

Introduction to the Book of Joel

01/26/20

by Eric Douma

Dating of Joel

Post-exilic (after 586 B.C.) proponents:

1. No mention of northern kingdom
2. References to priests not kings
3. No mention of Assyria, or Babylon
4. Claim Joel 3:2 refers to Babylonian invasion
5. Claim that mention of Greeks in 3:6 must imply post-exilic situation

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Dating of Joel

Pre-exilic (Before 586 B.C.) proponents:

1. Mention of Phoenicia, Philistia, Egypt, and Edom = 9th century
2. Reference to priests may fit 9th century situation when Athaliah usurped her son
3. Joel 3:6 mentions inhabitants of Israel being carried "far away" by Greeks
4. Evidence suggests Amos borrowed from Joel
5. Joel's style more like pre-exilic writers

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Structure of Joel

Broad View:

- I. Joel 1:1-2:11 Judgment on Judah
- II. Joel 2:12-17 Repentance
- III. Joel 2:18-3:21 Salvation

Near View:

- A. Judgment: Locust Plague 1:2-20
- B. Judgment: Northern Army 2:1-11
- C. Transition: Repentance 2:12-19
- B. Forgiveness: North Army destroyed 2:20
- A. Forgiveness: Locust damage restored 2:21-27

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Structure of Joel

Far View:

- A. Judgment: North Army destroyed 2:20
- B. Grace: Rain upon the land 2:21-27
- B. Grace: Pouring out of Spirit 2:28-32
- A. Judgment: Future enemies destroyed 3:1-21

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Theology of Joel

Covenant:

1. God judges covenant breaking: Deut. 28
2. God will restore graciously: Deut. 32
3. Salvation is of God not man: Ex. 34:6

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Theology of Joel

The Day of the Lord:

1. The Day of the Lord as judgment 1:1-2:11
2. The Day of the Lord as salvation 2:18-3:21
3. The need to repent/believe 2:12-17
4. The Day of the Lord is near/far

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Theology of Joel

Jerusalem will be established:

1. Promise to David will never be forsaken
2. God judges Jerusalem in short term
3. God will establish Jerusalem in the long term 3:16-17

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Theology of Joel

God will pour out His Spirit on all people:

1. Promise foretold Numbers 11:29
2. Promise foreshadowed pouring of rain 2:23
3. Promise fulfilled pouring out of Spirit 2:28

Joel as prophet speaks for God: 1:1

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