

Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 17, Joel

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 17, Joel, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's "Prophets, Session 17" focuses on the Old Testament book of Joel. The lecture introduces Joel as a literary masterpiece, despite being a minor prophet often overlooked. **Wilson highlights the locust plague described in Joel, connecting it to historical events and its significance as a harbinger of the "Day of the Lord."** He explores the theological contributions of Joel, especially concerning the Day of the Lord, and its relevance in Second Temple Judaism, as seen in the New Testament. **The lecture examines the cultural context of Joel's time**, including agricultural practices, the importance of figs and pomegranates, and societal responses to natural disasters. **Wilson also addresses the concept of fasting**, contrasting its outward practice with the prophetic call for social justice and genuine repentance.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Prophetic Literature).



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3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 17, Joel

Joel: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What makes the book of Joel unique among the minor prophets and why is it often overlooked by Christians?
2. Describe the locust plague that the speaker experienced as a child. How did this experience inform the way he understands the book of Joel?
3. How is the plague of locusts mentioned in the book of Joel related to the Passover celebration?
4. What is the key theological term in the book of Joel? Explain its significance in the context of the book.
5. Why is the name "Joel" significant? What does it mean, and what does the speaker say about names like his?
6. How does the book of Joel describe the destruction caused by the locusts? What specific aspects are emphasized?
7. Explain the significance of figs and pomegranates in the cultural context of Joel's time, and why their destruction was significant.
8. What connection does the speaker draw between the locust plague and the people's vulnerability to the Ba'al cult?
9. What is true fasting, according to Isaiah 58, and why is it important? How does this contrast with how fasting was often practiced?
10. How does the concept of the Day of the Lord evolve through the book of Joel, and how does it tie to the idea of God's intervention in history?

Answer Key

1. The book of Joel is unique because it focuses on a locust plague, a topic not always relatable to modern Christians, causing it to be overlooked. This plague is treated as a historical event that can speak to end-time events and an example of God's judgment.

2. The speaker experienced a locust plague as a child, where locusts made the highway slick and devastated vegetation. This personal experience helped him understand the dread and destruction the plague would cause, making him realize this was a real event.
3. The word "locust" is part of the annual Jewish Passover commemoration when reciting the ten plagues that helped release the Israelites from Egypt. Reciting the plagues, including locusts, makes this connection yearly to the Passover, and remembering the power of the divine that allowed their escape.
4. The key theological term in Joel is "Yom Yahweh," or the "Day of the Lord," which signifies God's intervention in history for judgment. It begins with the locust plague and extends into spiritual blessings for God's people, culminating in God's ultimate judgement at the end of days.
5. The name "Joel," meaning "Yahweh is God," is an affirmation of faith. Like other names of the time, such as Micah, Joel's name uses a divine name, serving as a confession of faith in ancient Israel and speaks to God's incomparability.
6. The locust plague is described with vivid detail, emphasizing its thorough destruction of agriculture: the land is burned brown, the vines and fig trees are stripped, and there is no grain, new wine or oil. The language used employs multiple terms for locusts and short, staccato sentences for dramatic effect.
7. Figs and pomegranates were important food sources in ancient Israel, with figs being a main source of sugar, and both were used for medicinal purposes. Pomegranates were also tied to cultural rituals like the blessing of new homes, which shows their importance.
8. The locust plague made the people more vulnerable to the Baal cult because Baal was seen as the god of nature and survival. When their crops failed and the land was desolate, people were tempted to turn to Baal because they felt that Yahweh had abandoned them.
9. True fasting, according to Isaiah 58, is not just about abstaining from food but is about actively working for social justice. It involves freeing the oppressed, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, showing that true devotion is reflected in practical love for others, not in outward shows of religious acts.

10. The Day of the Lord in Joel evolves from a present judgment in the form of a locust plague, to the future judgment of nations, to the end-time vindication of God's people. It consistently reflects God's intervention in history to judge and ultimately redeem, which includes not only the punishment of evil but also the salvation of God's people.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the use of literary devices in the book of Joel, specifically focusing on how the prophet's language and imagery contribute to the emotional impact of his message about the locust plague.
2. Compare and contrast the various interpretations of the Day of the Lord presented in the book of Joel, and discuss how these interpretations relate to the broader themes of judgment and redemption in the Old Testament.
3. Discuss the social and cultural context of the book of Joel, and explain how these factors might have influenced the prophet's message and the way his audience might have received it.
4. Examine the ways in which the book of Joel connects natural disasters, such as the locust plague, with divine judgment and repentance, and discuss the implications for contemporary views on environmental issues and spirituality.
5. Consider how the themes of repentance and restoration are presented in the book of Joel, and explore the ways these themes resonate within Jewish and Christian theology and practice.

Glossary

- **Apocalyptic:** Relating to or involving a revelation or prophecy of the end times and great cosmic events, often focusing on the end of the world or a cosmic battle between good and evil.
- **Baalism:** The worship of the Canaanite deity Baal, often involving fertility rituals and practices that appealed to human desires for agricultural prosperity and physical gratification.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the end of the world, or the ultimate destiny of humankind.
- **Holocaust:** A term meaning "total or whole burning," often associated with complete destruction.
- **Locust:** A type of grasshopper that often swarms in large numbers, causing significant damage to crops and vegetation. It can also mean "burner of the land."
- **Mot:** A Canaanite god of death and the underworld, often depicted as battling with Baal, the god of fertility.
- **Pentecost:** A Christian festival that commemorates the Holy Spirit coming to Jesus' disciples. In Judaism, Shavuot, seven weeks after Passover, is a pilgrimage festival celebrating the first fruits and the giving of the Law at Sinai.
- **Petheuel:** The father of Joel; little else is known about him or the family.
- **Shub/Shuv:** A Hebrew term meaning "to turn" or "return," used in the context of repentance.
- **Shavuot:** The Jewish festival celebrating the harvest and the giving of the Law to Moses.
- **Staccato:** Characterized by short, quick, and detached elements, in a literary context, this refers to short sentences that enhance the intensity of a passage.
- **Yom Yahweh:** A Hebrew term meaning "The Day of the Lord," referring to a time of God's intervention in history, often associated with judgment, salvation, and vindication.
- **Zion:** A poetic name for the city of Jerusalem, often used to represent the center of worship and spiritual significance in Israel.

4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 17, Joel

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5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 17, Joel, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Book of Joel

1. **What is the primary literary focus of the Book of Joel, and why might many Christians find it difficult to relate to?**
2. The Book of Joel centers on a devastating locust plague. Many Christians may struggle to relate to this central theme because locust plagues are not a common modern-day experience, making it seem like a distant, ancient event rather than a relevant spiritual message. However, the plague serves as a metaphor and a historical event related to the "Day of the Lord."
3. **Beyond the literal locust plague, what is the key theological concept that the book of Joel explores?**
4. The central theological concept in Joel is the "Day of the Lord" (Yom Yahweh). This is a recurring theme in the book, initially depicted through the immediate experience of the locust plague, then transitioning to future judgment, spiritual blessings, and the vindication of God's people. It represents God's sovereign intervention in history, both in immediate and future contexts.
5. **How does the name "Joel" itself relate to his message and the themes of the book?**
6. The name "Joel," meaning "Yahweh is God," is an affirmation of faith and reflects the book's overall theme of God's sovereignty and power. The name also highlights that the events in the book are not merely natural occurrences but are directly linked to God's divine authority and purpose.
7. **What significance did locust plagues hold in the biblical world and Jewish tradition?**
8. Locust plagues were greatly feared in the biblical world as they were destructive, devastating the land and agriculture. They were also a reminder of the plagues of Egypt, which is the annual event Jewish people use to celebrate being freed from slavery. The imagery of locusts was associated with divine judgment and also served as a warning against turning away from God.

9. How does Joel use vivid imagery and literary devices to describe the locust plague?

10. Joel uses a staccato-like writing style, with short, clipped sentences to emphasize the severity and emotional impact of the plague. He also uses a variety of words to describe the locusts, highlighting their destructive nature as they 'burn the land brown' and consume everything in their path. In some translations, different terms are used to show a locust's movement across a field, with words like cutting, swarming, hopping, and destroying, emphasizing the totality of their destruction.

11. What call to action accompanies the descriptions of the locust plague and what is the significance of "rending your heart and not your garments?"

12. Amidst the locust plague, Joel calls for repentance and a return to God. The call to "rend your heart and not your garments" (2:13) highlights that true repentance is internal and not just outward displays of sorrow or religion. It's a heartfelt turning away from sin and back to God. This is also associated with fasting which should not be an outward parade, but a true desire to return to God.

13. What are some of the agricultural elements Joel emphasizes and why are they so important?

14. Joel repeatedly emphasizes the destruction of key agricultural products, including grain, wine, and oil as well as fig trees, dates, and pomegranates. These elements are important because they represent the basic necessities for survival and are also tied to cultural symbols of prosperity and peace. In this context, the destruction of the harvest highlights how the nation would have been impacted and vulnerable to returning to God.

15. How does the concept of the "Day of the Lord" evolve throughout the Book of Joel and what relevance does it have for contemporary readers?

16. The "Day of the Lord" is initially presented as an imminent judgment in the form of the locust plague and potential invasions, it then transitions into a future judgment including spiritual blessings and the final vindication of God's people. The book concludes with the notion that the Day of the Lord is tied to a day of decision. For the contemporary reader, this concept serves as a reminder of God's sovereignty over history, of the importance of turning to God in repentance, and of the assurance of God's ultimate intervention in human affairs. The prophets remind the readers that God's judgment starts with his own people, not those outside of his flock.