

Lesson 9 – Joel

The dates for Joel and Obadiah are debated, as neither book indicates when it was written. The two prevailing views place them either among the earliest writing prophets (800s BC) or the exilic/post-exilic ones (500s BC). Joel describes circumstances which fit the conditions between the second and third Babylonian attacks (597-588 BC). The locusts in 1:4 are explained in 1:6 as the nation which had already come up against Judah. Babylon had invaded twice, plundering, taking captives, and imposing tributes. Yet, there still seems to be a chance for repentance (2:12-14). The "day of the LORD"— day of judgment— is approaching quickly. This refers to the impending fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Joel also prophesied what would happen after these things had taken place. The Holy Spirit would be poured out on "all flesh" (Jew & Gentile), miracles would be distributed to people, and salvation would be offered. Peter applied the prophecy to the events which began on Pentecost c. 30 AD. At that time, the "day of the Lord" was once again nearing for Jerusalem. It would be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD, very similar to its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The connection between these two events makes a strong case for the later date. In the Babylonian destruction, the survivors were the remnant preserved through the exile. When the Romans besieged Jerusalem, Christians had heeded Jesus' warnings and escaped. But "saved" in Acts 2:21 is not primarily about escaping the 70 AD day of the Lord coming against Jerusalem. When the people asked the apostles how to call upon the name of the Lord, Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized... for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Therefore, the salvation in Acts 2:21 was spiritual salvation. Baptism was preached and practiced throughout the world. Based on my view that Joel prophesied between the second and final Babylonian attacks on Jerusalem, I've placed it here in our study. The earlier date view is also respectable, and the date doesn't change the key teachings and applications.

Lesson 9 – Joel

1. Who did Joel address directly in his message? (Joel 1:2, 13)
2. What metaphor did Joel use to describe the enemies that had devastated Judah? (Joel 1:4, 6-7; 2:25)
3. How many times did Joel mention the “day of the LORD”?
4. What does the “day of the LORD” mean?
5. What figurative language describes the day of the LORD? (Joel 2:10, 30-31)
6. Even amid the ominous warnings of impending destruction, what did God instruct the Jews to do? (Joel 2:12-17)
7. What does Joel 2:18-27 describe?
8. Joel 2:28 describes events which would come “afterward”— after the 586 BC destruction of Jerusalem. When Peter quoted this, he used the term “last days.” What or when are the “last days”? (Heb. 1:2)
9. Who would be saved? Explain what this involved. (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:38; 22:16)
10. Upon whom would God pour out his Spirit? Who were the Jewish and Gentile people through whom God fulfilled this prophecy? (Acts 2:1-17; 10:44-11:17)
11. What did Jehoshaphat mean in Hebrew? (Joel 3:2, 12)
12. What had the Phoenicians and Philistines done to Judah? What would happen to those nations? What had Egypt and Edom done? (Joel 3:4-8, 19)
13. What did converting plowshares into swords and pruning hooks into spears indicate? What did the reverse indicate? (Joel 3:10; Isa. 2:4)