

A SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Joel

"A Plague of Locusts"

Title and Author:

- Title:
 - Means, "Jehovah is God."
 - Comes from the author's name.
- Author:
 - Joel was the son of Pethuel.
 - Apart from that, there isn't any other information given in the book.
 - He may have been a citizen of Judah familiar with Jerusalem.

Subtitle: "A Plague of Locusts"

Summary: "The Day of the LORD is dramatically pictured in association with a plague of Locusts."

Date:

- The precise date is unknown because no contemporary kingdoms are mentioned.
- Joel shares some material with Amos.
- Joel 3:16/Amos 1:2
- Joel 3:18/Amos 9:13
- It is possible Joel wrote at the same time as Amos.
- If so, the date was from 830s-790s BC.

Setting and Background:

- Set in Israel.
- The background of this book is a catastrophic event: a plague of locusts (Joel 1:2-4).
- The new wine was gone (1:5).
- The meat and drink offerings were not offered at the temple (1:9).
- The seed was rotting in the field and there was no corn (1:17).
- The herds were hungry (1:18, 20).
- Evidently, the reason for the judgment was a hypocritical heart toward God's worship (2:12-13).
- God was true to His promises in the Law: If Israel served Him, there was plenty; but the food failed if they failed (Deut 28).
 - They would have plenty of food if they obeyed (3-5, 8, and 11-12).
 - They would struggle if they disobeyed (17-18, 21, 24, **38-40**, and 42).

Key Doctrines:

- Joel's readers saw the Day of the LORD as future judgment (2:1-11).
 - The entire population – from youngest to oldest – needed to repent to divert judgment (2:12-14).

- Then God will deliver them and restore the fruits of the land (2:15-3:15).
- God will defend His people from Mount Zion (3:16-21).
- The Day of the LORD is the judgment of nations.
 - Isaiah 13:6-10
 - Jeremiah 46:10
 - Amos 5:20
 - Zephaniah 1:15
 - Malachi 4:5
- When we look at the New Testament we find additional descriptions of this event.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:2 (Rapture)
 - 2 Peter 3:10 (Destruction of current earth)
 - Revelation 16:16; 19:19-21 (Armageddon)

Christ in Joel:

- Christ is the LORD dwelling in Zion who will defend His people.
 - The events are fast-forwarded to the final Day of the LORD at Armageddon (3:9-15).
 - At this time, the LORD will defend His people from Mount Zion (3:16).

Overview:

- Description of the problem (1:1-20)
 - Plague of locusts
 - The crops were destroyed
 - The offerings in the temple had ceased
 - The animals had no pasture.
- The coming Day of the LORD (2:1-11)
 - An approaching army
 - They leave only a desolate wilderness
 - The earth will tremble
 - The sun will darken and the moon turn to blood.
- Appeal for repentance (2:12-18)
 - Whole-hearted repentance
 - Everyone must participate
- The LORD defends Israel (2:19-3:21)
 - He will satisfy their needs.
 - He will remove the incoming army.
 - He will pour out His Spirit on all flesh.
 - He will gather the offending nations and destroy them in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
 - He will dwell in Zion forever.

Key Theme:

- Calling on the name of the LORD will bring salvation.
 - Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21

- “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered (saved).”
- Is Acts 2 a complete fulfillment of Joel 2?
 - In Acts 2 the emphasis is on salvation.
 - The sign gifts of Acts 2 have ceased until the total fulfillment of Joel 2 – when the signs in heaven occur.

Challenges to Joel:

- Was the plague of locusts an actual event?
 - “When the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense.”
 - Joel told his listeners to recount the event to future generations.
 - Telling future generations only makes sense if there was a real plague of locusts.
 - The force of the whole book is diminished if we decide the event is only metaphorical.

Application: Let us endeavor to serve God with our entire heart.