3.

## Time Frame

Joel provides no specific dating in the book, and the details of the book lead to a variety of conclusions among scholars. There are three scholarly viewpoints: 1) the book was early preexilic (before the exile to Babylon around the ninth century), 2) the book was late preexilic (before exile to Babylon around 597-587 B.C.), and 3) the book was written postexilic (after the Babylonian exile around 517 B.C.).

Given the lack of internal clues it is impossible to determine the date or even the era in which the book was written with any degree of certainty.


## Emphasis

The emphasis of the book of Joel is calling the people to repentance. Although specific sins are not mentioned, Joel exhorts the people to repent, by turning to God with all their hearts, not just make a show of outward repentance by the tearing of clothes. He is calling for true repentance before God’s judgement comes in “the Day of the Lord.”

The “Day of the Lord” figures prominently in Joel’s prophecy. It is a reference to the judgement of the Lord coming against Israel and other nations. Joel mentions the “Day of the Lord” five times: (Joel 1:15, Joel 2:1-2, Joel 2:10-11, Joel 2:30-31, and Joel 3:14-16).

## Outline

- The locust invasion (1:1-20)
- The invading northern army (2:1-11)
- The appeal to repentance and restoration (2:12-19)

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- The northern army destroyed (2:20)
  - The restoration of the land (2:21-27)
  - The spiritual revival among the people (2:28-32)
  - The judgement of the nations (3:1-21)

# What I Noticed Today (Joel 1-3)

## Joel 1

In verse 1 the word of the Lord came to Joel, son of Pethuel.

In verses 2-20 Joel describes a severe locust plague that swept over the entire land destroying all the crops.

In verses 2-4 Joel calls on the elders and all those in the land that nothing like this calamity has ever happened before. People will tell the story of this devastation for generations. Joel describes four kinds of locusts: the devouring locust, the swarming locust, the young locust, and the destroying locust.

**Note:** Each version of locust would destroy more of what was left from the previous locusts.

In verses 5-13 Joel specifically calls on four groups to mourn.

In verses 5-7 Joel calls on the drunkards to mourn because a powerful nation is coming against them. It will devastate their grape vines and fig trees (two very important agricultural crops in terms of food supply and their economy).

In verses 8-10 Joel calls on the nation to mourn like a woman in sackcloth who has lost her husband (provider). The priests are called to mourn because the grain and drink offerings are cut off because the fields of grain, grapevines, and olives are destroyed.

In verses 11-12 Joel calls on the farmers to mourn because the wheat, barley, grapevines, figs, pomegranates, dates, apples, and all of the orchards are destroyed.

In verse 13-14 Joel calls on the priests and those who attend to the altar to mourn in sackcloth because there is no grain or wine for the offerings all night. Then they were to call the elders and people together at the house of the Lord to fast and cry out to the Lord.

In verses 15-20 Joel records the prayer of the people in the temple. The people were in mourning because the “Day of the Lord” and His judgment were near (the first of five mentions of the “Day of the Lord”). The land had been devastated so there was not grain or wine to make an offering to God. What grain was left was shriveled and the granaries were broken down. The animals were suffering because a fire had consumed the pastures and the rivers were dried up.

## Joel 2

In verses 1-2 Joel sounds the alarm warning the Day of the Lord (second mention) is coming. It will be a day of darkness and gloom. A powerful people are coming like never seen before, or ever again.

In verses 3-5 Joel describes the utter destruction of the land. It is like the garden of Eden before them but a wasteland after the army passes. Joel describes their appearance as like horses, they run like war horses (cavalry), and their sound is like the sound of chariots.

**Note:** Scholars disagree whether this description is a literal human army or an army of locusts. Either way, the point is there will be total devastation. I tend to think it is a literal army because Joel refers to a “powerful people” coming in verse 2. If he wanted to continue a metaphor of locusts he probably wouldn’t have referred to the coming army as people.

In verses 6-9 Joel describes nations writhing in horror as the warriors attack. They scale walls, storm the city, and climb through windows into the homes.

**Note:** The Hebrew word used for “writhing” (some translations say anguish), is a description of the pain of a woman in labor.

In verses 10-11 Joel now describes even the heavens reacting to the Lord as He commands His army. The judgment that comes in the Day of the Lord (third mention) is dreadful.


In verses 12-14 The Lord himself calls on the people to repent and turn to Him with fasting, weeping, and mourning. He wants true repentance (tear your hearts, not just your clothes). The Lord is gracious and compassionate and faithful in His love. If they return to him, He will relent in His judgment, and return a blessing to them so they can offer grain and wine once again.

In verses 15-17 Joel sounds a warning again calling on the people to assemble for a sacred assembly. The entire community of elders, children, and even nursing mothers were to attend. He called on the priests to make a petition to the Lord, pleading for mercy, to not make them an object of scorn among the nations.

In verses 18-20 the Lord responded to their prayer saying that He would spare his people. He would bless them with grain, wine, and olive oil and they would not be a disgrace to other nations. He promised to drive the northern army from them. They will die between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea because they had done catastrophic things.

**Note:** Again, scholars disagree whether this redemption from the Lord occurred during Joel’s time or whether it will occur in the end times. I believe it is an eschatological end time prophecy because when the Lord redeems them they will “not be an object of scorn among nations.” Since Israel has been an object of scorn among nations throughout their history this seems to point to fulfillment in the end times.

In verses 21-27 the Lord tells the land, the animals, and the crops not to be



afraid, but to rejoice. Then the Lord tells the people, the children of Zion (Jerusalem), the autumn and spring rains will come as before. The Lord promised to repay them for the years of devastation brought on by the great army He sent (the army is referred to here as the swarming, young, devouring, and destroying locusts).

In these days the people will have plenty eat, they will praise God, they will know He is present in Israel and He is their God, and they will never again be put to shame.

In verses 28-32 the Lord announces that “after this” He will pour out His spirit on all humanity, sons and daughters will prophecy old men will have dreams, and young men will have visions. He will display wonders in heaven and on earth (blood, fire, and smoke, the sun turned to darkness, and the moon to blood). Then (in that day) all those who call on the name of the Lord, whom the Lord has called, will be saved just as the Lord promised.

### Joel 3

In verses 1-8 the Lord describes when He restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem how He judges other nations because they had scattered His people and oppressed them. The Lord specifically calls out Tyre, Sidon, and all the territories of Philistia for robbing the temple and selling His people into slavery. He is about to demand retribution by selling their sons and daughters into the hands of the people of Judah who will sell them to the Sabians.

In verses 9-16 the Lord declares His judgment on the nations. He tells them to prepare for a holy war. Even the young are to claim to be warriors. They are to assemble in the Valley of Jehoshaphat where the Lord will bring judgment on them. The Lord will harvest their armies like grain and trample them like grapes in a winepress. Great numbers (multitudes, multitudes) will assemble in the Valley of Decision (Valley of Jehoshaphat) when the Lord will raise His voice from Jerusalem and heaven and earth will shake. Yet the Lord will be a refuge for His people.

In verses 17-21 then the people of Israel will know that Yahweh is God, that He lives in Jerusalem, the city will be holy, and foreigners will never again enter into the city. In that day (during the Millennium) the people will be blessed (mountains drip sweet wine, hills flow with milk, streams will flow with water). Egypt and Edom will become a wasteland because of what they did to Judah. But Judah will be inhabited forever and the Lord will pardon them