

# Survey of Joel

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## Joel's Message

1. The Hebrew name *Yo 'el* means “Yahweh is God.”
2. Joel's ministry was to receive and proclaim the “word of the Lord” (1:1).
  - a. The source of the Word: “Word of Yahweh” (1:1).
  - b. The secret of the Word: “that came to Joel” (1:1).
  - c. The servant of the Word: “Joel, the son of Pethuel” (1:1).
  - d. The scope of the Word: “Hear this, you elders; give ear all inhabitants of the Land” (1:2a).

## Joel's Ministry Time

1. The book of Joel includes no explicit time references that lead us to any specific historical time frame.
2. Many scholars choose a ninth century B.C. date for the writing of Joel, more specifically when Athaliah was removed from power and there was no king of such on the throne.
3. I would argue for a post-exilic date for Joel do so for the following reasons:
  - a. His people are scattered among the nations (3:2). God's people will never again be a national disgrace or reproach among other nations (2:19, 27).
  - b. God's people have already been sold to the Greeks and his temple treasures robbed (3:5,6).
  - c. There is a positive emphasis on priests and elders ruling and leading as opposed to kings (1:1, 9, 13, 14; 2:17).
  - d. There is no rebuke of the sins of the people – an indication of a new people of God who have come through the judgment with new hearts to worship Yahweh.
4. As a post-exilic writer, Joel possibly wrote about the same time as Malachi.

## **Joel's Primary Theme**

The theme of the book of Joel is “the day of the Lord” (1:15; 2:2, 11; 3:14). All of the other concepts in this book seem to find their meaning in relationship to this theme.

### **Outline:**

1. God communicated through a Plague (1:1-2:11)
2. God calls to Penitence (2:12-17).
3. God confirms his Promises (2:18-27).
  - a. Locust leave, crops return (2:18-27).
  - b. The Spirit is poured out (2:28-32).
  - c. The judgment on nations afflicting God's people (3:2-16).
  - d. God's people receive glory and blessing (3:1, 17-21).

### **Main Points with Application**

1. The locust plague is a unique event – a warning to forsake covenant infidelity and praise Yahweh (1:1). Consider Deut. 28:38-48. Who is to know this story (1:2)? Who is to teach it (v.3)? How frequently is it to be taught?
2. The Day of the Lord (2:1, 2, 11). Any day of divine judgment in history is a “Day of the Lord,” a divine visitation, a foretaste of the last great day of judgment (cf. Zeph. 1:14, 15). When scripture speaks of “the day of the lord,” we must ask to which day of the lord is it referring? The day of the lord may be now but not yet.
3. Our need: whole hearts of love and obedience toward God, not outward rituals (2:13).
4. “Who knows” (2:14), reveals the complete freedom of God. Our repentance is a *condition* for forgiveness but not the *cause* for forgiveness, an act of God's free grace. God is not like a vending machine. We must rest on his mercy.
5. What God reveals about himself: a warrior who defends his people (3:19-11); a judge who vindicates his people (3:12); a refuge who protects his people (3:16); and a resident who abides with his people (3:17, 21).