

joel

who? where? when?

- Joel means 'The Lord is God'. Joel and his father are not mentioned outside this book and Acts 2:16.
- The prophet only speaks of Judah, so we can conclude he was sent only to Judah.
- The question of when Joel was written has confounded scholars for years. Where the dating to be important to God, He would have ensured a way of dating it. Since God gave us no definite date or clear reference to a known time, I feel we should conclude with Calvin that,

But as there is no certainty, it is better to leave the time in which he taught undecided; and, as we shall see, this is of no great importance.

plague

1. Read Joel 1:1-7. What happened to the land? What is a locust plague like? Read Exodus 10:3-6,12-20. How complete was the destruction against Egypt? What was it like? What did pharaoh recognize the plague as? How did God's people respond? Read Joel 1:13-15. Why must Joel call the people to seek God if they were already doing it? Why does Joel stress so much that the lessons must be passed on in Joel 1:3? Read Deuteronomy 4:7-10. Did the people obey? Read Deuteronomy 31:16-21.
2. Read Joel 2:1-5. What is the 'Day of the Lord'? Read Isaiah 13:1-10, Zephaniah 1:7-9,14-17. Is this picturing the locusts still or is it only looking to a future fulfillment? Note these descriptions are still consistent with locusts, but Revelation 9:1-12 picks up the imagery as looking to more than an immediate end. Read Revelation 9:7-9. What then is the purpose of this section?

penitence

3. Read Joel 2:12-17. What does it mean to rend your heart and not your garment? Compare and contrast these to examples: 2 Kings 19:1-4 and Matthew 26:62-66. What does Joel 2:14 mean? Doesn't God have to relent if we repent? Read Romans 9:10-24. Since Election will be preached this morning I will not go further, but rather would like this to prepare our hearts to receive the message today.
4. Note however what God leaves to those He shows mercy from. We spoke of the drink offering and how it symbolizes the pouring of our lives into God's service, and how this glorifies God by calling to mind what He has done. What about the grain offering? Leviticus 2,6:14-23 covers the details of this sacrifice, and it is interesting to note that is to be grain with oil, incense and salt but no yeast. We have spoken of how yeast points to false teaching, but what does salt ('salt of covenant' from Leviticus 2:13) point to? Ref. Mark 9:49-50. Salt is both a preservative and a seasoning which brings out the flavor of what it seasons. What does it then mean to have salt in our lives? What is incense and how was it used in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:1-10)? What was oil symbolic of in Zechariah 4? Now the key, what does scripture say about grain? Read Matthew 13:18-23. So what does it all mean?
5. Who is called to the sacred assembly before the Lord? What is the basis for God saving His people? Is this an unusual reason? Read Psalm 42:9-11, Micah 7:10, Numbers 14:13-19. What is the real basis of this reason?

promise

6. Read Joel 2:18-20. What is God's response to the evident repentance of the people? Is the northern army the locusts? Note that locust swarms would enter the land from the south or east, and human armies came from either the south (Egypt) or north (others). Read Joel 2:25. Does this have relevance to us? Read Matthew 19:28-30, John 16:20-23, Philippians 3:7-11. How does this fit in light of Romans 8:28?
7. Read Joel 2:28-32. This is quoted by Peter in Acts 2 with reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Who or what is excluded from the Holy Spirit's power? What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord? Read Romans 10:8-13
8. Read Joel 3:2-3. Who was Jehoshaphat? Read 2 Chronicles 20:14-24. Note that this event preceded Joel no matter which view of the date is taken (between 40-400 years). How is the imagery similar? Read Joel 3:13 and compare with Revelation 14:17-20. What is the conclusion in Joel 3:18-21?