



Joel & Malachi

**The Old Testament Prophets of The
Coming Day of The Lord**

FAITH COVENANT CHURCH

Spring 2023

Joel & Malachi- The Old Testament Prophets of The Coming Day of The Lord

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. ~Malachi 3:1

Lesson Plan

Lesson	Subject	Verses
1	Locust Plague	Joel 1:1-2:11
2	Answered Prayer	Joel 2:12-32
3	The Coming Day of The Lord	Joel 3:1-21
4	God Disrespected	Malachi 1:1-2:9
5	God's Charges of broken Covenant	Malachi 2:10-3:12
6	The Coming Day of The Lord	Malachi 3:13-4:6

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Introduction

The prophet Joel is identified in this book only through his father in verse 1 which states “The word of the Lord came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.” Otherwise, there is little known about the prophet Joel. Most likely he was from Judah because there is no mention of Israel. His words are referred to only once, in the New Testament, in Acts 2:16.

It has been surmised is that this book was written somewhere in the 9th century BC. It is possible it was written during the early days of Joash. This reasoning comes from the lack of references to the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Syrians.

Joel does mention the Philistines, Edomites, Phoenicians, and Egyptians which sways to accepting the time frame 835-800 B.C.

The people of Judah regarded locusts as God’s judgment on their sins. Joel used this disaster to show the people of Judah their need to repent.

Some think since Malachi's name translates to “*my messenger*”, that perhaps it wasn't in actuality his name, but a title given to the one who wrote the prophetic book. There is little personal information known about Malachi the prophet, but from cultural clues of the time, it's been determined that he preached this message around 440 to 400 B.C., in Jerusalem. The people had returned from exile in Babylon, but their land was still being restored, and their faith was in shambles.

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Lesson 1

The Locust Plague Described

The Invasion

Read Joel 1:1-12

Note: some information on locusts, mature locusts have a 4 inch wingspan, and are 3 inches long, they look like grasshoppers, they can turn the sky black as they jump up to search for vegetation to devour, they can soar up to 5,000 feet, a swarm can contain 1 billion creatures weighing 3 million pounds, they can travel up to 60 miles in one day, and they can take down crops at 250 feet per hour, and they must taste pretty good too (See Matthew 3:4)

1. Where else in scripture are swarms of locusts mentioned? What does this tell you about the mention of locusts?

Exodus 10:3-17, Revelation 9:1-12 (Possibly). God uses plagues of locusts to display His power (Romans 9:17), to call upon His people to repent and turn to Him (Joel 1:5, 8, 11). Joel also uses this to remind the people that this devastation is small compared to God’s future judgement/

2. What 4 types of locusts are mentioned? What do you think is meant by the different types of locusts?

The locusts swarm (in ESV cutting locusts), Great locusts (In ESV swarming), the young locusts (In ESV Hopping), and other locusts (In ESV destroying). Possibly the 4 empires that would rule over God’s people (Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece, and Rome) or the destruction of the invasion will be complete, nothing will be left.

3. What do you know about the use of the symbols and/ or metaphors of “vines” (Vineyard), and “Fig trees”? Use scripture to help understand their uses in verses 7, 11, & 12

They are usually symbols for Israel (Isaiah 5:7, Jeremiah 24:4, Hosea 9:10), or metaphors for Israel’s sin & Judgement (Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 15:1-8, Matthew 21:33-46, Luke 13:6-9)

4. What are you “mourning” and “grieving” for in your world? What are or will you do about it? Personal. Certainly, repent and take it to God.

Lesson: _____

Difficult times in life are meant to turn you from self to God

The Call to Repent

Read Joel 1:13-20

5. What is fasting? What occasions did Israel fast for?

Denying of self, to better align your life with God, and His will, a sign of penitence & humility. Only required was on Day of atonement (Leviticus 29-31), but also done in times of calamity (Judges 20:26, 2 Samuel 12:16, Esther 4:3, 16, Jeremiah 14:12, Zechariah 7:3, John 3:4-5)

6. When and how should you fast? See Matthew 6:16-18

Personal. When I need to turn my heart to God & not the ways of this world, or for a battle with sin, I am encountering. So others do not know I am fasting, only God.

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Lesson 1

The Locust Plague Described

7. What is “the day of the LORD”?

A time in history where God personally intervenes to accomplish some specific aspect of His plan. Such as in divine judgements, or Christ’s return to Earth.

8. “The day of the LORD is near,” how are you preparing for that day?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

The day of the LORD terrifies His enemies, and encourages His people

The Army Described

Read Joel 2:1-11

9. What is darkness a symbol, or metaphor for here? See also Amos 5:18, Zephaniah 1:15, Isaiah 50:3, and Jeremiah 2:6

Distress and suffering, and a common prophetic figure used for the day of the LORD.

10. What advancing army might Joel be describing?

Immediate seems to be the Babylonian army, but the imagery appears to point to the close of times. (See Revelation 9:3-10), they are at the call of God.

11. What do you learn from the question, “who can endure it?” See also Ezekiel 22:14, Nahum 1:6, Zephaniah 2:11, and Revelation 6:17

There is no escape, except turning to God. Everything will be destroyed.

12. How does the imagery of this fierce army encourage or motivate you?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

The only way to survive God’s army’s attack is to turn to God in repentance

Challenge: How will you lament for your sins before God this week?

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Lesson 2

Answered Prayer

Last time we were introduced to God’s prophets Joel, and Malachi, and discussed the locust plague upon the people of Judah, and Joel’s call for repentance. Today we are going to look into answered prayer, by God’s compassion, great deeds, and restoration.

God’s Compassion

Read Joel 2:12-17

1. What is the difference in rending your heart versus rending your garments?

Rending of garments is an outward sorrow or regret of sin, to rend your heart is to repent and turn from your sin. In other words, “change your life, not just your clothes”

2. What do the following verses tell you about repentance?

Isaiah 59:20: The redeemer only comes for those who have repented of their sins.

Ezekiel 18:30: Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall.

Acts 26:20: demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.

Romans 2:4: God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance

2 Corinthians 7:10: Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation

3. What do you learn about God’s abounding love from the following verses?

Psalms 52:8: In God’s unfailing love, we can flourish.

Psalms 86:5: God is forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to Him.

John 3:16-17: God loves everyone so much, He sent Jesus into the world to save us.

Romans 5:5: God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:8-11: God is love. Because of His love, Jesus is our atoning sacrifice.

4. How do you respond to others when they ask, “where is your God” when bad things happen?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God stands ready to forgive and bless, if only people would repent & turn to Him.

God’s Great Deeds

Read Joel 2:18-27

5. What does “the LORD was jealous for His land” mean?

The jealousy of God is His holy commitment to His honor, glory & love manifested in His people’s salvation, and just condemnation of those who oppose Him.

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Lesson 2

Answered Prayer

6. What does God promise to restore in these verses?

Blessings (Verse 19), Peace (Verse 20), Joy (Verse 23), Life (Verse 26), a right relationship with Him (Verse 27)

7. How should believers wait patiently, in the present, for God’s promises to be fulfilled? See also Psalm 37:7, Romans 8:24-25, and Ephesians 4:2

Be still before the Lord, not fretting when evil people succeed (Psalm 37:7), in Hope (Romans 8:24-25), Humble, gentle, and bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)

8. How has God made His presence known in your life?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God’s great deeds a far greater than any worldly deeds

God’s Restoration

Read Joel 2:28-32

9. When, and where in scripture, did the Apostle Peter use these verses? Why did Peter use these verses?

On the day Pentecost, in Acts 2:16-21. To explain God’s Holy Spirit being poured out on people, and that they were not drunk as believed.

10. What other events in scripture did darkness accompany? What do you learn about darkness from these verses?

Jesus died on the cross (Matt. 27:45), When Egypt judged (Exodus 10:21-29), When the Lord came down on Mt. Sinai, and gave 10 commandments (Exodus 20:21, 24:15-16), God’s covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:17-18). Darkness often accompanies serious, important events.

11. What important event might God’s wonders in the heavens, and on the Earth be pointing to?

Jesus’ return to Earth to establish His kingdom.

12. Who do you know, who has not called on the name of the Lord? How, and with what urgency will you guide them to make this life, and death decision?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God’s Spirit is poured out on all who call on His name, guaranteeing what is to come.

Challenge: How will you return to God, with all your heart, this week?

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Lesson 3

The Coming Day of The Lord

Last week we studied God’s answer to prayer, by His compassion, great deeds, and restoration. This morning we will delve into the coming day of the Lord, including God’s judgement, the proclamation of war, and God’s blessings.

God’s Judgement

Read Joel 3:1-8

1. What time is “In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem”? Explain your answer.

God’s time of judgement at the end of times. The end of chapter 2 described, the day of the Lord, when all who call on the Lord’s name will be saved, then continues in chapter 3 to judgement of nations.

2. What do you learn about God from this passage?

He is the restorer of fortunes for His people, the ultimate judge of nations, He has been patient with sinful nations but when His patience runs out, He will judge quickly, He is perfect in all of His ways, and everything belongs to God.

3. What do you know about the nations God mentions in verse 4 (Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia)?

Initially part of the promised land (Gen. 49:13, Josh. 13:6, 19:29, 40-43) and have had tumultuous history with Israel, Tyre & Sidon are in Southern Lebanon, the regions of Philistia is in the Palestine ran region of the Gaza strip. Yes they are still enemies of Israel, Lebanon is home to Hezbollah, and the Gaza strip is ran by Hamas, both militant terrorist groups opposed to Israel.

4. Who do you know, and how can you present the truth to them, that one day, God’s patience will end, and He will judge the nations, and individuals who are against Him?

Personal. With gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)

Lesson: _____

God’s judgement is surely coming for those who have chosen to be His enemies.

Proclamation of War

Read Joel 3:9-16

5. When will peace in the Middle East occur? How will it come about?

When God judges the nations who are Israel’s enemies. God will bring His people Israel together to boldly battle Her enemies, but God will Judge & destroy them.

6. Does Joel 3:10 contradict Isaiah 2:4? Explain your answer.

No. These are prophesies from different periods in the end times. Joel 3:10 is during the tribulation period, especially as Israel prepares for the battle of Armageddon, and Isaiah 2:4 is during Christ’s millennial reign.

7. What does verse 13 mean? When will this happen? See Revelation 14:15-19, 18:5, 19:15-20
God’s enemies’ sin has reached His appointed time of destruction. This will occur at Jesus’ 2nd coming to Earth, and His millennial reign.

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8. How does knowing God is your refuge, encourage you to live for Him today?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God has declared and will wage war against all who are against Him, and His people.

God's Blessings

Read Joel 3:17-21

9. What specific ways does God promise to restore & bless Judah?

No more foreign invasions (17), mountains drip with new wine& hills flow with milk, ravines run with water & a fountain flows from God's house watering the valley of acacias (18), Egypt desolate & Edom deserted (19), Judah inhabited forever (20)

10. Which of the promises above have been fulfilled? When have they, or when will they be fulfilled?

None. They will be fulfilled when God has done away with sin, in the New Heaven & the New Earth. (New Jerusalem.)

11. What do you learn about God from these verses?

He is the Mighty Judge, who will destroy His enemies, and the compassionate, loving God, who shelters, and blesses His children in abundance.

12. How are you comforted, or challenged by God and His judgement?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God will judge His enemies, and bless His faithful

Challenge: How will you prepare for the coming day of the Lord this week?

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Lesson 4

God Disrespected

Last week we finished the book of the prophet Joel, by looking into the coming day of the Lord, to include God’s judgement, the proclamation of war, and God’s blessings. Today, we will begin the book of Malachi, and study how God is disrespected by the doubting of His love, unacceptable sacrifices, and priests who are failing in their duties.

God’s Love Doubted

Read Malachi 1:1-5

1. What were the people of Israel’s attitude towards God? What was God’s attitude toward Israel?

The people were spiritually discouraged and doubted God’s covenant love for them. God loved them, as evidenced by His covenant choices with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

2. What does it mean when God says He hated Esau? See also Romans 9:9-16

God blessed Esau greatly (See Genesis 33:9, 36:1-43), yet He favored him less than Jacob in the sense of His covenantal blessings. God chooses who He wills and rejects others.

3. Was Esau or Jacob worthy of God’s love? What do you learn from this?

No. God’s love is steadfast, and constant, His mercy, compassion, and grace are great.

4. What ways has God shown His love in your life?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God’s relationship with His people is based on His grace, not their goodness.

Unacceptable Sacrifices

Read Malachi 1:6-14

5. What point is Malachi making in verse 6, about a son/father and servant/master?

If honor is given to a sinful person, how much more honor should we give to God?

6. What were the Israelites commanded to offer to God? Why would God require this? Use scripture to answer.

Leviticus 22:17-25 and Deuteronomy 15:21-19 you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep, or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. Numbers 18:29-Give the best of the everything the priests receive. These sacrifices pointed forward to God giving us His best in Jesus, it is only proper that man give Him their best. You honor God w/ your best-Proverbs 3:9

7. What do you learn about God from these verses?

He deserves and is worthy of our best. He is Almighty, He is a great King. His name is to be feared, and great in all nations.

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Lesson 4

God Disrespected

8. What are some modern-day ways we may not honor God? How can you honor God by giving Him your very best?

No tithe (rob God-Malachi 3:8), disobey His laws, wrong motives in doing the right thing (my glory, not God's). Personal.

Lesson: _____

God does not accept man's token offerings; He desires & deserves only our very best.

Priests Condemned

Read Malachi 2:1-9

9. Who is this message directed to? What were their responsibilities, and what did God want them to do?

The priests. Spiritual leaders of the people, and as such should set a good example in honoring & worshiping God. Resolve to honor His Name.

10. What were the consequences of disobeying God? See also Deuteronomy 27:15-26, 28:16-19
God will curse them and rebuke their descendants. A curse from God possesses an inherent power of doom & destruction.

11. How does God reveal His mercy in these verses? Why would God do this?

He gave them warning (verse 4) of what would happen if they did not honor Him. Because of His covenantal promises with Levi, and mercy is part of His character.

12. What ways can you show greater faithfulness as God's representative in the world today?
Personal.

Lesson: _____

Godly leadership should be a source of good, not harm.

Challenge: How will you revere the name of God this week?

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Lesson 5

God’s Charges of Broken Covenants

Last time we opened the book of Malachi and discussed how God is disrespected by the doubt of His love, unacceptable sacrifices, and God condemned the priests. This morning we will look into God’s charges of broken covenants, by unfaithfulness, the denial of God’s justice, and the robbing of God by withholding tithes.

Unfaithfulness

Read Malachi 2:10-16

1. Why is God concerned with how we treat each other?

It reveals out attitude towards Him. How can we love & honor God when we can treat other people the way God says to.

2. Why is the marriage covenant important to God? See also Ephesians 5:21-35, Hebrews 13:4

It is a covenant before Him, it is an earthly representation of Jesus’ permanent union to His church, and again, if we can’t be faithful to our spouse, how will we ever be faithful to God.

3. Were the people truly repentant because God no longer looked on their offerings with favor? Why or why not? See also 1 John 4:20

No. they were sorry for their sins against God, but failed to repent, and turn from them, and back to God. They wept, and wailed only because God did not show favor to their offerings.

4. What does faithfulness in your relationships look like?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

Marriage God’s way should be carefully promoted and protected.

Denial of God’s Justice

Read Malachi 2:17-3:5

5. How do people today weary God with their words?

Say what is evil, good, and good is called evil. God’s gospel is being watered down. God’s patience & justice is criticized.

6. Who does “my messenger” refer to? Why?

Possibly Elijah (Verse 4:5), but more than likely John the Baptist (Matthew 11:7-14)

7. What do you learn about God’s justice from these verses?

God is quick to judge, and He alone testifies against the sins of sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, those who defraud laborers, oppress widows, and deprive justice for foreigners.

8. How has God refined, and purified your heart?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

We must rely on God’s grace to purify us, not our own abilities.

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Lesson 5

God’s Charges of Broken Covenants

Robbing God

Read Malachi 3:6-3:12

9. Why did God not destroy Israel for its sin?

Because He is unchanging, and is faithful to His covenant promises, even when His people are not. His character is unchangeable, and His love is unconditional.

10. How did the Israelites turn away from God’s decrees in the following verse?

Psalms 106:35-36- Worshiped idols and false gods

Ezra 10:10- Unfaithful, in marrying foreign women

Ezekiel 22:29- Extortion, robbery, and oppression of the needy

Numbers 25:1- Sexual immorality with foreign women

Psalms 10:2- Arrogance and pride

11. What New Testament verses do you know that give additional insight into tithing?

2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Matthew 6:2-4; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Philippians 4:19

12. What is a steward? How are you being a steward with the blessings God has given you?

A caretaker who has been entrusted with his master’s possessions.

Personal.

Lesson:

Believers should support God’s work with their time, energy, talents, gifts, and money.

Challenge: How will you seek to honor God’s covenants this week?

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Lesson 6

The Coming Day of The Lord

Last week we saw a few broken covenants with God, such as faithfulness, denying God is just, and Robbing God by withholding of tithes. Now we will finish Malachi, just as we did Joel, by discussing the coming day of the Lord, beginning with man’s arrogance, then God’s restoration of the faithful remnant, and closing with the announcement of the coming day of the Lord.

Arrogance

Read Malachi 3:13-15

1. How did the Israelites speak arrogantly against God?

Serving & being obedient to God is not producing the promised results.

2. What motivation did the Israelites have for serving God? What is your motivation to serve God?

Self-serving, what is in it for me.

Personal

3. How do people act pridefully against God today?

Refuse to acknowledge God; try to make Him in their own image; exalt evil is good, and good is evil; take credit for successes in life; Believe in self, and abilities.

4. How do you speak arrogantly against God?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

Serving for one’s own gain is futile and will quickly be given up.

Restoration of The Faithful Remnant

Read Malachi 3:16-18

5. What could have those who feared the Lord been concerned about? How did God calm their fears?

That they would be swept up in judgement with the rest of the evil in their nation. A scroll of remembrance was written in God’s presence, they would be spared as His treasured possession.

6. What lesson do you learn from these verses?

Though a nation may turn away from God, often times a remnant of faithful believers remains. God will not abandon His faithful remnant,

7. What other scripture do you know where God distinguishes between the righteous, and the wicked?

Genesis 4:4-16-Cain & Abel; Genesis 7:1-7-Noah; Genesis 19:1-29-Lot & his family after Abraham argued with Him about sweeping away the righteous with the wicked; 2 Samuel 3:1-David & Saul.

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Lesson 6

The Coming Day of The Lord

8. What encouragement do you have as a faithful remnant to God in a nation that is turning from Him?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God honors those who honor Him.

The Coming Day of The Lord Announced

Read Malachi 4:1-6

9. What day is referred to in verse 1?

Judgement day when all the evil will be judged by God for all they did in life.

10. What will happen on that day to the wicked? What will happen to the righteous?

They will be completely destroyed, there will be nothing left of the wicked. The Sun will heal them and they will frolic, and trample on the ashes of the evil.

11. What final reminder does God give? What do you learn from this warning?

Remember the law of my servant Moses. Ignorance of the law is never an excuse, and the Bible tells us everything we need to know to live a Godly life, the Bible is enough!

12. How are you preparing for the great and dreadful day of the Lord?

Personal.

Lesson: _____

God is merciful, and gives opportunity for repentance, right up until the end.

Challenge: What will you do this week to look forward to the coming day of the Lord?