

SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: JOEL

*What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.*

Joel 1:4

The meaning of 'Joel': *Jehovah is God*

The identity and times of Joel the man: *Unknown*

The structure of Joel the book:

1:2-20	Day of the locusts
2:1-17	Day of Jehovah
2:18-27	Jehovah's blessings
2:28-32	Jehovah's greater blessings
3:1-17	Jehovah's judgment on the nations
3:18-21	Jehovah's blessings on His people

The theme and message of Joel:

- The Day of the LORD! *This is a dominant concept in this book. It started off as the day the locusts will invade the land (as a day of judgment) to become the day God Himself will come to judge His people. Coming to the New Testament, the Day of the Lord is the Day of Pentecost and it will find its ultimate fulfillment in the Second Coming of Christ.*
- Judgment most, most terrible! *On the day of the LORD, the judgments will be devastating. For example, 1:4 highlights the completeness of the judgment while 1:7-12 describes just how terrible is the devastation – husbands snatched away on wedding day, temple service terminated, all the trees in the land withered.*
- The sole acceptable response! *We need to know that this message was proclaimed before the Day of the LORD arrives! Hence Joel the prophet was not content to just tell the people how terrible the coming judgment will be like, but to urge them to do the one thing needful and acceptable:*

REPENT! This can be seen in 1:13-14 and 2:12-14. It is amazing to hear Joel calling them to prepare for the coming disaster, not make plans to defend the city, but take steps to reconcile with God! And the fact that a prophet of God is calling the people to repent conveys the message that God intends to forgive, He is ready to!

- Why bother? *The prophet does not only call upon the people to repent, but also list down the blessings that awaits all who would turn from their sins to God. 2:19 talks of food provided, reproach removed and the soul satisfied. 2:20 talks about enemies removed while 2:21-24 talks about joy restored. 2:25 assures the people that what they have lost will be more than recovered while 2:27 is the ultimate blessing!*

For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?

Now, therefore," says the LORD, " Turn to Me with all your heart,

With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."

So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God,

For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness;

And He relents from doing harm.

Joel 2:11b-13