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Article 29: Joel at a Glance

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JOEL AT A GLANCE

This book describes the results of a recent terrible locust plague which had utterly destroyed the crops of Judah, apparently sent from God to punish His people for their sins. He then urges them to repent and ask for divine deliverance. The prophet employs this plague as an illustration to predict a future invasion at which time enemy soldiers would cover the land as did the locusts, only to suffer total destruction by the God of Israel Himself.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

INSECTS AND END TIMES: HOW THE FIRST WAS USED TO ILLUSTRATE THE SECOND.

Sometime during Joel's ministry, the land of Judah was struck by a ferocious locust plague, more intense than any experienced before. Joel, under divine inspiration, compares that terrible locust plague to the coming tribulation period.

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Joel.** He predicted Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32), and coming events such as Armageddon (Joel 3:1-15) and the Millennium (Joel 3:18).
2. What? The **Book of Joel.**
3. When and where? 848 B.C., from Judah.
4. Why? To call the people back to God who were suffering from a locust plague due to sin.
5. To whom? The Southern Kingdom of Israel.

KEY EVENTS

1. The prophecy of Pentecost
2. The Battle of Armageddon and Israel's full restoration by God

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Joel:** prophet who used a locust plague in his day to illustrate the coming great tribulation and also predicted the Day of Pentecost which later occurred in Acts 2.

KEY PLACES

1. **Valley of Jehoshaphat:** thought to be synonymous with the Kidron Valley in the New Testament (see Jn. 18:1), where Joel predicts will be the scene of God's final victory over Satan during the Battle of Armageddon.

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. This book describes the second most severe locust plague in the Old Testament (1:4-13). For the worst, see Exod. 10:13-15.
2. Joel is the first biblical prophet to use the phrase, "the day of the Lord," a title describing the coming seven-year tribulation (1:15).
3. He depicts this terrible period in graphic terms:
 - *"A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds . . ."* (2:2)
 - *"The earth shall quake . . . the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withhold their shining"* (2:10)
 - *"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come"* (2:30, 31).
4. Joel also pinpoints the crucial action during the battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation in a place called the Valley of Jehoshaphat (3:2, 12). This place is thought to be an Old Testament name for the New Testament Kidron Valley (Jn. 18:1), which valley separated the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. In describing this bloody battle, Joel reverses the order of peace and war as depicted by Isaiah.
 - Note Isaiah's words in describing the millennium: *"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"* (Isa. 2:4).
 - Note Joel's words in describing Armageddon: *"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong"* (3:9-10).
5. Joel is known as the prophet of Pentecost, because his words about the Holy Spirit were later quoted by Simon Peter on the day of Pentecost (2:28-32). See Acts 2:17-21.
6. In glowing language he predicts the eventual regathering of Israel (2:18, 19, 25-27, 32), and the glorious millennium (3:18-21).
7. In essence, the book of Joel speaks of three all important days:
 - The day of Pentecost (literal 24-hour day)
 - The day of the Lord (the 7-year tribulation)
 - The day of Christ (the 1000-year millennium)
8. Hebrew scholar Ebenezer Henderson summarizes:

"In point of style Joel stands pre-eminent among the Hebrew prophets. He not only possesses a singular degree of purity, but is distinguished by his smoothness and fluency; the animated and rapid character of his rhythmus, the perfect regularity of his parallelisms; and the degree of roundness which he gives to his sentences. He has no abrupt transitions, is everywhere connected, and finishes whatever he takes up. In description he is graphic; in arrangement lucid; in imagery original, copious, and varied." (*The Twelve Minor Prophets.*" Baker Book House, pp. 90, 91)

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Amos:

- Both speak of mountains “dripping” with wine (3:18; Amos 9:13).
- Both say that the Lord will “roar” from Zion (3:16; Amos 1:2).
- Both declare that the day of the Lord will be dark, not light (2:2, 10, 31; 3:15; Amos 5:18, 20).

Isaiah:

- Both proclaim that “the day of the Lord” is at hand (1:15; Isa. 13:6) and that it is a day when the sun and moon will not give light (2:10; 3:15; Isa. 13:10).
- Both speak of the pouring out of God’s Spirit (2:28; Isa. 32:15; 44:3).
- Joel spoke of beating “plowshares into swords” in preparation for Armageddon (3:10). Isaiah, writing some 100 years later, reversed the saying and made it an image of millennial peace (Isa. 2:4; see Mic. 4:3).

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The Glorious Warrior (2:11)
2. The God of Armageddon (3:2, 9-15)
3. The Hope and Strength of Israel (3:16)
4. The One Dwelling in Zion (3:21)