

A person is seen from behind, walking down a street that is completely covered in rubble and debris. On either side of the street are tall, multi-story buildings that have been severely damaged, with many windows missing and structural elements exposed. The sun is low on the horizon in the distance, creating a strong orange and yellow glow that silhouettes the person and the buildings. The overall mood is one of desolation and hope.

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 is some way
- An actual natural disaster, perhaps signaling a greater disaster to come

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JOEL

THE WORD THAT CAME

¹ The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

Joel 1:1

דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יוֹאֵל בֶּן־פֶּתוּאֵל

- 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

² 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

³ 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

⁸ Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the betrothed of her youth. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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, it's 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

A person is walking away from the camera down a street in a city that has been completely destroyed. The buildings on both sides are in ruins, with exposed rebar and crumbling concrete. The ground is covered in debris and rubble. In the distance, a bright sun is setting or rising, creating a strong orange and yellow glow that fills the sky and reflects on the wet pavement. The person is silhouetted against this light.

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