

Joel

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2. Author, date, historical setting – The prophet Joel of Pethuel (1:1) is unknown outside of the book. Several Joels are mentioned in other places in Scripture, but none can be clearly identified as this prophet. Most scholars accept the unity of the book. However, a great deal of disagreement exists concerning the dating of the book. The book itself has no clear chronological notations, so the dating of the book must be determined on the basis of implications of the subject matter. Some believe the book was written as early as the 9th century B.C. This date is based on the order of Joel in the Hebrew canon. However, the Septuagint places Joel after Micah (late 8th century). The position of Joel is probably due to a thematic rather than a chronological grouping. Others have noted several features (or notable silences) of the subject matter: mention of elders and priests (1:2, 13; 2:16) but no mention of a king, no mention of idol worship or foreign deities, the theme of the nations arrayed in battle against the Lord (3:9-17), references to the Jews being dispersed into the surrounding nations (3:1-2), and references to the functioning of the temple (1:9, 13-16; 2:15-17). All of these factors seem to be most consistent with a date after the exile and the rebuilding of the temple.
3. Language and style – The very fact that Joel is difficult to date suggests that Joel was intended to be used as a public reading in worship that would be meaningful under a variety of circumstances. For example, the book calls for repentance, but no specific sins are mentioned. As a result of this non-specific nature, Joel strikes modern readers as more powerful and directly applicable than some other prophetic literature. Joel draws on many figures, phrases, and terms from the body of prophecy prior to the exile. For example, while Isaiah and Micah prophecy peace in terms of swords being beaten into plowshares, Joel picks up and reverses the figure, mocking the nations by calling on them to beat their plowshares into swords to gather themselves against the armies of the Lord (3:9-11). References to Ezekiel and Amos can also be identified.
4. Structure:
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 - i. Description (1:1-12)
 - ii. Call to lamentation (1:13-14)
 - iii. A foretaste of the Day of the Lord (1:15-20)
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 - iii. The Lord relents and assures (2:18-27)
 - c. The coming Day of the Lord
 - i. Description (2:28-32)
 - ii. Judgment on the nations (3:1-17)
 - iii. Salvation for the people of God (3:18-21)
5. Themes:
 - a. God warns his people, sometimes with harsh judgments. But he warns with merciful intention and loves to show mercy to repentant people.
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 - ii. Judgment on the nations (3:1-17)
 - iii. Salvation for the people of God (3:18-21)
5. Themes:
 - a. God warns his people, sometimes with harsh judgments. But he warns with merciful intention and loves to show mercy to repentant people.
 - b. The Day of the Lord will be a day of both salvation and judgment – salvation to those who belong to the Lord and are repentant but judgment to those who are God's enemies and are arrayed against him.
 - c. The giving of the Spirit at Pentecost is referenced by Peter (Acts 2:16-21) as a fulfillment of Joel (2:28-32). This is a further step in God's merciful gathering of his exiled people and a step toward that Day in which the nations will be winnowed and judged.

Reference:

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Joel

1. Introduction – Joel describes a locust plague as a means of leading the reader to understand the Day of the Lord, a day in which the Lord's armies will invade and devastate the land.
2. Author, date, historical setting – The prophet Joel of Pethuel (1:1) is unknown outside of the book. Several Joels are mentioned in other places in Scripture, but none can be clearly identified as this prophet. Most scholars accept the unity of the book. However, a great deal of disagreement exists concerning the dating of the book. The book itself has no clear chronological notations, so the dating of the book must be determined on the basis of implications of the subject matter. Some believe the book was written as early as the 9th century B.C. This date is based on the order of Joel in the Hebrew canon. However, the Septuagint places Joel after Micah (late 8th century). The position of Joel is probably due to a thematic rather than a chronological grouping. Others have noted several features (or notable silences) of the subject matter: mention of elders and priests (1:2, 13; 2:16) but no mention of a king, no mention of idol worship or foreign deities, the theme of the nations arrayed in battle against the Lord (3:9-17), references to the Jews being dispersed into the surrounding nations (3:1-2), and references to the functioning of the temple (1:9, 13-16; 2:15-17). All of these factors seem to be most consistent with a date after the exile and the rebuilding of the temple.
3. Language and style – The very fact that Joel is difficult to date suggests that Joel was intended to be used as a public reading in worship that would be meaningful under a variety of circumstances. For example, the book calls for repentance, but no specific sins are mentioned. As a result of this non-specific nature, Joel strikes modern readers as more powerful and directly applicable than some other prophetic literature. Joel draws on many figures, phrases, and terms from the body of prophecy prior to the exile. For example, while Isaiah and Micah prophecy peace in terms of swords being beaten into plowshares, Joel picks up and reverses the figure, mocking the nations by calling on them to beat their plowshares into swords to gather themselves against the armies of the Lord (3:9-11). References to Ezekiel and Amos can also be identified.
4. Structure:
 - a. The current disaster – a locust plague
 - i. Description (1:1-12)
 - ii. Call to lamentation (1:13-14)
 - iii. A foretaste of the Day of the Lord (1:15-20)
 - b. The Day of the Lord presented as a locust plague
 - i. Description (2:1-11)
 - ii. Call to repentance in hopes of mercy (2:12-17)
 - iii. The Lord relents and assures (2:18-27)
 - c. The coming Day of the Lord
 - i. Description (2:28-32)
 - ii. Judgment on the nations (3:1-17)
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