

SPIRITUAL RESTORATION

Midwest City Free Methodist Church

Introduction to the Prophetic

I. Background to Joel

A. The Locust Plague - *Joel 1:1-20*

1. A call to wake up and mourn
2. A call to fast and wail
3. A call to repentance - changing the way we live

B. The Day of The Lord - *Joel 2:1-27*

1. A day of the Lord
2. A day of clouds and blackness
3. A day of shaking and thundering
4. A day to gather the people in a sacred assembly
5. A day to rend our hearts to God
6. A day of blessing to those who follow God by faith.

C. The Holy Spirit - *Joel 2:28-32*

1. On all people (or flesh) - everyone who has faith
2. Sons and daughters will speak (or prophesy)
3. Old men will dream dreams
4. Young men will see visions
5. Men and women will serve in the Spirit of the Lord

D. The Judgment of Day - *Joel 3:1-21*

1. A gathering of all nations - justice
2. A redeeming of the lost - mercy
3. A showing from Zion - theophany
4. A blessing from God - grace

II. The Prophetic Word

A. God speaks to communities of faith

1. We are saved in community - **witnesses of grace**
2. We live our faith in community - **acts of love**
3. We worship God in community - **expressions of love**

B. God speaks about relationships in covenant

1. God calls a person into a special relationship with Himself
2. God gives the person a blessing of grace
 - a. The forgiveness of sins
 - b. The righteousness of Christ
 - c. The infilling of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The promise of everlasting life
3. God assures the person of His covenant with them
 - a. Word of God - God speaks of His promises
 - b. Holy Spirit - God speaks of His presence
 - c. Church - God speaks of His purpose
4. God defines the person's character by revealing His character
5. God speaks to the person - a prophetic voice

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“Desert Times”
Joel 1:2-20

- I. Summons to Hear (v. 2)
 - B. To Four Generations in the Community — elders, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren (v. 3)
 - C. The Crisis — locusts, locusts, locusts, locusts — successive waves of locusts (v.4)
 - 1. Cutting, swarming, hopping, destroying
 - 2. Devouring all in their path
 - 3. Plague that will affect every part of society causing starvation, poverty and disease
- II. Summons for the Community to Lament (v. 5-14)
 - A. The damage inflicted by the locusts
 - 1. Vines and fig trees — symbol of prosperity
 - 2. Fields of wheat and barley — daily provision and sacrifices
 - 3. Groves of olive, pomegranate, palm and apple
 - 4. Will affect food supply, trade, and worship
 - B. First class of people affected — drunkards (vv. 5-7)
 - 1. Will suffer because of their dependence — grape vines will be destroyed
 - 2. Any supply will be restricted and the prices will go up
 - D. Second class of people affected — farmers (vv. 11-12)
 - E. Third class of people afflicted — priests (vv. 17-20)
 - 1. God is the only source of hope
 - 2. Gather the community — elders and all inhabitants of the land
 - 3. Set apart a time of fasting
 - 4. Pray — cry out to God
- III. The Day of the Lord is Near (vv. 15-20)
 - A. The Day — judgment is forthcoming
 - B. Without God — joy and gladness cease — all celebration is gone
 - C. Return to God — lament — repent (*Deuteronomy 8*)

*With our lips let us sing one confession, with our hearts hold to one truth alone;
For He has erased our transgression, claimed us and called us His own, His very own.*

People of God, called by His name,

Called from the dark and delivered from shame;

One holy race, saints everyone, because of the blood of Christ Jesus the son.

Hear us, O spirits of darkness, so you will know where we stand:

We are His servants, purchased with scars,

Bought by the blood of the Lamb, the blood of the Lamb.

People of God, called by His name,

Called from the dark and delivered from shame;

One holy race, saints everyone, because of the blood of Christ Jesus the son.

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Coming Home Joel 2:1-32

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love and he relents from sending calamity.”

Joel 2:13

I. About Joel

- A. We don't know much historically
 - 1. Son of Pethuel
- B. One of the Minor Prophets
 - 1. Augustine first called the shorter of the twelve prophets “minor”
- C. Probably Ministered in Judah around 400-350BC
 - 1. Some scholars place him after exile
 - a. No reference to kings
 - b. Places priests and elders in authority - *Joel 1:13,24,2:16-17*
- D. Joel means - “Yahweh is God”

II. A Prophecy for Israel

- A. A warning - *Joel 2:1-2*
 - 1. Applies to us as well as Israel - *Joel 2:1* (for the day of the Lord is coming)
- B. God is going to lay waste to the land - *Joel 2:3*
- C. This is also a strong warning to us - *Joel 2:3*
 - 1. Is also a last days prophecy - *Matthew 24:29*
 - a. Horses in *Joel 2:4* like *Revelation 9:7*
 - 2. Day of the Lord is:
 - a. Great - *Revelation 7:17* - For those washed in the blood
 - b. Dreadful - *Matthew 7:21-23*

III. Rend Your Heart

- A. “Even now,” declares the Lord, “Return to me with all your heart”
 - 1. “Even now” said another way, “After all you’ve done”
 - 2. It doesn't matter what you’ve done
 - a. God is always watching and waiting - *Pdsalm 14:2*
 - b. No sin is too bad to be forgiven - *Mark 3:28-19*

B. Not your garments

- 1. Not external but internal - *Joel 2:13*
 - a. Not let's make a deal - true repentance
 - b. Stop everything (even the wedding)

C. God is patient - *Joel 2:13*

- 1. Not slow - *II Peter 3:9*

IV. Restoration (Coming Home)

A. God promises to restore Israel - *Joel 2:19*

- 1. Grain - Jesus the bread from Heaven - *John 6:35*
- 2. New wine - the Gospel - *Matthew 9:17*
- 3. Oil - the Holy Spirit - *Hebrews 1:9*

B. God promises to restore us - *Psalms 23* (He leads, we must follow)

- 1. God restores us to the original image in His Son - *Galatians 3:26-27*
- 2. God has glory awaiting in us - *Romans 8:18* (it's already there)
- 3. God has called the whole earth to restoration - *Acts 2:14-21*
 - a. Signs to unbelievers and seals believers - *II Corinthians 1:21-22*
 - b. Spirit convicts unbelievers - *John 16:7-8*

C. Welcome Home - *Luke 15:11-31*

- 1. God wants an intimate relationship
- 2. God wants us to return home to him, where we belong

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The Valley of Decision

I. The Three Valleys

A. The Valley of Judgment (Jehoshaphat) - *Joel 3:1-8*

1. God will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem.
2. God will gather the Nations who helped to destroy Israel:
 - a. Scattered the Jewish people
 - b. Divided up the promised land
 - c. Bought and sold the Jewish people
 - d. Carried off the treasures of the Temple
3. God will rescue the sons and daughters of Judah

B. The Valley of Decision - *Joel 3:9-16*

1. God will gather the Nations for war.
2. God will reveal Himself in full view of creation.
3. God will be a refuge and stronghold for His people.

C. The Valley of Life (acacias) - *Joel 3:17-21*

1. God will bless His people with new life.
2. God will forgive His people and dwell with them.

II. Between Judgment and Life

A. A Time for Choosing - *Deuteronomy 28:1-6*

1. Blessed in the city and country.
2. Blessed in children and harvest.
3. Blessed in receiving and giving.
4. Blessed in coming and going.

B. A Time for Reflecting - *II Corinthians 13:5-6*

1. Giving thanks for God's grace.
2. Confessing any hidden sins or unforgiveness.
3. Asking for the mercy and pardon of God.
4. Resolving to receive grace and obey God.
5. Developing disciplines for accountability and growth.

C. A Time for Faith - *II Corinthians 6:1-2*

1. We choose God over the world (and everything else).
2. We choose grace over law.
3. We choose love over fear.
4. We choose hope over despair.

D. A Time for Action - *I Peter 4:19*

1. We give God control of our lives.
2. We give God our energy and devotion.
3. We give God the best we have.
4. We give God everything.