

The Voices of God to Israel: The Minor Prophets

7 – JOEL: INTRODUCTION

I. The Date of the Prophecy

- No information is given in the opening verses to establish the date of this prophecy.
- Scholars have proposed various dates ranging from the 9th to 2nd centuries B.C.
- Those who hold to a pre-exilic date look to its position in the Hebrew Old Testament.
- They also point to the naming of Israel's early pre-exilic enemies in the prophecy.
- Some scholars believe the prophecy was written in the aftermath of Judah's only ruling queen, Athaliah (835 B.C.).
- Hence, the lack of reference to a king and the reference to the elders.
- They also point to Joel's reference to the Temple which was destroyed in 586 B.C.
- Those who hold to a post-exilic date look to reference to elders instead of a king.
- They also point to passages that quote other prophets, including Ezekiel.
- The reference to Greek slave trade in Joel 3:6 reflects the post-exilic time period.
- In conclusion, it is impossible to be dogmatic about the date of Joel's prophecy.
- The legitimacy of Joel is reflected in its use by the apostle Peter in Acts 2.

II. The Prophet

- The name "Joel" means "Jehovah is God."
- We know nothing about Joel except that he was "the son of Pethuel."
- From internal evidence, some scholars believe that Joel was a priest or a son of a priest.

III. The Occasion for the Prophecy

- The prophecy was given with reference to a calamity that had engulfed the land.
- Deuteronomy records the covenantal agreement between the Lord and Israel.
- The land was devastated by locusts and drought and from fires.
- Some scholars think that the locusts were an invading army.

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- It is from this calamity that the prophet draws his lesson and the call to repentance.
- Unless there is repentance and righteousness from the nation, more judgment will come.

IV. The Message of the Prophecy

- The message of the prophecy is the doom of the nations and the ultimate glory of God.