



Bible Books Chapter by Chapter Series

JOEL

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart."

Course Text: Joel

Outline:

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Chapter 1 – A Plague of Locusts
2	Chapter 2 – Call to Repentance
3	Chapter 3 – Judgment & Final Blessings



יואל

The book of Joel has only three chapters with a total of 73 verses. His name, Joel, means The Lord is God. (Literally Jehovah is God) We know little else about him other than his father's name from verse 1. The date the book was written is a subject of a good bit of argument among Bible scholars. I think Joel was written about a hundred years before Hosea between 850 and 800 B.C. The message is clear regardless of the date. The overriding theme of the book of Joel is the Day of the Lord, a day of God's wrath and judgment. This is the Day in which God reveals His attributes of great anger, power and holiness, and it is a terrifying day to His enemies. The book is written almost entirely in the form of Hebrew poetry. Look for the parallelism in it.

Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's chapter aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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Lesson 1 – A Plague of Locusts - Joel Chapter 1

Please read Joel chapter 1 and answer these questions:

[1A] What happened to what the swarming locust did not eat?



[1B] What would make the drunkards cry when they woke up?

[1C] What is cut off from the house of the Lord?

[1D] All the trees dry up, but four are mentioned in particular. Name two of them.

[1E] Who was called to the house of the Lord for a fast and solemn assembly.

[1F] What other destructive force is compared to the locusts?

[1G] Describe a time in your life when it seemed you were visited by a "cloud of locusts" (i.e. a very great difficulty.) What impact has that time made on your walk with the Lord?

Think & Pray _____

----- ANSWERS -----

Lesson 1 – A Plague of Locusts - Joel Chapter 1

[1A] What happened to what the swarming locust did not eat? The young locust ate it. Jl 1:4

[1B] What would make the drunkards cry when they woke up?

Nothing left to drink. The locust got it all. Jl 1:5

[1C] What is cut off from the house of the Lord? The grain and drink offerings. Jl 1:9

[1D] All the trees dry up, but four are mentioned in particular. Name two of them.

2 of fig, pomegranate, palm and apple. Jl 1:12

[1E] Who was called to the house of the Lord for a sacred fast and assembly. All living in Judah Jl 1:14

[1F] What other destructive force is compared to the locusts? Fire Jl 1:19 (or flame)



[1G] CLOUD OF LOCUSTS For me perhaps it was the time when the church I was pastoring was failing and I had to re-enter the workforce as a computer programmer, my daughter was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, and my son was on his way to fight in the Iraq war. The Lord brought me through it to serve in the jail ministry, which really is much better suited for me and my personality than being a church pastor; my daughter's courage and cheerfulness in the face of her disease has made me extremely proud and inspired me, and my son came home safely with almost all of his men, thanks to many miracles from God. My faith is much stronger now because of all this.

For further thought:

(1h) According to Joel 1:3 who is responsible for informing the next generation about the mighty acts of God? In your opinion, how good of a job are we doing with that?

(1i) Dressing in uncomfortable clothes (sackcloth was rough and itchy) and fasting (going without food as a religious activity) is mentioned in this chapter. Do you think these are things we should do today as God's people? Why or why not?

(1j) Joel 1:20 says, "Even the wild animals cry out to you." Does this mean that animals can and do pray?

(1k) Except for verse 1, chapter 1 is entirely in the form of Hebrew poetry. Can you find the parallelism in it?

Lesson 2 – Call to Repentance - Joel Chapter 2

[2A] Besides fire the locusts are likened to another destructive force. What? An invading army Jl 2:4-11

[2B] The Lord declared that they were to return to him with what? All their heart Jl 2:12

Doing what? Fasting, weeping, mourning and breaking their heart instead of their clothing. Jl 2:12-13

In that culture rending (tearing or ripping) a garment was a sign of extreme grief and sorrow

[2C] They were to return to the Lord our God because He has what attributes?

Gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, rich in love, and relenting of sending disaster. Jl 2:13

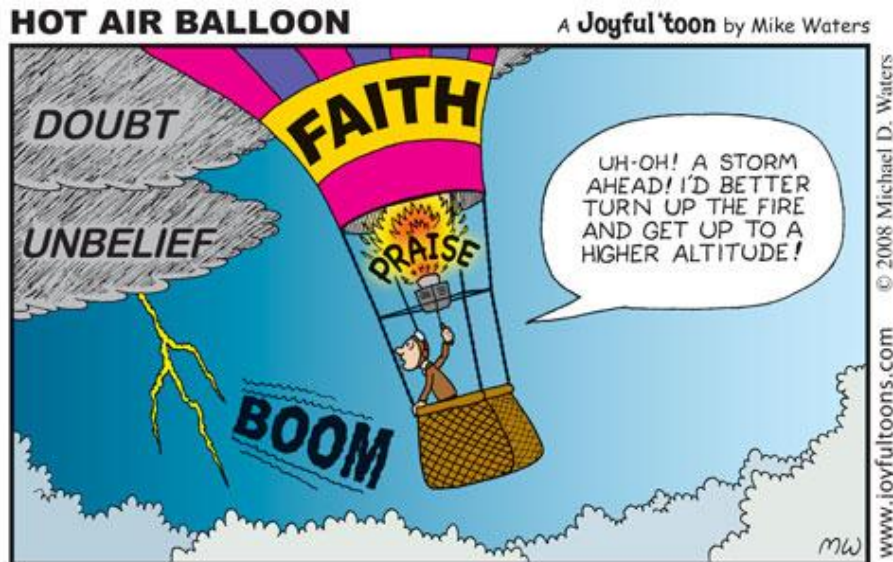
[2D] Because the Lord does great things we can rejoice and be glad and not be afraid. Jl 2:21

[2E] Where did the "great army" of locusts come from? God sent them. Jl 2:25

[2F] After God restores His people, how much will there be to eat? Plenty Jl 2:26

[2G] In the great and awesome day of the Lord, who will be delivered out of the danger and destruction?

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord. Jl 2:32



Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,
- ROMANS 4:20 NIV

[2H] FIRE FROM ABOVE Joel 2:28 was quoted by Peter during his sermon at Pentecost. (Acts 2:17-18) He used it to explain the tongues of fire on the apostle's heads and the way they could speak many languages at the same time. God gives to each of us His Spirit when we are saved. He is not a respecter of persons. That is to say, He does not play favorites. Regardless of gender or circumstances He gives Himself generously to all who will receive Him.

For further thought:

(2i) In Joel 2:21 the people are instructed to be happy and fearless, but the deliverance from calamity is still in the future. God seems to expect us to be happy about what He has promised to do before it is done. (See also Philippians 4:4) How are you doing with that? Why?

(2j) Who is expected to listen to Joel 2:22? How is that possible and what is the significance of it?

(2k) In Joel 2:28 God says, "I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity." Does that mean everyone is going to be saved and go to heaven? How do you know?

(2l) Except for the first part of verse 18, chapter 2 is entirely in the form of Hebrew poetry. Can you find the parallelism in it?

Lesson 3 – Judgment & Final Blessings - Joel Chapter 3

Joel tells us that God’s ultimate judgment, which falls on the Day of the Lord, will be “great and terrible. Who can endure it?” (Joel 2:11). The answer is that we, on our own, can never endure such a moment. But if we have placed our faith in Christ for atonement of our sins, we have nothing to fear from the Day of Judgment. Without repentance, judgment will be harsh, thorough and certain. Our trust should not be in our possessions but in the Lord our God.

Please read Joel chapter 3 and answer these questions:

[3A] In the last days how many nations will be gathered? _____

[3B] Which nations are mentioned by name?

[3C] What causes the heavens and the earth to shake or tremble?

[3D] Some say that Joel 3:16 contradicts Joel 2:25. How would you answer this? (Hint Joel 2:13)
"The Lord will be a refuge for His people" vs. "My great army that I sent against you."

Think & Pray _____

Joel Conclusion:

[C1] Which verse would you select to memorize from Joel? Why?

Think & Pray _____

[C2] How can the lessons of Joel be applied to our own life?

Think & Pray _____

[C3] If someone asked you what Joel was about what would you say?

Think & Pray _____

If you have any questions, now might be a good time to discuss them with your classmates.

Lesson 3 – Judgment & Final Blessings - Joel Chapter 3

[3A] In the last days how many nations will be gathered? All of them Jl 3:2

[3B] Which nations will be judged? Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Greeks, Sabeans, Egypt, Edom Jl 3:4, 8 & 19

[3C] What causes the heavens and the earth to shake or tremble? The Lord's voice Jl 3:16

[3D] **JOEL vs. JOEL** "Slow to anger" does not mean never angry. God was trying to get them to repent so they would not spend eternity in Hell. He was trying to get them to come to Him for refuge. Sending the locusts was like a shepherd sending a dog to chase the sheep away from danger. I'm sure the sheep don't like the dog.

For further thought:

(3e) What does Joel 3:21 mean?

(3f) Joel 3:1 says that the things mentioned will happen when He restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem. I believe this includes everything from Joel 2:28 – 3:21. What do you think it includes? Why? Is it in the past, present or future? How do you know?

(3g) Except for verses 4-8, chapter 3 is entirely in the form of Hebrew poetry. Can you find the parallelism in it?

Joel Conclusion:

[C1] I like Joel 2:12-13 "Even now— this is the Lord's declaration— turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster."

[C2] What I learned from Joel is that I need to obey God, and when I am most confident I am obeying God, I need to examine myself carefully to see if I really am obeying God.

[C3] The overriding theme of the book of Joel is the Day of the Lord, a day of God's great anger and judgment. "God at times may use nature, sorrow or other common occurrences to draw us closer to Him. But in His mercy and grace, He has provided the definitive plan for our salvation—Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins and exchanging our sin for His perfect righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). There is no time to lose. God's judgment will come swiftly, as a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2), and we must be ready. Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7). Only by appropriating God's salvation can we escape His wrath on the Day of the Lord." (from GotQuestions.org)



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