

The Book of Joel

Notes for 23 May

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Read: [Joel](#)

Welcome to our first foray into the (I don't want to call them Minor) the writings of prophets that wrote smaller scrolls. (Just in case you were wondering, the first scroll was written, in Egypt, around 2500 BCE. The *Diary of Merer* was an administrative text)

Background

It is mostly believed that Joel wrote when Joash ruled, though that king is never mentioned. He is one of those prophets who does not seem to be connected to any ruler. His writing indicates he was familiar with Jerusalem and with the temple. Other than the name of his father and the hopes expressed by the people who named him. know nothing about Joel's personal life.

Lenses

Object Lesson/Literary Devices

1. An object or circumstance can be a report of one event or that event can be an example of one of more events in the future (ie locusts).
2. Physical descriptions can have conceptual or spiritual meanings.
3. Trumpets can be warnings, call to a meeting, announcement of Sabbath or other holidays.
4. Locusts are most notably mentioned in Hebrew texts here in Joel and the eighth plague of Egypt. The first was on Egypt at the end of Moses's discussion with Pharaoh. The second was to Israel in Joel.
5. Couplets – The second line reinforces the first line.

View of God

We have at least two possibilities.

1. When a person or a people choose not to be part of the convenient of Yahweh, they are vulnerable to destructive event because by their choices they remove themselves from a relationship with God. God calls them to make a choice to be in

covenant so Heaven can keep them safe. God takes responsibility for what allows when people make destructive choices.

2. God sends destructive events as punishments. People change their ways because they don't want any more punishment.

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

1. Obedience and punishment
2. Self interest – reward based
3. What are social expectations
4. Maintaining social order
5. Decisions are guided by higher ethical principles and individual rights – beyond societal laws.
6. Universal ethical principles – the greater good outweighs personal risks.

Translation of Names

1. Lord- Yahweh – Corporate and personal convenient relationship with commitments and benefits.
2. Joel 1:15 – name means Shaddai – leader of Heaven's armies. Imbued with androgynous physical qualities.
3. Joel – name means Yahweh is God
4. Joel 1:13 – God Elohim - majesty

An Invitation

Often we research esteemed commentators to see what they think. I am wondering what you think of having us just share our understandings, thoughts, and opinions... ie become the esteemed commentators.

Questions

1. Given that the only other plague of locusts mentioned to these first readers of Joel, was at the end of the time in Egypt why do you think Joel used the event that as happening physically to mean something spiritual. What do you think was the meaning?
2. Why call out "drunkards" who are wailing because "the new wine has been snatched from your lips"....

3. Where have we heard the terms new wine? What do they mean?
4. Vs. 7 what does it mean that the fig tree's bark has been stripped away?
5. Vs. 8 Virgin/betrothed...where have you heard this metaphor
6. Vs. 9 - What would it mean that grain offerings and burnt offerings are cut off from the house of the Lord?
Note: This description has the feeling of the first words in Ruth...and for the same reason.
7. Vs. 13 – God =Elohim – Majesty and power. Why are the priests the ones who should be mourning?
8. What do you think is the meaning of the grain offerings being withheld from the house of God.
9. Vs. 14 Repeat of the call in vs. 1...why use the term the Lord your God....this goes right back ...to Genesis 1-3...the name is a potent mix and spiritual lesson
10. Vs 15....why do you think the Covenant God – and the Lord of Heaven's armies.
11. Why do you think it is the Yahweh iteration of God that Joel chooses to call on?

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 – if you think in terms of Hebrew couplets – This chapter is the "second line"... Given that this is written in a scroll form you wouldn't have the chapter split to separate the meanings. For instance darkness and gloom parallels the devastation by the locusts in chapter 1.

Come Home! Vs. 12

This call of Yahweh has another illustration centuries later in the story of the prodigal son. The father did not force the son to live in a penury living with pigs on corn husks. He waited and worried and watched for his child to return...same here.

- Vs. 12 – Why the use of the iteration Yahweh in this verse?
- Vs. 13....the couplet – what does rend your heart and "return" have to do with each other?
- In vs. 13 at what stage of moral development do you think the people addressed here were?
- Vs. 15 and 16 – why do you think this particular mix of people were included?
- 16. Vs. 17 – what is the function of the priests who minister before the Yahweh?

Note: The area between the portico and the altar of Burnt offerings was considered a highly sacred section of the court of the priests. Its elements included: the laver where the priests washed their hands and feet before any of the sacred duties inside the sanctuary or the altar. The sacred threshold was where the priests would stand and weep offering intercession for the people and the nation. Non-priestly folk would bring their offerings of the first fruits.

- Verses 19 through 24 are focused on the ways God is healing Their injured people. What are the ways God is acting here that you find particularly interesting?
- Verse 28 to 32 – the reaction of the people....What do you think this says about God's character.

Chapter 3

1-16 The sentence on the people who insisted on harming those who follow the principles of love.

Verses 17 to 21 – The blessings on God's people...it might be helpful to note that nations mentioned in this kind of literature are both geographic and behavior based.

You will see this kind of language in the prophetic books. For the first time I saw the progression of the focus. Just hadn't picked it up before.

Final questions:

1. What do you think was the stage of moral development displayed by Joel.
2. What do you think was the stage of moral development described in:
 - a. The children of Israel
 - b. The people who declared war against them.