



FROM RUIN

TO RENEWAL

THE BOOK OF JOEL



WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JOEL



- Appears in the first portion of the “Scroll of the Twelve”
- His name means “Yahweh is God” – perhaps indicating that the people’s sin was not acknowledging this fact in some way
- An actual natural disaster, perhaps signaling a greater disaster to come

## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JOEL



THE WORD THAT CAME

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

Joel 1:1

דָּבָרִיְהָ אֲשֶׁר קִיָּה אֶלְיוֹאֵל בְּרִפְתּוֹאֵל

- The word is active—it “came”
- Not any word—the word of Yahweh
- The prophet was the agent through whom Yahweh spoke



# THE WORD THAT CAME



A CALAMITY TO REMEMBER

<sup>2</sup> Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your ancestors?

Joel 1:2

<sup>3</sup> Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.

Joel 1:3



NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY

5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine; wail because of the new wine, for it has been snatched from your lips. 6 A nation has invaded my land, a mighty army without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness.

Joel 1:5-6

7 It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white.

Joel 1:7



A TIME TO MOURN

<sup>8</sup> Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the betrothed of her youth. <sup>9</sup> Grain offerings and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests are in mourning, those who minister before the Lord. <sup>10</sup> The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up; the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the olive oil fails.

Joel 1:8-10

11 Despair, you farmers, wail, you vine growers; grieve for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field is destroyed.

12 The vine is dried up and the fig tree is withered; the pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree— all the trees of the field—are dried up. Surely the people's joy is withered away.

Joel 1:11-12



COMMUNAL LAMENT

13 Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn;  
wail, you who minister before the altar.  
Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who  
minister before my God; for the grain  
offerings and drink offerings are withheld  
from the house of your God.

Joel 1:13

14 Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly.  
Summon the elders and all who live in the  
land to the house of the Lord your God, and  
cry out to the Lord.

Joel 1:14



THE DAY OF THE LORD

15 Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Joel 1:15



YAHWEH IS THE CAUSE

10 Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine.

Joel 2:10

11 The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty is the army that obeys his command. The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

Joel 2:11



“TROUBLING” TAKEAWAYS



Be careful not to apply Joel's language to every calamity in our lives—not all disasters should be laid at God's feet

- Sometimes, God is said to be the cause
- Sometimes, God allows, but Satan is cause
- Sometimes, they appear to be chaotic disruptions that are resisted by God—Jesus calmed the storm
- When God is cause, its purpose is reconciliation and renewal

## NATURAL DISASTERS AND GOD



Learn to discern God's voice in  
seasons of disruption

- Ask what God may be saying through disruption
- Joel challenges complacency—economic uncertainty, cultural shifts, moral confusion are moments for spiritual discernment
- Ask: what is God revealing about our dependence, priorities, and faithfulness?



# DISCERNING GOD'S VOICE



Move from individual faith to  
communal repentance and lament

- Spiritual renewal is a shared responsibility
- Churches are called not only to personal piety but to collective humility—confessing sins of pride, racial division, misuse of power, or neglect of the vulnerable
- Renewal in Joel begins when the whole community turns back to the Lord



**COMMUNAL LAMENT/REPENTANCE**



Recover a serious vision of the “Day  
of the LORD”

- The “Day of the LORD” is both warning and hope
- Guards against two extremes: fear-driven alarmism and casual indifference
- God’s holiness still matters – present faithfulness is shaped by future accountability
- Life, ministry, and ethics are lived before a coming day when God sets all things right



**DAY OF THE LORD**

- All prophets in the scroll of the 12 speak of some sense of disruption, which is an occasion and opportunity for repentance
- Repentance is returning from a humanly-crafted trajectory toward death to the way of life in covenantal relationship to God
- God's heart is always for human flourishing



**DISRUPTION, REPENTANCE, RENEWAL**



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