

I. Joel

- a. Purpose: We will look at the authorship, purpose, structure and other aspects of the book of Joel so we would be more familiar with this part of the Bible and yearn to study it for ourselves.
- b. Authorship
 - i. About Joel
 1. Little is known about him.
 2. The name Joel means “Yahweh is God.”¹
 3. The book does not give any dates.
 4. He ministered during a time when the Temple was present (**Joel 1:9, 1:13-14, 16**) demonstrating that the book was written either before 586 or after 515 BC.
 5. Conservative Bible scholars have taken the view that it was written during the 9th Century BC.²
 6. It seems that Joel was from Judah.
 - a. In **Joel 1:14** Joel commands the priests to gather an assembly to the Temple. This would have to be in Judah.
 - b. In **Joel 2:15** Joel commands a trumpet be blown in Zion. This would be in Judah.
 - ii. Reasons why it is written by Joel
 1. Reason 1 why it is by Joel: It was to Joel that the Word of God came to in this book: “*The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:*” (**Joel 1:1**)
 2. Reason 2 why it is by Joel: The New Testament attribute the book of Joel to Joel: “*but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:*” (**Acts 2:16**)
 - a. This is spoken by Peter during the day of Pentecost.
 - b. Peter then quotes from **Joel 2:28-32**.
 - c. Notice Peter said this “*was spoken of through the prophet Joel.*”
- c. Purpose
 - i. According to Richard Mayhue: “The Day of the Lord in retrospect and prospect.”³
 - ii. According to John Walton: “Joel’s concern throughout the book was to address ‘the day of the Lord.’ The locust plagues was the beginning and judgment would get worse.”⁴
 - iii. According to Walter Kaiser: “The book is written to explain the cataclysmic plague of locusts that hit the Judean countryside (Joel 1:2-4). However, it looked beyond this immediate circumstance to an

¹ Michael Grisanti, “Joel” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 14947.

² Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 152.

³ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 81.

⁴ John Walton, “Ezekiel” in *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 595.

eschatological ‘day of the Lord’ when God would judge all the nations of the earth.”⁵

d. Structure

i. Short outline⁶

1. Day of the Lord in Retrospect (1:1-2:17)
2. Day of the Lord in Prospect (2:18-3:21)

ii. Longer outline⁷

1. Superscription (1:1)

a. A Locust Invasion Signals the Day of the Lord (1:2–2:17)

- i. Call to Mourning and Prayer (1:2-20)
- ii. The Announcement of the Day of the Lord (2:1-11)
- iii. A Call to Repentance and Prayer (2:12-17)

b. God Delivers and Vindicates His People (2:18-3:21)

- i. The Lord's Restoration of His People (2:18-27)
- ii. The Lord's Vindication of His People (2:28-3:21)
 1. The Outpouring of the Spirit (2:28-32)
 2. The Divine Judgment of the Nations (3:1-21)

e. Closer look at Joel

i. Locusts

1. There's debate of whether the locusts in chapter 1 and 2 refer to actual locusts or human armies
2. Chapter 1 seem to describe a literal swarm of locusts
 - a. Joel 1:4-13 describes the locusts' devastation.
 - b. Joel 1:16-20 continue describing the locusts' devastation.
 - c. There's nothing in the passage that states these locusts are symbols of something else.
 - d. Instead we see the locusts being symbolized as something else: *“Its teeth are the teeth of a lion, And it has the fangs of a lioness.”* (Joel 1:6b)
 - e. Thus this seems likely to be literal locusts.
3. Chapter 2 also seem to describe a literal swarm of locusts
 - a. There's nothing in the passage that states these locusts are symbols of something else.
 - b. Locusts are explicitly mentioned as the army of the Lord: *“Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you..”* (Joel 2:25)⁸

⁵ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 158.

⁶ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master's Seminary), 81.

⁷ Michael Grisanti, “Joel” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 14972-14981.

⁸ Michael Grisanti, “Joel” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 14994-14995.

- c. Instead we see the locusts are being compared to human armies in **Joel 2:4-7**.⁹
 - d. Thus this seems likely to be literal locusts.
 - ii. Day of the LORD
 - 1. The big announcement: “*For the day of the Lord is coming; Surely it is near*” (**Joel 2:1b**)
 - 2. There is nothing like it according to **Joel 2:2b**: “*There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.*”
 - 3. This involves God’s judgment of sins upon Israel according to **Joel 2:3-17**.
 - 4. There is no mention of specific sins of Israel in this book.
 - 5. The Day of the Lord also involves God’s judgment upon the Gentiles according to **Joel 3:1-17**.
 - 6. Yet there is also in the end restoration according to **Joel 3:18-21**.
- f. Place of this book in the Canon
 - i. Though a small book the theology of Joel was foundational for many of the teachings in the New Testament.
 - ii. The sound of the trumpet on the day of the Lord which is taught in **Joel 2:1** is elaborated upon in **1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 8:6-11:19**.¹⁰
 - iii. The judgment of Gentiles taught in **Joel 3:1-14** is elaborated upon in **Matthew 25:31-46**.¹¹
 - iv. The darkening of sun and stars taught in **Joel 2:30-31, 3:15** is elaborated upon in **Luke 21:25, Revelation 8:12**.¹²
 - v. The shaking of the earth taught in **Joel 3:16** is elaborated upon in **Hebrews 12:26**.¹³
 - vi. An end time’s army of locusts like horses taught in **Joel 2:4** is elaborated upon in **Revelation 9:7, 9:9**.¹⁴
 - vii. The calling of the name of the Lord for salvation taught in **Joel 2:32** is elaborated upon in **Acts 2:21, 2:39**.¹⁵
 - viii. The prophecy about the coming Spirit taught in **Joel 2:28-32** is partially fulfilled in **Acts 2:14-41**.¹⁶

⁹ Michael Grisanti, “Joel” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Location 14998.

¹⁰ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 158.

¹¹ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 158.

¹² Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 158.

¹³ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 158.

¹⁴ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 159.

¹⁵ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 159.

¹⁶ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 159.