

JOEL

SMALL BOOKS,

Big Voices





What is a “minor” prophet?



Earlier prophets (e.g., Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha) generally spoke to the king while later prophets generally spoke to the public or the nation.

The minor prophets are not lesser books with lesser messages, but shorter books.

While we might pick and choose our preferred press secretaries who speak for our preferred presidents, *the prophets speak for God*. We ignore them at our own peril.

Joel 1:1-4

¹The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

²**Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land.** Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your forefathers?



Joel 1:1-4

³ Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation. ⁴ What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.



Joel 1:6-7

⁶ A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness.

⁷ It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white.



Joel 2:3-9

³ Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden; behind them, a desert waste—nothing escapes them. ⁴ They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. ⁵ With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.



⁶ At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. ⁷ They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. ⁸ They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. ⁹ They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.



Joel has combined a description of natural and political disasters that would disrupt every bit of a person's and a nation's life.

Joel 1:16-20

¹⁶ Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes—joy and gladness from the house of our God? ¹⁷ The seeds are shriveled beneath the clods. The storehouses are in ruins, the granaries have been broken down, for the grain has dried up. ¹⁸ How the cattle moan! The herds mill about because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep are suffering.



Joel 1:16-20

¹⁹ To you, O Lord, I call, for fire has devoured the open pastures and flames have burned up all the trees of the field. ²⁰ Even the wild animals pant for you; the streams of water have dried up and fire has devoured the open pastures.



How is Joel speaking for God?

The prophet places God in these
devastating events.

Joel 2:11

¹¹ The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. **The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful.**
Who can endure it?



“To be a prophet is both a distinction
and an affliction.”

ABRAHAM HESCHEL

Joel 1:13-20

¹³ Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God.

¹⁴ Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. ¹⁵ Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.



The *Day of the Lord* was a decisive day of God's judgment not only *for* God's people, but *against* God's people.

Day of the Lord is...

- near (1:15; 2:1)
- destruction (1:15)
- darkness, gloom (2:2)
- great, dreadful (2:11)

The prophet is not simply one who speaks
for God, but who is a gift from God.

Joel 2:12-14

¹² "Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with *all your heart*, with fasting and weeping and mourning." ¹³ *Rend your heart and not your garments.* Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.



Joel 2:14

14 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God.



Repentance could change the *action* of God, but it did not change the *heart* of God.

Joel 2:18-22

¹⁸ "Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people. ¹⁹ The Lord will reply to them: "I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations. ²⁰"I will drive the northern army far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land, with its front columns going into the eastern sea and those in the rear into the western sea. And its stench will go up; its smell will rise." Surely he has done great things.



²¹ "Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the Lord has done great things. ²² **Be not afraid, O wild animals, for the open pastures are becoming green.** The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.



We know that God was so determined to be
seen and heard rightly that God sent His
Son.

Mark 1:12-13

¹² "At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, ¹² and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan.

He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.



Mark 6:39-44

³⁹ "Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.



And *we know* that God was so determined
to be *seen and heard widely* that God sent
His Spirit.

Joel 2:28-32 quoted in Acts 2:14-21

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

¹⁵ **These men are not drunk**, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷" 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.



¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!



Even if God is leading the charge of life's troubles, don't waste a day to turn to the Lord with your whole heart.

How can we apply Joel's message?



REPENT & WORSHIP

Place God first in practical ways.

(Joel 1:14; 2:13-16)



FACE THE CHAOS

Courageously seek God
in life's calamities.

(Joel 2:11 vs. Revelation 9:7-11)

**We are in the day of the Lord. Expect
changed lives and transformations. Expect
trial and challenge and spiritual warfare.**



PREPARE

Be ready for the *final*
Day of the Lord
(Joel 3; Rev. 6:15-7:10)

Revelation 19:11-16

¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.



¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.**
¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

