

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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The Book of Joel

Not much is known about Joel other than he is the son of Pethuel. Dating the book of Joel depends upon one's interpretation of God's "great army" of locust, canker-worms, caterpillars, and the palmer-worm (cf. Joel 2:25). If this "great army" is the Babylonians, then the date would likely be during a similar time of Jeremiah (~ 610 to 586 BC). There are hints that the Babylonians may be under consideration in the book itself. Joel refers to God's "great army" as a "nation" (Joel 1:6) and then again as the "northern army" (Joel 2:20). We know that the Babylonian nation is often referred to as the army from the "north" in the writings of the Major Prophets (cf. Jer. 10:22). Then again, if Joel is speaking about a literal insect attack, there is virtually no telling when the book was written (Joel 1:7). Many have concluded, with little evidence, that the book was written as early as 830 BC. We do know that Joel belongs among the books of the Bible. The apostle Peter quotes from Joel 2:28-32 at Acts 2:17ff. The apostle Paul quotes from Joel 2:32 at Romans 10:13. Said quotations from the apostles of Jesus Christ indicate the divine origin of Joel's work.

Gloomy Days for God's People

Joel chapters 1:1 through 2:11 paint a vivid picture of doom and gloom upon the land and inhabitants of Palestine. God's "great army" of locust, canker-worm, caterpillar, and the palmer-worm (whether literal or figurative) cause widespread desolation upon the land. This "great army" is well organized and determined to achieve its purpose of desolating the land (cf. Joel 2:4-11). The destruction caused by this army is seen in that grazing fields, grain, new wine, oil, fig, pomegranate, palm, apple, "and even all the trees of the field are withered" (Joel 1:8-12). Joel depicts these days as "darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness..." (Joel 2:2). A land that has been desolated of all vegetation will surely cause famine to settle in among the inhabitants (Joel 1:15). Joy and laughter is no where to be found (Joel 1:15). Israel faces dark, gloomy, and depressing days. Joel writes, "for joy is withered away from the sons of men" (Joel 1:12b).

The Cause for all the Doom and Gloom

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors. We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

Pat Robertson received a favorable report on the biopsy that she had done this past Monday. The mass was found to be benign. Thanks for all your prayers.

We welcome Tony and Rachael (Michael and Caty) Bender to our number. Their address is: 207 B. Thor Shepherd AFB, Tx. 76311

Last Sunday of the month Singing is tonight! Be sure to get with one of the song leaders and make your request early.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

Joel writes, “*turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God;*” (Joel 2:12). The prophet’s request, by inspiration, for God’s people to repent suggests that the cause of all this doom and gloom is their sin. The lesson we learn is no different that that which we learn when studying virtually every book in God’s word. That lesson is that God wants man to serve Him not because it is what he has always done, to get gain, or to mechanically worship God without a real interest, but rather God wants man to serve Him because this is truly one’s desire to do so. I can certainly “*rend the garments*” in an outward show of humility and sorrow over what has been revealed as wrong in my life, yet no man may see the inward callous heart of apathy. God thereby desires that the man or woman that would serve Him should be torn at heart over his violations of His will. Samuel had instructed Saul to have such a heart at I Samuel 15:22-23. David expressed such true sorrow as recorded in Psalms 51. The prophet Isaiah prescribed such a heart at Isaiah 57:15 and 66:1-2. The apostle Paul spoke of such a humble hearted disposition at II Corinthians 7:10.

The Blessings and Future Joy for those who Humble themselves to God

Joel delivers a message of hope and happiness to the downtrodden and depressed people who have been devastated and desolated by the northern army. There will come a great day of blessings. God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon men and women, young and old, slave and free (Joel 2:28-29). Those immersed in the Holy Spirit will deliver a soul-saving message through prophesy, dreams, and visions. Peter quotes from these verses in Joel at Acts 2:17-21. Those who recognize the words of revelation as divine help shall “*call*” upon the name of Jehovah God by invoking and appealing to the Lord for help (Joel 2:32). All of humanity needs help in areas of emotional strain, temptation, persecutions, and most importantly the forgiveness of one’s sins. Those who so call upon the name of the Lord shall indeed be saved (Acts 2:21). Joel defines said saved individuals as people “*whom Jehovah doth call*” (Joel 2:32b). While the gospel calls all to obtain salvation, not all hear, believe, and receive it (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14). Those who reject God’s message will be figuratively placed in a wine vat and treaded down by God’s judgments of condemnation (Joel 3:12-13). Those who gladly receive God’s instructions will be filled to complete satisfaction with the Spirit-filled word of God (Joel 3:18; Eph. 3:19; 5:18; Col. 1:9). There will be unity among baptized believers who are forgiven of their sins, and they shall be clean and separate from the ungodly (Joel 3:17, 20). The prophecy of Joel has been fulfilled. Jesus has shed his blood upon the cross that man may be forgiven of his sins (Col. 1:20-22). Those who call upon the name of God today will never be disappointed (cf. Ps. 3:1ff; Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-13; I Cor. 1:2; II Tim. 2:22).

John C. Robertson