

Joel

Historical Setting:

- The Valley of Jehoshaphat seems to imply that this was after the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17 – 20). But, Jehoshaphat in Hebrew means “Jehovah Judges.” So, perhaps Joel did not mean a name, but the actual meaning of the word.
- The phrase, “the captives of Judah and Jerusalem” (3:1), seems to indicate the Babylonian period, unless the taking of the captives was future to Joel, perhaps in fulfillment of Moses’ prediction (Leviticus 26:27 – 45, Deuteronomy 28:36 – 68).
- Amos 1:2 and 9:13 seem to quote Joel, as does Isaiah 13:6. However, one could assume that Joel borrowed phrases from Amos and Isaiah.
- The priesthood seems to be functioning properly.
- The best argument perhaps is that, since the enemies spoken against are Edom, Egypt, Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia but Syria, Assyria, and Babylon are not mentioned, this is most likely prior to the rise of Assyria. So Joel would be the earliest minor prophet, in the days of Joash before the death of Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 23:1 – 24:16).

Passages believed to be Messianic by ancient rabbis:

- Joel 2:28 – 32 (Acts 2:17 – 21, Romans 10:13) This was applied by Peter to the scene at Pentecost. Paul recalls the image and continues the logic as a call for evangelism.
- Joel 3:18 Jesus may have been referring to this passage in John 4:14 and 7:38.

The plot: A great locust plague is occurring. Is this a literal locust plague sent by God, or an invading army, or a series of invading armies? See 2:17 – 20, 3:4 – 6, 3:9 – 10.

The point:

- Repent (3:12 – 14)
- God will rescue Israel (2:18 – 27, 3:18)

Interesting lines:

1:15 The day of the Lord is at hand

2:12 Rend your heart and not your garments

3:10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears (see Isaiah 2:4)