

LESSON TEXT: Joel 1:1---3:21
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Joel, a prophet to the nation of Judah, wrote his clarion call to repentance about 830 B.C. during the reign of Joash (grandson of Jehoram & Athaliah). Queen-mother Athaliah (the daughter of Jezebel) murdered many of her own grandchildren to keep them from coming to the throne. Joash, son of Ahaziah, was stolen away as a baby, and hidden in the Temple for 6 years. When Joash was 7 years old, Jehoida, the high priest, Joash's uncle, managed to get Athaliah removed from power, and placed Joash on the throne. Jehoida was the real ruler as long as he lived. He directed the child-king in all his administrations. Under the tutelage of Jehoida, Joash cleared the land of Baalism, repaired the Temple, and restored the worship of God. But after the death of Jehoida, Joash fell into apostasy and set up idols. The princes who had known the licentious worship of Ashtoreth were the ruin of Joash, who even ordered Zechariah, son of Jehoida, to be stoned to death. And within a year after Zechariah's death, the Syrians came and plundered Jerusalem, slew the princes, and executed judgment on Joash, because he had forsaken the Lord. Joel prophesied when Joash was about 20 years of age.

An appalling famine, caused by an awesome locust plague, followed by prolonged drought, had devastated the land. Joel proclaimed these "natural" disasters as God's call to the people of Judah to repent. Their religious revival had turned to dead formalism and idolatry. God desires a **sanctified** people through whom he may fulfill his day-of-Pentecost covenant promises of **redemption** for the whole world. When they repent, God redeems them. This is the constant program of God--judgment, repentance, redemption. This method reached its **perfection** (fulfillment) in the Messiah, his redemptive work, and his spiritual kingdom the NT church. Joel predicts the Messianic kingdom. Joel was commissioned to preach the **ultimate act of God's conquest over the powers of world darkness**. BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL AND LEARN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS!

"An awakened sense of dependence upon God makes for a genuine religious experience"

---Yates, in *Preaching From the Prophets*

QUESTIONS:

1. Does God really send upon the world such things as locust plagues? 2:11
2. Name 5 reactions God expected to elicit from Joel's audience, 1:5,8,11,13,14
3. What has a locust plague to do with the day of the Lord? 1:15; 2:1,11
4. What does repentance involve, according to Joel? 2:12
5. Is there some question as to whether the Lord will bless those who repent? 2:14
6. Why does Joel suddenly, in the midst of contemporary promises (2:18-27), skip down 830 years later to predict the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:14-21?
7. When are the portents of 2:30 to occur? What are they?
8. When are all the nations to be gathered into the valley of Jehoshaphat? 3:1-3
9. When is the Lord to roar from Zion? 3:18 How?
10. When will strangers never again pass through Jerusalem? 3:17

"The Yezidi sect among the Kurdish people has a strange religion that is a mixture of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Islam, with a few "faiths" as well. They think that God takes no part in the affairs of men but leaves everything to his seven angels. The most important of these is Malak Tatus who fell from his angelic estate but repented. They believe he repented so thoroughly that his tears put out the fires of hell."

---1000 Windows, Robert Shannon.

Christians know from historical certainty that their repentance puts them within the grace of God through the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by which they escape the fires of hell.

---PTB