

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS – PART 4

*It is advisable first to read the Preface in Part 1 and also the Introduction to the Minor Prophets which precedes the Study on Hosea.



The section on each prophet is a complete Bible study on its own.

THE PROPHET JOEL

INTRODUCTION

Little is known about Joel, the prophet from Judah, and the date of his prophecies is uncertain. His prophetic word, however, is referred to by Peter in the Acts of the New Testament. Joel could have lived as early as the 9th century B.C. when similar conditions prevailed in the land.

A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

Read Joel Chapter 1

The word of the Lord came to Joel, for swarms of locusts had devoured and left the land bare. Joel addressed the elders and all the people with these words to tell their children and to their children's children and to the next generation -

Joel 1: 4

Moses had prophesied blessings for obedience and curses for rebellion. Now the people's disobedience had caused such a disaster fulfilling, *The Voice of the Lord*.

(Deuteronomy 28: 38, 42)

Furthermore, drought had dried up and devastated the ground. The people of Judah had never known anything like it before. As God's prophet, Joel likened the locust plague to an invading enemy army.

A hostile nation has invaded My land, mighty and without number. Joel 1: 6a

Joel gave a detailed description of the plague of locust swarms and the consequent destruction of the land, its fields, trees and animal life. There were no harvests of grain and oil or wine for the drunkards to drink!

In the house of the Lord there were no grain or drink offerings. Joel called upon the priests, elders and all the people to fast and repent. The fire of God's judgement had come upon the land, causing despair to replace the blessings of joy and gladness.

THE ARMY OF LOCUSTS

Read Joel 2: 1 - 11

Blow the trumpet (shofar - ram's horn) in Zion; and sound an alarm on My holy Mount.

Joel 2: 1a



Joel prophesied the coming Day of the Lord would be as a mighty army of locusts destroying everything in its path. The prophet's description of the invading Lord's army, like devouring locusts, is full of graphic detail for both the near and distant future.

Joel 2: 11

A CALL TO REPENTANT PRAYER

Read Joel 2: 12 - 17



Joel 2: 12

Joel told the priests and people, the old and young, the bride and the bridegroom to rend their hearts and not their garments and return to the Lord.

Joel 2: 13

These words of God's loving-kindness, His gracious mercy with justice, can be traced throughout the pages of Scripture.

Joel 2: 15

Joel exhorts the people to repent in prayer for God's pity and for the honour of His name.



Joel 2: 17

GOD'S ANSWER TO REPENTANT PRAYER

Read Joel 2: 18 - 27

Joel recounts the blessings of the Lord and the restoration He will give to a repentant people.

Joel 2: 19

The invading army will be destroyed with a mighty destruction.

Joel 2: 21

The early and latter rains will fall as before with the threshing floors full of grain and the vats filled with wine and oil. Once again the people would rejoice in the land's restoration; the animals feeding on the revived pastures, the trees bearing fruit with the fig tree, olive and vine flourishing.

Joel 2: 25



Then, will the people praise the Lord, for they will know that He is the God of Israel.

Joel 2: 27

THE PROMISE OF GOD'S SPIRIT

Read Joel 2: 28 - 32

Joel 2: 28

These prophetic words were used by the apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, when the disciples of Jesus were filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Peter's great Pentecost sermon, he explained the signs of the coming of the Holy Spirit, when the power came like fire and a mighty wind –

the Birthday of the Christian Church.

The gracious Holy Spirit would be poured out on all flesh, upon all mankind, who called upon the name of the Lord; meaning both Jew and Gentile.



Joel 2: 32a

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Read Joel 3: 1 - 16

In those days, when the Lord restores Israel, the nations will be gathered for judgement for their wickedness and cruelty to His people.

Joel 3: 2

God's judgement will fall upon Tyre and Sidon and the land of Philistia – the Philistine age-long enemy of Israel. In preparation for the coming battle, Joel announced *The Voice of the Lord* to these nations, including Egypt and Edom. Their wickedness would indeed reap a harvest.

Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears.

Joel 3: 10a

Let the nations come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.

Joel 3: 12

It was in this Valley that the hand of the Lord gave King Jehoshaphat a mighty victory against a vast army from Moab, Ammon and Edom.
(2 Chronicles 20: 1 - 30)

As God's mouthpiece, Joel uttered these words -

Joel 3: 14

The sun and moon are darkened and the stars withdraw their shining.

Joel 3: 15



Joel 3: 16

GOD'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

Read Joel 3: 17 - 21

Joel 3: 17

The hostile enemy nations shall be judged, but Israel will once again be fruitful and receive the rich blessings of the Lord and become as in former times -



a land flowing with milk and honey.

Exodus 3: 8

In that day, the mountains shall drip with the fresh juice of the grape and the hills shall flow with milk and the brooks and rivers of Judah shall flow with water, and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord.

Joel 3: 18, (Ezekiel 47: 1 - 12)

Joel 3: 20

Amos ended his prophetic word with *The Voice of the Lord* promising His presence to His cleansed and forgiven children of Judah -

for the Lord dwells in Zion.

Joel 3: 21b



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