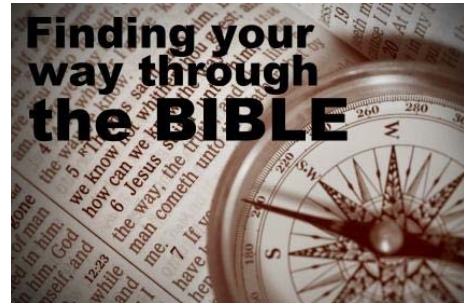


Joel

Author



The prophet Joel whose name means “Yahweh is God” is not mentioned outside the books of Joel and Acts ([Acts 2:16](#)) His father, Pethuel ([1:1](#)), is also unknown. Judging from his concern with Judah and Jerusalem (see [2:32](#); [3:1,6,8,16–20](#)), it seems likely that Joel lived in that area.



Date

The book contains no references to datable historical events. Many interpreters date it somewhere between the late seventh and early fifth centuries b.c. In any case, its message is not significantly affected by its dating. Since no none of the enemies are named it seems that this is written before the exile of Judah by Babylon.

The book of Joel has striking linguistic parallels to the language of Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Some scholars maintain that the prophets borrowed phrases from one another; others hold that they drew more or less from the religious literary traditions that they and their readers shared in common—liturgical and otherwise.

Theological Message

Joel sees the massive locust plague and severe drought devastating Judah as a harbinger of the “great and dreadful day of the Lord” ([2:31](#)). The locusts he mentions in [1:4](#); [2:25](#) are best understood as real insects, but may be allegorical representations of the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks and Romans, as well as the future day of the of the Lord which includes the *Great Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ and the Millennium*.

Often Old Testament prophecy has:

- 1) A near fulfillment – a literal plague of locusts
- 2) A further fulfillment – the Gentile Kingdoms ruling over Israel/Judah
- 3) A future fulfillment in the end times

Confronted with this crisis, he calls on everyone to repent: old and young ([1:2–3](#)), drunkards ([1:5](#)), farmers ([1:11](#)) and priests ([1:13](#)). He describes the locusts as the Lord’s army and sees in their coming a reminder that the day of the Lord is near. He does not voice the popular notion that the day will be one of judgment on the nations but deliverance and blessing for Israel. Instead—with Isaiah ([2:10–21](#)), Jeremiah ([4:5–9](#)), Amos ([5:18–20](#)) and Zephaniah ([1:7–18](#))—he describes the day as one of punishment of unfaithful Israel as well. Restoration and blessing will come only after judgment and repentance.

Outline

- Title ([1:1](#))
- Judah Experiences a Foretaste of the Day of the Lord ([1:2–2:17](#))
 - A Call to Mourning and Prayer ([1:2–14](#))
 - The Announcement of the Day of the Lord ([1:15–2:11](#))
 - A Call to Repentance and Prayer ([2:12–17](#))
- Judah is Assured of Salvation in the Day of the Lord ([2:18–3:21](#))
 - The Lord’s Restoration of Judah ([2:18–27](#))
 - The Lord’s Renewal of His People ([2:28–32](#))
 - The Coming of the Day of the Lord ([ch. 3](#))
 1. The nations judged ([3:1–16](#))
 2. God’s people blessed ([3:17–21](#))