

Pastor Craig Schill
Lake Cities Community Church

Introduction to the Book of Joel

Joel is one of the “minor prophets.” The difference between “minor” and “major” prophet is only in the length of the book; not in the importance of the message. All revelation from God is inspired and profitable!

It is difficult to know exactly when Joel was writing. As you may recall, after the death of King Solomon, David’s Kingdom was split into two groups – 10 of the tribes were in the north (Israel) and two in the south (Judah). Both kingdoms, because of disobedience, were punished by God and sent into exile at different times.

Was Joel writing to Israel or Judah? Before or after the exile?

Some scholars hold that Joel was written very early (9th century B.C.) many years prior to either Judah or Israel going into exile. Others hold that it was written after Israel had gone into exile (722 B.C.) but before Judah was invaded by Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar (maybe written around 597 B.C – see 2 Kings 24). Your pastor prefers this dating. Perhaps Daniel and his friends were infants during the great locust disaster of chapter one? In this case the people did not repent as they were encouraged to do (Joel 2:13).

Other scholars hold that Joel was written after the exile and their return to the land (the time of Ezra and Nehemiah) and after the reconstruction of the Temple (the temple is functioning in the book: 1:9, 13-14; 2:17). The army (Joel 2:11) could therefore represent many nations who have sought to scatter God’s people.

Overall, the dating of the book is unsure. But it does not at all diminish the purpose of the book, which transcends time and place:

Joel wrote this book in order to call God’s people to repent and turn from their sin; because sin brings God’s judgment and repentance brings restoration and blessing.

That is still true today. I pray you will greatly enjoy and be challenged by our study through the Book of Joel.