

Minor Prophets Summer 2025 - Lesson 8

Locust Invasion - Joel 1-2:17

Theme Verse: "Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." (Joel 2:13 - ESV).

The Book of Joel appears between Hosea and Amos. While Hosea and Amos preach repentance to Israel, Joel proclaims repentance to Judah. Almost nothing is known about Joel other than that he was the son of Pethuel and a prophet of the Lord. The name "Joel" means "Yahweh is God." Joel is a contemporary or near contemporary of both Hosea and Amos. Joel proclaims that the invasion of locusts foreshadows the great and coming Day of the Lord. Joel's description of the locusts is echoed in Revelation 9. Using some of the best poetry found in the Bible, Joel calls for all to repent.

Martin Luther wrote about Joel, "All the prophets have one and the same message, for this is their one aim: they are all looking toward the coming of Christ or to the coming kingdom of Christ... So every time the prophets announced something bad or something good, they intended one to look at the kingdom of Christ" (AE 18:79).

1. How can God use both good and bad events in our lives to help us look to Christ and His kingdom?

Wail and Lament

Read **Joel 1:1-4**. The Hebrew text uses four different words to describe the locusts. When locust swarms occurred, they were devastating to crops and vegetation. The locusts ate anything in their paths.

2. What does *four* swarms of locusts suggest about the extent of devastation?

Read **Joel 1:5-7**. The account of the locusts is intended to wake the people up from their slumber. The drunkards here do not refer to people who are currently intoxicated with alcohol; rather, the drunkards are those who are drunk on life, those who are used to fine living and having an abundance of things.

3. Why does Joel tell the drunkards to wake up and weep?

Call to Repentance

4. Read **Joel 1:13-20**. The wearing of sackcloth and fasting were outward signs of repentance. In the New Testament, the Church continued to fast. What is the connection between these outward acts and repentance in the heart?

Read **Joel 2:1-6**. Joel's vision here about the coming Day of the Lord is not exclusive to the Final Day of Judgment, although it applies to that as well. He is also referring to anytime the Lord visits His people. Peter calls the Day of the Lord "the day of visitation." The Lord's visitation can either be a day of grace or a day of wrath.

5. Think of those times in Scripture when the Lord visited His people. Were those visits days of grace or of wrath?

Read **Joel 2:7-11**. Notice how the coming day of the Lord affects the earth. There are earthquakes, disturbances in the sky, the sun and moon are darkened. God's power causes the whole of creation to quake - this has been shown especially at Jesus' death and it will be even more earth shattering when Jesus returns. Until then we remain in the "end times" awaiting that day.

God's Word for Today

The theme of repentance runs throughout Hosea, Joel, and Amos. The Reformation and every other restoration of the Church have begun with repentance. The Church belongs to Jesus; she is His holy bride and the gates of hell will not prevail against her.

6. Read **Joel 2:12-19**. This text is the appointed reading for Ash Wednesday. How do we know that we have a gracious Lord?
7. Notice how the prayer highlights the Lord's promise. "Spare your people, O Lord, and make not Your heritage a reproach... Why should they say among the people, 'Where is their God?'" (v.17). How does this teach us to pray in our daily lives?

In Closing

- Consider the state of the world & signs of the end times. Pray for the repentance of the Church and the promotion of the saving Gospel of Jesus among all people.
- Read Joel 2:18 - 3:21 for next week.

Prayer: O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

This study is based on:

"God's Word for Today: Hosea, Joel, and Amos - Faithfulness amidst Unfaithfulness."