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# Joel

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## Author

The name Joel means The Lord is God or Jehovah is my God. Joel was one of the earliest prophets. Joel may have lived in or near Jerusalem since he often refers to it, though he does not state specifically where he lived. The book gives very little information or clues about him.

## Book Background and History

The timing of the events in Joel is uncertain. The locust plague might have been 9th century BC though it could as easily have been 5th century BC. The message is relevant regardless of the timing.

In the Middle East, locusts sometimes multiply to enormous numbers. They swarm across the land and devour all vegetation in their path even stripping bark from trees. There is no defense against them. It takes years to recover from their destruction.

## Key Verse

*Joel 1:4 What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten. (NKJV)*

## Key Word

The key word is "locusts." Locust means burners of the land.

## Book Highlights

Joel warned Judah that if they did not repent, God would bring another plague of locusts upon them. Judah appeared to think that the coming "day of the Lord" would be God judging pagan nations and the judgment would not include them. Joel tried to correct their wrong thinking insisting that their restoration would only come after God judged them and they repented of their sins.

Sin always threatens God's people. Unlike most of the other prophets, Joel does not give much detail about the sins in question. He seems to assume, "You know what you did."

## Book Outline

Alarm <b>Joel</b> <b>1:1-2:11</b>	Warning about Coming Plague "...sound an <b>alarm</b> ..." <b>[Joel 2:1]</b>
Appeal <b>Joel 2:12-17</b>	Call to Return to God " <b>turn</b> to Me with all your heart..." <b>[Joel 2:12-13]</b>
Aftermath <b>Joel</b> <b>2:18-3:221</b>	Hope of God's Future Blessing "...I will restore...I am the Lord your God...My people shall never be put to shame..." <b>[Joel 2:25-27]</b>

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## Personal Reflection and Application

Joel describes repentance as a tearing of our heart rather than external actions such as tearing clothing. He says,

*"...So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God..." (Joel 2:12-14).*

If we are truly repentant, our heart will break for our sins and how we have disappointed God. When you know you have disappointed God, does your heart break?

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## Small Group Conversation Guide

The more we are married to our creature comforts, the more difficult it is to part with them. They dull our spiritual senses. As Joel says, "awake you drunkards" ([Joel 1:5](#)). Which creature comforts do you find the most difficult to let go?

There's nothing wrong with creature comforts if they don't interfere with your relationship with God. Discuss times when your creature comforts have taken your eyes off God.

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## Leadership Principles from Joel

### Creative, Constant, Consistent

Just as Joel did ([Joel 2](#)), leaders can use current events to share timeless truth.

Creative	By using word pictures and creativity, you can capture people's attention.
Constant	Once you have their attention, you can constantly speak until they understand the point you are making.
Consistent	You can be careful to present a consistent message that points them toward God.

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## Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each chapter.  
Try these:

O1. How each generation is to pass God's word to the next	O2. What Joel lists as God's character qualities
O3. What God promised to do for Jerusalem someday	