

Dr. Gary Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 29, Joel

Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 29, Joel, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Yates' Session 29 on the Book of Joel explores the message, setting, and implications of this Old Testament book. He investigates the challenging task of dating the book, ultimately leaning towards a post-exilic setting in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. **Yates highlights Joel's warning of the coming Day of the Lord, connected to both a locust plague and a potential enemy invasion.** He analyzes the people's response, noting a possible national repentance that averted further judgment. **The session discusses Joel's placement in the Book of the Twelve, emphasizing its thematic significance in introducing the Day of the Lord motif.** Finally, Yates touches on the eschatological dimensions of Joel, including a future outpouring of the Spirit and a final judgment on the nations leading to a kingdom of peace.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 29 – 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 → Book of the
Twelve [Minor Prophets]).**



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on29.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 29, Joel

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Gary Yates' Session 29 on the Book of Joel:

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Yates on the Book of Joel (Session 29)

Main Themes & Ideas:

This session focuses on the historical setting of Joel, its central message concerning the Day of the Lord, and the broader theological implications of the book, especially its role in the Book of the Twelve. Dr. Yates emphasizes that while dating Joel precisely is difficult, a post-exilic dating (late 6th or early 5th century BC) is most probable. The book serves as both a warning of impending judgment and a call to national repentance, offering a model for God's desired relationship with his people. Further, Joel sets thematic precedents for the rest of the Book of the Twelve and looks forward to future prophetic fulfillment in the last days.

Key Points & Supporting Quotes:

- **Dating the Book of Joel:** The dating of the Book of Joel is uncertain, but recent consensus points towards a post-exilic period. *"The issue here and part of the problem here is that the date of the book of Joel is something that is very difficult to determine, and it's something that scholars themselves have debated back and forth, and the book has been placed in several different settings, and the date has been given at several different periods in Israel's history."* Arguments supporting this include the lack of a king mentioned, references to a dispersed people and the temple being rebuilt, and potential allusions to Greek involvement in the slave trade. Dr. Yates states, *"So, for all of these reasons, Joel, the most likely date seems to be a post-exilic period, but these other possibilities are definitely there."*
- **Historical Context:** If Joel is post-exilic, his ministry likely occurred after the temple rebuilding in 515 BC. Dr. Yates places the ministry *"either at the end of the 6th century after the temple has been built or sometime early in the 5th century before the second return under Ezra and Nehemiah."* The historical backdrop includes the return from exile under Zerubbabel and Joshua, the rebuilding of the temple, and potentially the lead-up to conflicts between the Persians and Greeks.

- **The Day of the Lord and Locust Plague:** The book revolves around the theme of the Day of the Lord, a time of impending judgment, signaled by a devastating locust plague. *"The book is a warning about the coming day of the Lord. It's a warning about a judgment that is about to come on the people that is imminent."* The locust plague is seen as a warning, a prelude to further judgment if the people do not repent. Dr. Yates describes the locust plague as *"just the prelude to what. It's just the shot that God has fired across the bow."* The severity of locust plagues is further illustrated with facts from National Geographic, which notes swarms can be over 450 square miles, contain 40-80 million locusts per half square mile, and devour up to 423 million pounds of food daily.
- **Call to Repentance and Averted Judgment:** A crucial aspect of Joel is the call to national repentance. *"Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all of your heart, with fasting, with weeping, with mourning, return to the Lord your God."* Unlike other prophetic books where warnings go unheeded, Joel presents a scenario where the people seemingly respond to God's call. As a result, God relents and averts the threatened judgment. *"Then the Lord became jealous of his land, and he had pity on his people."*
- **Joel as a Model of Repentance:** Joel's placement at the beginning of the Book of the Twelve is significant because it provides a "paradigmatic example of national repentance." This highlights God's desire for his people to turn back to him and experience averted judgment. *"At the beginning of the Book of the Twelve, this is put there to say that this is what God ultimately wanted from his people all along."*
- **Thematic Importance in the Book of the Twelve:** Joel introduces key themes that resonate throughout the Book of the Twelve, particularly the "judgment of the Day of the Lord." *"So, Joel thematically may be put at the front of the book and at the front of the Book of the Twelve to highlight and to emphasize this emphasis on the Day of the Twelve that is going to carry through this literature all the way to the end."*

- **Two Interpretations of God's Response in Chapter 2:** Yates discusses the two views on the verb tense in Chapter 2. One view is the Lord "promises" what He "will" do, stressing that the people are looking ahead to a time of future restoration and that God is certain to fulfill the covenant that He made. The other view is that the people "actually did" respond to the message and repent, and that the Lord "actually did" relent from the warning that was threatened. Yates prefers the second view, as it highlights that they "*carried through on what the prophet called them to do. And as a result of this repentance... God relented and did not send the judgment that was threatened.*"
- **Future Restoration and Eschatological Vision:** Beyond immediate restoration, Joel looks forward to a final, ultimate restoration and outpouring of the Spirit. "*It shall come to pass afterward, after these immediate blessings and after I reverse this, at some unspecified time in the distant future, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.*" This passage is quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, indicating a "now and not yet fulfillment" of Joel's prophecy. Joel also envisions a final judgment on the nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, leading to the salvation of Israel and the establishment of a kingdom of peace. Dr. Yates clarifies that, "*The purpose of these prophetic texts is not to help us to identify the enemy. We are actually looking at a worldwide rebellion against God.*"

Implications:

- Joel provides a powerful example of the consequences of covenant unfaithfulness and the potential for divine mercy through repentance.
- The book's emphasis on the Day of the Lord serves as a recurring warning throughout the Book of the Twelve, urging vigilance and faithfulness.
- Joel's prophecies have both immediate and long-term fulfillments, pointing towards the ultimate restoration of God's kingdom.
- Caution should be taken when relating prophetic passages to contemporary events, focusing instead on the broader themes of judgment, repentance, and God's ultimate victory.

4. Study Guide: Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 29, Joel

Joel: Locusts, Judgment, and Restoration

Study Guide

I. Historical and Literary Context

- **Dating of Joel:** Discuss the difficulties in dating the book of Joel and the arguments for both pre-exilic and post-exilic dating. What are the key arguments and evidence that suggest a post-exilic dating?
- **Post-Exilic Period:** Briefly outline the historical events of the post-exilic period (return under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah). How does the book of Joel fit into this timeline?
- **Placement in the Book of the Twelve:** Explain the thematic reasons for placing Joel at the beginning of the Book of the Twelve. What key themes does it introduce that are developed in the subsequent books?
- **Literary Connections:** Describe how Joel connects to the books of Hosea and Amos. What common themes or ideas link these prophetic books together?
- **Locust Plague:** Describe the locust plague in Joel 1. What does this plague symbolize? Why is it so devastating?

II. The Day of the Lord

- **The Day of the Lord:** Define the concept of the "Day of the Lord" as it is presented in Joel. How does it function as a warning and a call to repentance?
- **Locusts and the Army:** Analyze the description of the invading army in Joel 2. Is it a literal army, a metaphorical description of locusts, or something else?
- **Call to Repentance:** What is the nature of the call to repentance in Joel 2:12-17? What specific actions are the people called to take?
- **God's Response:** Describe God's response to the people's repentance in Joel 2:18. How is this a "hinge verse" in the book?

III. Restoration and Future Hope

- **Restoration:** Detail the promises of restoration in Joel 2:18-27. What will God restore to the people? How will their situation change?

- **Pouring Out of the Spirit:** Explain the prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32. How does this relate to the "last days?"
- **New Testament Fulfillment:** Discuss the New Testament fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32, particularly in relation to the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
- **Eschatological Judgment:** Describe the final, universal judgment in Joel 3. Where will this judgment take place, and who will be judged?
- **Eschatological Battle:** Describe the eschatological battle in Joel 3. What is the purpose of the battle?
- **Ian Duguid Quote:** Summarize Ian Duguid's commentary on Ezekiel 38-39 regarding the eschatological battle. Why is it important to avoid connecting prophetic passages too closely to contemporary events?

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are two arguments supporting a post-exilic date for the book of Joel?
2. Why is Joel placed at the beginning of the Book of the Twelve?
3. Describe the devastation caused by the locust plague in Joel 1.
4. What is the significance of the "Day of the Lord" in Joel?
5. Explain the two possible interpretations of the army described in Joel 2.
6. What specific actions are the people called to do in Joel 2:12-17?
7. How does God respond to the people's repentance in Joel 2:18-27?
8. What is the prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32?
9. Where does the final, universal judgment take place in Joel 3?
10. According to Dr. Yates's reading of Joel 2:18, what is the most likely explanation for what occurs in that verse?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The book does not mention a king, and Joel 3:2-3 refers to the dispersion of the people of Israel, suggesting they have been taken away into exile, an event that fits the post-exilic period. Additionally, Joel 3:6 mentions the sale of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, which could also suggest a post-exilic setting.

2. Joel introduces key themes, such as the Day of the Lord and the call to repentance, that recur throughout the Book of the Twelve. It also provides an example of national repentance, which is what God ultimately wants from his people.
3. The locust plague is described as a devastating swarm that consumes all the crops and vegetation in the land. It is portrayed as a direct judgment from God, leading to a nationwide crisis that threatens the people's livelihood and very existence.
4. The Day of the Lord is a warning about an imminent judgment from God and a call for the people to repent and get right with God. It is a time of darkness and gloom, meant to emphasize the need for faithfulness and obedience to the covenant.
5. One interpretation is that the description is another locust plague that is more devastating than the first. The second, most likely interpretation, is that the prophet uses the invasion of the locusts to portray the invasion of an enemy army that is going to come on the land.
6. The people are called to return to God with all their heart, fasting, weeping, and mourning. They should rend their hearts, not just go through a ceremony, and call a sacred assembly, gathering everyone from the oldest to the youngest.
7. God becomes jealous for his land and has pity on his people. He promises to restore what the locusts have eaten, providing grain, wine, and oil, and to remove the "northerner" (the enemy army) far from them, turning covenant curses into covenant blessings.
8. God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh, leading to prophecy, dreams, and visions among all people. This is described as a future event during the last days, fulfilled partially at Pentecost but fully consummated at the second coming of Christ.
9. The final, universal judgment will take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which means "the Lord has judged." It is not a specific location but symbolizes the place where God will execute his final judgment on the nations.
10. In Joel 2:18, Dr. Yates argues that the Lord became jealous for the land and had pity on his people as a response to their repentance. Thus, verse 18 should be read as an account of what God did for the people in response to their repentance rather than a promise of what God will do for the people at a future restoration.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the challenges in dating the book of Joel and argue for the most likely dating based on the evidence presented in the lecture. How does the dating of Joel influence our understanding of its message and context?
2. Explain the significance of the "Day of the Lord" in Joel's prophecy. How does Joel use this concept to warn the people of Judah and call them to repentance? Compare and contrast Joel's use of this theme with its usage in other prophetic books, such as Amos and Zephaniah.
3. Analyze the description of the locust plague and the invading army in Joel 1 and 2. Are they literal events, metaphorical representations, or both? How does Joel use vivid imagery to convey the severity of God's judgment and the urgency of the call to repentance?
4. Examine the themes of repentance and restoration in the book of Joel. How does the people's response to Joel's message affect God's judgment and promises? What does Joel teach us about the nature of God's mercy and the possibility of averting judgment through genuine repentance?
5. Discuss the eschatological dimensions of Joel's prophecy, focusing on the outpouring of the Spirit and the final judgment of the nations. How do these prophecies relate to the New Testament and the Christian understanding of the last days? What does Joel contribute to our understanding of God's ultimate plan for salvation and the establishment of his kingdom of peace?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Post-Exilic Period:** The time in Jewish history after the Babylonian exile, from 539 BC onwards.
- **Book of the Twelve:** Also known as the Minor Prophets, these are twelve short prophetic books in the Old Testament, including Joel.
- **Day of the Lord:** A prophetic concept referring to a time of divine intervention, judgment, and salvation in history.
- **Locust Plague:** A devastating infestation of locusts that destroys crops and vegetation.
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and a turning toward God in humility and faith.
- **Restoration:** The act of returning something to its original condition or state; in Joel, refers to God's reversal of judgment and the giving back of what was lost.
- **Eschatology:** The study of the "last things," including the end times, judgment, and the future kingdom of God.
- **Eschatological Battle:** A final, decisive battle between good and evil at the end of history.
- **Valley of Jehoshaphat:** A symbolic location for God's final judgment on the nations, meaning "the Lord has judged."
- **Vayiktol Verbs:** A form of the Hebrew imperfect verb with a conjunction used to express past events or to record events that have occurred within a narrative and a story.

5. FAQs on Yates, Book of the Twelve, Session 29, Joel, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Joel FAQ

1. What is the primary message of the Book of Joel?

The Book of Joel primarily warns of the coming Day of the Lord and calls the people to repentance in light of impending judgment. The initial judgment is symbolized by a devastating locust plague, which serves as a prelude to a greater, potentially military, judgment if the people do not turn back to God. It also provides an example of national repentance and God's willingness to relent from judgment when His people genuinely return to Him.

2. When is the Book of Joel believed to have been written, and what evidence supports this dating?

While the exact dating of the Book of Joel is debated, the prevalent scholarly view places it in the post-exilic period, likely in the late 6th or early 5th century BC. This is supported by several factors: references in chapter 3 to a scattering of the people of Israel among the nations which alludes to their exile, a mention of the sale of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks (though not definitive), the absence of any mention of a king in either Israel or Judah, and the references to a standing sanctuary, which would place it after the rebuilding of the temple in 515 BC.

3. What is the significance of the locust plague described in Joel?

The locust plague serves as a present manifestation of God's judgment and a warning of more severe judgment to come on the Day of the Lord. It is a result of the covenant curses for disobedience. It also functions as a catalyst for national repentance and a return to God. The vivid descriptions of the locusts' devastation emphasize the magnitude of the judgment and the need for a serious response from the people.

4. What does the Day of the Lord signify in the Book of Joel?

In the Book of Joel, the Day of the Lord initially signifies an imminent judgment upon Judah, symbolized by the locust plague and the threat of an invading army. It is described as a time of darkness, gloom, and unprecedented devastation. However, the Day of the Lord also carries a broader, eschatological significance, pointing towards a future, universal judgment on all nations and the ultimate restoration of Israel.

5. How does Joel call the people to respond to the impending judgment?

Joel urges the people to engage in sincere repentance. This includes fasting, weeping, mourning, and turning to God with all their heart. He calls for a sacred assembly, bringing together all members of the community, from elders to infants, to collectively seek God's mercy. The prophet emphasizes the need for genuine repentance, "rending your hearts," not merely going through the motions of religious ceremony.

6. How does God respond to the people's repentance in the Book of Joel?

According to one interpretation, the change of God and God's response indicates a repentance on the part of the people. God relents from the threatened judgment, promising restoration and blessing in place of devastation. He promises to restore what the locusts have eaten, provide grain, wine, and oil, and remove the "northerner," suggesting the removal of a military threat. However, another interpretation views this as a promise for a future time.

7. What is the "pouring out of the Spirit" prophesied in Joel 2:28-32, and how does it relate to the New Testament?

The prophecy of the "pouring out of the Spirit" is a promise of spiritual empowerment and prophetic gifting that will be poured out on all flesh in the last days. In the New Testament, Peter connects this prophecy to the events of Pentecost, seeing it as an initial fulfillment of Joel's promise. The pouring out of the Spirit is thus understood to have both a "now" and "not yet" fulfillment, beginning in the church age and consummating in the future kingdom.

8. What is the vision of the eschatological battle described in Joel 3, and how does it connect with other prophetic texts?

Joel 3 describes a final, universal judgment on the nations in the "valley of Jehoshaphat," where God will judge them for their treatment of Israel. This judgment will lead to the salvation and final restoration of Israel. The nations will turn their farming implements into weapons, leading to an eschatological battle, in direct contrast to Micah's vision of peace. This vision of an eschatological battle connects with other prophetic texts, such as Micah 4-5, Ezekiel 38-39, Zephaniah 3, and Zechariah 12-14, and informs the New Testament's portrayal of Armageddon in Revelation 16 and 19. It emphasizes God's ultimate victory over evil and the establishment of His kingdom of peace.