

MINOR PROPHETS – STUDY 1

JOEL

INTRODUCTION. V 1 - 3

Joel has a wonderful name meaning “Jehovah is His God”. The opening verse of his prophesy indicates a man in touch with God. “The word of the Lord that came to Joel”.

It is difficult to give an accurate date for the writing of this prophesy as Joel himself gives no link to Kings of the nation or other prophets as some of the other writers of the minor prophets do. Most studies indicate an early date of writing which would agree with the position of the book amongst the other prophecies. He probably spoke in the 9th century B.C. and would be amongst the prophets who spoke in the period before the exile.

Most references in the book lead us to accept that he was speaking to the part of the nation known as Judah (the two tribes or southern kingdom) rather than Israel (known as the ten tribes or northern kingdom). See refs to Judah ch 3 v 1 v 6 v 8 etc to Jerusalem see 2 v 32 3 v 1 v 6 and to Zion 2 v 1 v 15 v 23 etc. These are all names associated with the southern kingdom.

Joel claims divine inspiration for what he writes. See V 1. There can be no greater authority. We are reminded that whether in the old or new testament “all scripture is given by inspiration of God “ 11 Tim 3 v 16.

Joel’s writing is inclusive – v 2 “old men” “your fathers” v 3 “your children”.

Joel’s writing covers many generations – although writing to a present generation he will speak of a previous generation “your fathers” and a number of future generations “let your children tell their children, and their children another generation”. God’s word is unchanging irrespective of the day in which I live.

CONDITIONS PRESENT V 4 – 13

The **land** has been devastated. One enemy after another has attacked and these are likened unto an attack by locusts v 4. Note there are not four different insects but rather four stages of the development of the locust in view. Each seems to bring a progressive destruction. What one stage has left another comes to further destroy. V 7 The vine is waste, the fig tree clean bare. Often Israel was attacked by the same enemy. Locusts are often associated with divine judgment see Ex 10 v 4 (one of the plagues in Egypt) also Rev 9 v 3 when the fifth angel sounds. We today need to be alert to attacks from Satan. Sometimes he attacks as “an angel of light” 11 Cor 11 v 14 or as a “roaring lion” 11 Peter 5 v 8.

Their **lives** have been devastated. Note the refs in this section to “weep”, “howl”, “mourn”, “lament”. V 5 v 8 v 9 v 10 v 11 v 13. The illustration used is of a young woman losing her husband see v 8.

Their **love** for the Lord is affected. V 9 indicates that the people have stopped offering their sacrifices. Sad to note what is said of believers at Ephesus “left thy first love” Rev 2 v 4.

COMING DAYS – 1 V 14 TO 2 V 32

Joel directs us to future times “the day of the Lord”. This is found 20 times in the bible – 16 in the Old and 4 in the new yet Joel speaks of it 5 times 1 v 15 : 2 v 1 v 11 v 31: 3 v 14. Other prophets refer to this day often using the expression “in that day”. This day of the Lord will be a day when God pours out judgement both on the nation of Israel and on Gentile nations. It will commence when the believers are taken to heaven at the rapture so covers events like the great tribulation and the glorious appearing.

This day is marked by **Destruction** 1 v 14 – 20. No meat or joy v 16. No sowing or reaping v 17. Herds and flocks perish v 18. This must lead to great famine amongst the people.

By **Darkness** 2 v 1 – 11. Such a time seems to be described for us in other scriptures – see Isa 13 v 10 : Eze 32 v 7 / 8 : Amos 5 v 20 : Zeph 1 v 15. In the new testament we also read in Matt 24 v 29 “Immediately after the tribulation of these days shall the sun be darkened” and in Rev 6 v 12 “the sun became black as sackcloth of hair”.

By **Deliverance** 2 v 12 – 32. The people are instructed to **repent** v 13 “rend your heart” note it has to be genuine “not our garment”. This will lead to a **re-gathering** v 15 – 17 “blow the trumpet” “gather the people”. All are included elders, children, bridegroom and bride, priests and ministers. The **reproach taken away** v 19. God moves “I will send you corn and wine and oil”. The **removal of the enemy** v 20 the “northern army” is driven back. This defeat is also spoken of by Ezekiel in chs. 38 & 39 of his prophesy. We read of such a defeat where 5/6 of the enemy forces are destroyed and it takes 7 months to bury the dead and 7 years to burn the weapons. The nation now **rejoices** v 21 & v 23 “be glad”. **Restoration** is a feature v 25. The “I will” of God is seen as in v 19 & 20. What the enemy had progressively attacked God reverses. There is finally a **revelation** of the Spirit. This section has had a partial fulfilment in Acts but the powers so evident in that day will be replicated in the day of the Lord. **Redemption** will be afforded v 32 “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered”. We remind our hearts that this was the message Peter preached in Acts 2 and Paul quoted when writing Romans 10.

CONCLUDING EVENTS – CH 3

The days are future “in those days” v 1.

It is still a time of gathering and a number of peoples are mentioned.

V 1 There is a gathering of the Jewish people – “Judah and Jerusalem” back to their land and their own city.

V 2 The location is “the valley of Jehoshaphat” – this is the Kidron Valley which is located between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Familiar because we remember the Lord Jesus Christ here just before Calvary. It is to this mount that the Lord Jesus returns at his manifestation – see Zechariah 14 v 4. At that time he will gather all nations before Him – see Matthew 25 v 32. This will be to execute judgment on the peoples of earth as to how they have treated the Jews during the period of great tribulation v 49 “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me”.

V 4 - 8 Near neighbours are gathered. “Tyre and Zidon and all the coasts of Palestine”. Tyre and Zidon would be modern Lebanon and coasts of Palestine the Gaza strip.

V 9 – 13 The heathen are gathered despite their protestations. They will fight and makes weapons – v 10 “beat your plowshares into swords”. This is the opposite of what happens in the millennial reign – see Isa 2 v 4 “they shall beat their swords into plowshares”

V 14 So great is the company the prophet cries “multitudes, multitudes” and all are gathered now before God.

V 15 – 16 The one who on earth was the Lamb of God and who went silently to the cross as a sheep dumb before her shearers will now “roar out of Zion”. The lamb has become the lion and final judgments are complete.

V 17 The Lord dwells in Jerusalem. The place where they cried “let him be crucified” Matt 27 v 23. During this great period his people will know :

1. **His provision** – v 18 “the mountains shall drop down new wine”
2. **His protection** – v 20 “Judah shall dwell for ever”
3. **His presence** – v 12 “for the Lord dwelleth in Zion”

