

Lesson 12 – Joel

Text: Joel

Key Passages:

- Joel 2:13 – Repentance requires a changing of the heart, much more than just outward actions.
- Joel 2:28-32 – This passage, quoted by Peter in Acts 2, pointed to a day when God would pour out His Spirit upon the world and reveal His new laws for all to follow.

Background Information:

Like Obadiah, Joel is a very difficult book to date, as it has no clear time markers as many other books of prophecy do (such as referencing specific events or kings that were ruling at the time of the prophecy). It seems likely that Joel prophesied shortly after Joash became king in Judah, addressing many of the ongoing issues of Judah in his prophecies.

Due to the previous rulers (12 years under Jehoram, 1 year under Ahaziah, and 6 years under Athaliah) Judah's faith in God had grown very weak. Baal worship had been introduced and popularized due to the influence of Ahab's family. Judah had been badly corrupted by idolatry and was in need of rebuke and repentance. Though Jehoiada was making strides in winning the people back to God, they continued to sacrifice on the high places. Joel's message is based on a locust invasion that had taken place shortly before his prophecy. He told the people that if they did not learn their lesson from the locust invasion and repent, a far worse invasion (armies) would come and ravage the land of Judah.

Outline:

- I. Purpose: to inform the people of Judah that they needed to learn their lesson from the locust invasion and truly return to the Lord with all their hearts so they could be saved
- II. Consider the severity of God's punishment from the locust swarm (1:2-12)
 - a. They had never experienced a plague like that one (1:2)
 - b. Every person had been affected by the plague; joy had been taken from Judah (1:8-12)
- III. First call to repentance (1:13-20)
 - a. Joel charged the priests with the responsibility of leading the people in repentance (1:13ff)
 - b. It was time to cry out to the Lord; even the animals were already doing so
- IV. The day of the Lord (2:1-11)
 - a. The day of the Lord was coming against the people (judgment)
 - b. When God's army is loosed on a nation, it is utterly destroyed
- V. Second call to repentance (2:12-17)
 - a. Emphasis placed on the heart turning to God with actions to show that change (2:12-13)
 - b. God is merciful; when people repent, He considers relenting the punishment (2:13)
- VI. Promise of blessing (2:18-32)
 - a. If the people chose to repent, God would richly bless them
 - b. The restoration of the land would bolster their faith (2:27)
 - c. God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh (2:28-32); this is referenced in Acts 2 by Peter
- VII. Victory promised to God's people (3:1-21)
 - a. God promised to protect and save His people (Israel) while judging all other nations
 - b. Though these prophecies had no physical fulfillment, they were fulfilled spiritually in Christ

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Repentance requires a change of heart and actions to demonstrate the change (Luke 19:1-10).
- 2.) God must punish those who are evil, but He desperately wants them to repent (2 Peter 3:9).