Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

9 April 2017 Message 8 of 12

NLT 60 Minutes

**Be Disciplined**

Title

***Book of Joel***

**Topic:** Discipline

**Subject:** What should we do when we are disciplined?

**Complement:** Let discipline bring repentance and repentance bring restoration.

**Purpose:** The listeners will show they accept God’s discipline by turning from known sin.

**Attribute:** We worship the God who disciplines.

# Introduction

### Interest: Be disciplined or you will be disciplined. This is true because any good leader disciplines those he cares about, and ultimately, God is the best disciplinarian.

Discipline

(2 slides)

### Need: Which better describes your life now? Disciplining yourself or being disciplined by God?

Be disciplined

Backgrd

#### If your experiences are *sweet*, thank God. Maybe you are disciplining yourself so God doesn’t have to get your attention.

#### But if your experiences are *sour*, thank God also. Maybe this is just what you need for God to get your attention. Are you listening?

Ting

### Intro to MPI: What should we do when we are disciplined? Do you catch my double meaning here?

What to Do?

### Background: Judah had survived the Assyrian onslaught a century earlier when Israel was destroyed. However, things then became tough as God raised up the Babylonians to replace the Assyrians.

#### Although I cannot be dogmatic about dating Joel, the best option is that Joel prophesied after the Babylonians took 10,000 people of Judah captive in 597 BC.

Placing the Prophets

#### However, he doesn’t mention the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Therefore, he seemed to have ministered during this 11-year period just after a locust invasion and drought. A date between 597 and 586 BC seems best because the invasion of 3:3 could refer to the Babylonian invasion which deported 10,000 men in 597 BC (cf. 2 Kings 24:10-16) before the final exile and temple destruction in 586 BC, thus explaining why the temple is still prominent in the book. Joel also mentions selling people to Greeks, which also happened only after about 600 BC when Greece became strong.

3:4-6  
(2 slides)

3:3

#### In our study of the Minor Prophets we are now near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC under Nebuchadnezzar. This was one of the two key times the city was destroyed as God’s discipline of his wayward people.

Fall  
(2 slides)

### Preview: Today we’ll see what to do about present difficulties, and then how these will all turn out in the end.

To Do List  
• 1 & 2

### Text: We’ll study the entire prophecy of Joel in all three chapters.

Question

(First, what should we do when we are disciplined?)

# I. Discipline should bring repentance.

MP

[Times of difficulty are great times to change our perspective.]

Chart

## Judah should repent over a recent judgment of locusts and the future day of the LORD with Babylonian and Tribulation armies (1:1–2:17).

### Joel affirms the divine authority of his prophecy and the uniqueness of the events he will describe so the people will pass his words on to future generations (1:1-3).

Joel 1  
(5 slides)

### Readers should mourn and repent to seek God's deliverance from a terrible locust invasion and drought (1:4-20).

CRY

#### We cannot understand the significance of locusts and drought without understanding the conditional Mosaic covenant that Israel made with God.

Occasion  
(16 slides)

#### This agreement noted in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 includes both blessings for obedience and cursings for disobedience. Among the many punishments God designed to get the nation to turn from sin are natural calamities such as locust invasions and God’s withholding rain.

### The people should repent since a more dreadful judgment (day of the LORD) will come soon by the Babylonian army and Armageddon in the distant future (2:1-17).

Joel 2  
(15 slides)

## God’s disciplining us should motivate us to seek the Lord.

Running Away

### God disciplines us not because he is mean, but rather to get our attention. Judah was not listening to the LORD, so God sent triple tragedies: invasion, hunger, and thirst.

### The character of God has remained unchanged in the 2600 years since the writing of this book. He still disciplines us to get our attention to repent and he still promises phenomenal blessings for those who repent.

### God disciplines nations to seek him.

God & USA

#### The moral height of the USA was in the 1950s. The USA rebuilt its former enemies Japan and Germany, adopted “In God We Trust” as the national motto, and began to see many turn to Christ under Billy Graham as well send out missionaries to the nations.

#### But the 1960s became a turning point: corporations wanting to prolong the Vietnam War to make more money off it, making it illegal to pray and read the Bible in schools, chaos in the many riots, and assassinations of key leaders like John F Kenney and Martin Luther King.

Flag

#### The last straw was America turning its back on Israel in recent years, even sponsoring a conference in January a week before the change of power in Washington.

#### As a result, the USA has been in horrible disarray: 78 million abortions, half of births to unwed mothers, 110 million people with STDs, disrespect around the world, involved in the longest war in US history in Afghanistan and Iraq, etc.

Guns

#### The USA has been under the disciplining hand of God in order that the country might turn back to him.

### God disciplines individuals to seek him as well.

Doors

#### Some of us could share our stories.

I Make Results

#### Some have played with sin until we finally got disgusted with ourselves.

#### Others of us have become complacent so that we hardly give God a thought until Sunday.

#### The result? We lack love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. How could we expect the fruit of the Spirit without being controlled by the Spirit?

#### God is calling us to repentance—a change of mind in whom we trust. He also wants to see in us the fruits of repentance—a change of actions that reveal we really did change our mind.

(Israel needed to heed that repentance in the call of Joel 2:12-17. Did they? Unfortunately, they didn’t. But will they? Thankfully, yes! So what will result from repentance like that in Joel 2:12-17? The next section shows us that…)

MPI

# II. Repentance will bring restoration.

MP

[Changing our minds about God leads to changing our future.]

Chart

## Israel’s repentance will bring forgiveness, deliverance and restoration (2:18–3:21).

Jews

### Israel’s repentance will bring forgiveness and blessing (2:18-27).

2:18-20  
(2 slides)

### God will deliver His restored people by judging the nations and will send a great time of spiritual awakening to motivate His people to repent now (2:28–3:21).

Parallels  
(6 slides)

#### In the day of the LORD, God will send the indwelling of the Spirit upon all Jews and celestial signs [when the Jewish nation repents at the return of Christ] (2:28-32).

Spirit  
(5 slides)

#### When God restores Israel as a nation He will judge the nations for abusing Judah (3:1-16).

Joel 3

(13 slides)

#### Joel describes the fruitfulness of Judah in contrast to the desolation of Edom and Egypt as an indication that Judah will be inhabited forever (3:17-21).

Israel  
(4 slides)

## Your trust in the Lord alone will bring his blessing.

Bible Read Me

### Repentance will bring restoration in a nation: Repentance in the USA is bringing about his blessing.

Restoring USA

#### In April 2016 the most conservative Supreme Court justice died suddenly and his body was pronounced dead by a coroner who never actually saw the body, then the body was cremated within hours. This set the stage for a huge showdown whether the Court would shift to the Left for the next generation.

USA

Map

#### The breaking point came last year when we actually had a candidate running for office under FBI investigation who destroyed 30,000 government documents.

#### God brought American Christians to a breaking point. Franklin Graham devoted the year to 50 prayer vigils—one on the steps of each capital of each state in the USA.

#### Election night showed a huge lead for Clinton until a massive prayer effort nationwide surged at about 8-9 PM, when it totally shifted.

#### The result? The past 8 years over 1000 liberal elected officials have been removed from office, culminating in the first Republican president, House and Senate in nearly 100 years. Only 17 of the 50 state governors are liberal now.

#### The culmination came just two days ago when Neil Gorsuch was confirmed to the Court, restoring the 5-4 Constitutional edge. This was by far the most enduring act of President Trump will have in his 4-year or 8-year term(s) of office.

Gorsuch

Church

### Repentance will bring restoration in a church: God wants our church to really trust him.

#### We still don’t see our need for him as we don’t see our need to pray.

#### We also need to be involved in his work: missions, teaching, accountability groups, finances, etc.

MPI

(What should we do when we are disciplined?)

# Conclusion

### Let discipline bring repentance and repentance bring restoration (MI).

MI

### The two main points from Joel show us God’s two-fold pattern:

#### Discipline should bring repentance.

#### Repentance will bring restoration.

MPII

### Be disciplined or you will be disciplined.

#### The book *Celebration of Discipline* shows the value of spiritual disciplines.

Foster book

Prov 3

#### Proverbs 3:11-12 warns us not to resent God’s fatherly discipline.

### Questions to consider might include these:

#### Do you need God to strip you of everything before you repent? (Huang Sabin)

Q 3

Q 1

#### Is God disciplining you to get your attention on him once again?

Q 2

#### Have you considered fasting (1:14; 2:12) or do you think fasting isn’t for our modern age? Why wouldn’t it be?

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Although I cannot be dogmatic about dating Joel, the best option is that he prophesied after the Babylonians took 10,000 people of Judah captive in 597 BC.

### However, he doesn’t mention the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Therefore, he seemed to have ministered during this 11-year period just after a locust invasion and drought. A date between 597 and 586 BC seems best because the invasion of 3:2b could refer to the Babylonian invasion which deported 10,000 men in 597 BC (cf. 2 Kings 24:10-16) before the final exile and temple destruction in 586 BC, thus explaining why the temple is still prominent in the book.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### God disciplines us not because he is mean, but rather to get our attention. Judah was not listening to the LORD, so God sent triple tragedies: invasion, hunger, and thirst.

### The character of God has remained unchanged in the 2600 years since the writing of this book. He still disciplines us to get our attention to repent and he still promises phenomenal blessings for those who repent.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### We cannot understand the significance of locusts and drought without understanding the conditional Mosaic covenant that Israel made with God.

### This agreement noted in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 includes both blessings for obedience and cursings for disobedience. Among the many punishments God designed to get the nation to turn from sin are natural calamities such as locust invasions and God’s withholding rain.

# Questions

### What is the “locust invasion” of Joel 2?

### When will Israel be restored?

### Is this restoration conditional?

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

God disciplines us to get our attention of what matters.

# Possible Illustrations

### Though every natural disaster cannot be blamed on disobedience, Christians today also experience God’s blessings or cursings based on their obedience.

### The USA epidemic of STDs recently hit 110 million! This is God’s judgment for sin.

## Previous Introduction

### Interest: Like a good Chinese dish, life has both sweet and sour.

### Need: Which better describes your life now? Are things sweet or sour?

#### If your experiences are *sweet*, thank God.

#### If your experiences are *sour*, thank God also.

### Intro to MPI: What should we do when life turns sour?

### Background: Judah had survived the Assyrian onslaught a century earlier when Israel was destroyed. However, things then turned sour.

### Preview: Today we’ll see what to do about present trials, and then how these will all turn out in the end.

### Text: We’ll study the entire prophecy of Joel in all three chapters.

(What should we do when life turns sour?)

# Possible Applications

### Do you need God to strip you of everything before you repent? (Huang Sabin)

### Have you looked at the difficulties in your life as potentially God’s discipline to get your attention on him once again?

### Have you considered fasting (1:14; 2:12) or do you think fasting isn’t for our modern age? Why wouldn’t it be?

# Old Testament Survey Notes

**Joel**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day of the LORD** | | | | |
| **“Locust” Plagues** | | | **Blessing** | |
| **1:1–2:17** | | | **2:18–3:21** | |
| **Zion’s Discipline** | | | **Zion’s Deliverance** | |
| **The LORD fights**  ***against* His people** | | | **The LORD fights**  ***for* His people** | |
| **Introduction**  **1:1-3** | **Repent from literal locusts**  **1:4-20** | **Repent from Babylonian/**  **Armageddon “locusts”**  **2:1-17** | **Forgiveness after repentance**  **2:18-27** | **Spiritual awakening**  **2:28–3:21** |
| **Lamentation**  **1:1–2:17** | | | **Salvation**  **2:18-32** | **Judgment**  **3:1-21** |
| **Past** | | **Future** | | |
| **Judah (c. 590 BC)** | | | | |

**Key Word: Locusts**

**Key Verse: “…The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? ‘Even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning’” (Joel 2:11b-12).**

**Summary Statement:**

**A recent judgment of Judah by locusts should cause the people to repent as a more dreadful day of the LORD will come in a Babylonian invasion and at Armageddon, yet God promises forgiveness, deliverance, and restoration by judging the nations.**

**Application:**

**Do you need God to strip you of everything before you repent? (Huang Sabin)**

**Joel**

**Introduction**

**I. Title:** The name Joel (la,/yo *Yo'el*) is usually interpreted to mean "Yahweh is God" but other related meanings may be "strong willed" (Nestles) and "take refuge" (Arabic; cf. BDB 222b). The reverse form of Joel ("Yahweh is Eloheim") is Elijah ("Eloheim is Yahweh").

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: The Joel of this prophecy is not noted elsewhere in the Old Testament. Critical opinions on his identity relate to when he wrote (see Date below).

B. Internal Evidence: The title declares the author to be Joel, the son of Pethuel (1:1), which means "persuaded of God" (BDB 834d). Although several Joels are mentioned in Scripture, nothing is known of the author of this prophecy except evidence in this book. Because of the many references to Zion and the Temple (1:9, 13-14; 2:15-17, 23, 32; 3:1, 5-6, 16-17, 20-21) it has been suggested that he probably lived close to Jerusalem. The references to religious activities and priestly ceremonies (1:13-14; 2:17) may suggest that Joel was a temple prophet (LaSor, 438).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: The time of Joel's writing remains a thorny problem since the book makes no explicit time references in the superscription (unlike most other prophetical books). Until recently most dating estimates fell into two general periods (1 and 2 below).

1. The first date proposed is early pre-exilic, usually during the time of Joash (ca. 835 BC; cf.Keil, 169-170; *TTTB*, 240-241). Support is sought in: (a) the reference to Israel's early enemies of Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Egypt and Edom (3:4, 19), (b) the government of elders (1:2; 2:16) and priests (1:9, 13; 2:17) which held power while Joash was still a boy as he was crowned at age seven (cf. 2 Chron. 24:1), (c) the position of Joel between Hosea and Amos in the Hebrew canon, and (d) Amos’ dependence on Joel (Amos 1:2 on Joel 3:16; Amos 9:13b and Joel 3:18a; cf. Benware, 181).

Response: Even OT prophets in the Babylonian era preached against the nations mentioned above (cf. Jer. 46–47; 49:7-22; Ezek. 27–30; Zeph. 2:4-7; cf. Chisholm, *BKC*, 1:1409). The government in the book is also argued by proponents of a *late* date which makes it inconclusive and the LXX order is different than the Hebrew, thus making the order in the canon insignificant concerning date. Also, one cannot tell whether Amos quotes Joel or *vice versa*. Further, Greek slave trade (3:6) was not characteristic of this time period.

2. Others suggest a post-exilic date near the end of the exile (ca. 540 BC) or even as early as 350 BC (R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, 575; R. K. Harrison, *Intro. to the OT*; J. A. Brewer, *Joel*, ICC; Wolff, Hermeneia). They give four arguments (summarized by Chisholm, *BKC*, 1:1410) for this position: (a) Joel notes Babylon’s destruction of Jerusalem and exile in 586 BC (3:1-2, 17) while the temple in other places (1:9, 13; 2:17) refers to the postexilic temple of 516 BC, (b) the government of elders appears rather than of a king, (c) Joel quotes the exilic prophet Ezekiel (2:3 with Ezek. 36:35; 2:10 with Ezek. 32:7; 2:27-28 with Ezek. 39:28-29), and (d) Greek slave trade (3:6) can refer only to when the post-exilic Greek empire had its greatest control of Israel.

Response: (a) Joel 3 records a future restoration following captivity and does not require captivity to have already occurred, (b) not mentioning a monarchy in the book does not disprove its existence at the time of writing, especially since elders were prominent *before* the exile (2 Kings 23:1; Jer. 26:17; Lam. 5:12, 14; cf. Kapelrud, *Joel Studies*, 187-89), (c) dependency is speculative in parallel quotations as it is difficult to know who quoted whom, and (d) slave trade between the Phoenicians and Greeks (Ionians) flourished as early as the seventh and early sixth centuries (Ezek. 27:13; cf. Kapelrud, 154-58). Also, Greek control of Palestine (331-143 BC) came *after* the post-exilic date of 540 B.C. above.

3. A mediating late pre-exilic time period between 597 and 586 BC has been supported recently (by Kapelrud; Chisholm, *BKC*, 1:1411-1412) due to affinities between Joel, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah, especially since Zephaniah refers to the day of the LORD as a time of darkness (LaSor, 439). Further, this perspective alone answers how seventh-sixth century Greek slave trade (3:6) could be characteristic of Joel's time. Finally, a date between 597 and 586 BC seems best because the invasion of 3:2b could refer to the Babylonian invasion which deported 10,000 men in 597 BC (cf. 2 Kings 24:10-16) before the final exile and temple destruction in 586 BC, thus explaining why the temple is still prominent in the book.

B. Recipients: The total lack of reference to Israel indicates that Joel had those living in Judah in mind when he penned the prophecy. This is also supported by the many references to Zion and the Temple (1:9, 13-14; 2:15-17, 23, 32; 3:1, 5-6, 16-17, 20-21). That the prophecy addressed Judah may also provide additional evidence that it was written just before Judah’s fall (586 BC) rather than over two centuries later (835 BC).

C. Occasion: Because of the difficulty in determining the correct date of the book (see above) it remains equally speculative to posit an exact occasion for the prophecy. However, it is evident that the people of Judah were recovering from a severe and recent devastation from locusts since this Joel graphically described (chs. 1–2). This catastrophe thoroughly (1:4) plagued the land for at least two years (2:25). Joel used this calamity to illustrate an even more serious future devastation of the land by the Babylonian army (2:1-11; 3:2). The people needed to see that the ultimate devastation was not the loss of their crops but the loss of their existence as a nation. Joel prophesied the latter loss unless the people repented of their sins.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. The locust plague in Joel’s prophecy (see Occasion above) was not merely a natural disaster. It was a supernatural disaster, for Moses had predicted that when locusts invaded the land the people should see this as a divine judgment on their sin (Deut. 28:38, 42; cf. Lev. 26:20).

B. No date is given in the superscription or anywhere else in the book, making it difficult to date.

C. The prophecy makes no mention of a king or of Judah's three greatest enemies: Assyria, Syria, and Babylon (LaSor, 439, n. 20).

D. The Temple is prominent (1:9, 14, 16; 2:17).

E. Although calls to repentance are made in the book (2:12, 15-17), never are the sins of the nation specifically spelled out.

F. The coming day of the LORD, a time of awesome judgment upon people who have rebelled against God, is the key theme of the prophecy (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14, 18). The day of the LORD theme pervades this prophecy perhaps more than any other with the possible exception of Zephaniah (e.g., Zeph. 1:14-18, 2–3) and is noted throughout the Bible (cf. Amos 1:3–2:3; Zech. 12–14; Isa. 13:6, 9; 14:28-32; 17:1ff.; 20:1-6; 31:1-5; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 30:3ff.; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). Joel mentions this “day” several times (1:15; 2:1-2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18), indicating that it actually refers to a time period that “is to be a day of wrath and judgment upon the wicked and a day of salvation to the righteous” (Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the OT Prophets*, 146).

When is this day? The mention of apocalyptic phenomena such as wonders in the heavens (i.e., the sun being turned to darkness and the moon to blood in 3:20-21) indicate that while to some extent *near* judgment would strike Judah for disobedience, the *ultimate* judgment would befall the nation at Christ’s second advent (cf. Matt. 24:29-30). However, this will not just be a day of wrath upon the unbelieving but of blessing as well for the righteous (Joel 2:32; Zech. 14; Zeph. 3:8-20; Isa. 2, 11, 65–66; Amos 9:11-15; Ezek. 20:33-44, etc.; idem., 147). For more here see page 639.

G. The difficult relationship between the literal locusts in chapter 1 and the "locusts" in 2:1-11 now has at least 15 different views. Who are these "locusts" in 2:1-11? The following views are adapted from a chart by John Martin, "Views on the Locust Plague in Joel 2" (cf. Freeman, 150-54):

Supernatural Creatures (Figurative View)

1. Distant Future (Scorpions/Supernatural Insects; cf. Rev. 9:3-10; Wolff, Pfeiffer)

Armies (Allegorical View)

2. Near Future (Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome; cf. church Fathers, Jewish rabbis, Cyril of Alexandria, Luther, Hengstenberg, Pusey)

Armies (Literal/Apocalyptic Views)

3. Near Future (Assyria)

4. Near Future (Egypt) referring to Pharaoh Shishak (1 Kings 14:25; 1 Chron. 12:2-9)

5. Near Future (Egypt) referring to Pharaoh Neco (2 Chron. 35:20–36:4)

6. Distant Future (Armageddon)

7. Distant Future (Gog and Magog)

8. Distant Future (Army of God leader Brother Amos)

9. Near Future (Assyria) and Distant Future (Armageddon; cf. Patterson, Martin)

10. Near Future (identity unknown) and Distant Future (Armageddon; cf. Chisholm)

11. Near Future (Babylon) and Distant Future (Armageddon; cf. Freeman, Griffith)

Locusts (Literal Views)

12. Past (same locust invasion as in chapter 1; cf. LaSor, Allen, Driver, Thompson, Fleer, Keil, Heater, NIV Study Bible)

13. Near Future (in Joel's Day)

14. Distant Future (in the Tribulation)

Locusts and Army (Combination View)

15. Near Future (literal locusts) and Distant Future (figurative army at Armageddon)

As stated above, the present study holds to the apocalyptic view (#11) that sees a near army (Babylon) and a far army (Armageddon) in view. This finds support in several lines of evidence (cf. Freeman, 152-54), four of which are listed here:

1. The imagery of chapter 2 far exceeds the description of a locust plague, such as an earthquake, signs in the skies, and ominous events (2:10, 30-31; Matt. 24:29).

2. The invaders of chapter 2 are called “people” (2:2), an “army” (2:11), and “the northern army” (2:20).

3. Literal locusts never invade Israel from the north as does this “army” (2:20).

4. The term “northern one” (2:20) would be an unsuitable designation for locusts since it is an adjective (“northern”) with a prefixed article, thus meaning “the northerner,” or “the northern one.” However, Israel’s eschatological enemies are often said to invade from the north (cf. Zech. 6:8; Jer. 1:14-15; 6:1, 22; Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2; Isa. 14:31; Zeph. 2:13).

H. Another difficult issue in Joel’s book is how Joel 2:28-32 relates to the day of Pentecost:

1. Joel 2: Joel's prophecy details a future "day of the LORD" which follows a recent locust invasion in Judah. The prophet's point is that while the people are concerned about the existence of their *crops* due to the locusts, even more serious "locusts" (eschatological armies) are coming which threaten the existence of their *nation.*

Then Joel declares that in the last days the LORD will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (all of Judah) so that young men will dream dreams and old men will see visions (2:28-32). This is a clear prophecy of the Spirit’s coming and eschatological dimensions. In other words, Joel sees deliverance happening in the end times.

2. Acts 2: When Peter and the apostles experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, many unusual things also occurred. Each of the apostles praised God in new languages that could be understood by pilgrims to Jerusalem visiting at that time (e.g., from Pontus, Cappadocia, Rome, and other distant places). Further, tongues of fire appeared on their heads. With these new languages and strange fiery phenomena the accusation came that the apostles were drunk with wine. Peter refuted this claim by quoting Joel 2:28f. He declared that they were witnessing an actual fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of the giving of the Spirit. This is clear in his designation, "This is *that* which was spoken…" (Acts 2:16) which leaves no question that the reception of the Spirit was what Joel had in mind.

However, Joel's prophecy also noted strange events in the sky as well—the sun darkened and the moon turning blood red. Acts 2 records no such phenomena because the prophecy was left incomplete due to Israel’s unbelief. These certain elements are reserved for a future time when the nation will believe just prior to the return of Christ. (For a study of five views on this issue see Freeman, 154-56.) This shows that the end times already had begun in Peter’s time.

**Argument**

The prophet Joel masterfully illustrates both God’s judgment and grace in the recent devastation of a locust plague in the land of Judah. In the first of two major movements in the book (1:1–2:17) Joel declares that the recent judgment of Judah by locusts should cause the people to repent as a more dreadful day of the LORD is coming upon the land in the Babylonian army invasion. This is followed by the second part (2:18–3:21) where Joel notes God's forgiveness and promises that He will eventually deliver His people by judging the nations and restoring Judah. Therefore, the book follows the popular judgment/blessing pattern typical of the prophetic writings and is written to encourage repentance based on God's mercy.

**Synthesis**

**Day of the LORD**

**1:1–2:17 "Locust" plagues**

1:1-3 Introduction

1:4-20 Repent from literal locusts

2:1-17 Repent to avoid Babylonian/Armageddon "locusts"

**2:18–3:21 Blessing**

2:18-27 Forgiveness after repentance

2:28–3:21 Spiritual awakening

2:28-32 Indwelling of the Spirit

3:1-16 Restoration/judgment of nations

3:17-21 Fruitfulness

**Outline**

**Summary Statement for the Book**

**The result of Judah’s repentance over God’s recent judgment of Judah by locusts and future day of the LORD by Babylonian and Armageddon invasions will be forgiveness, deliverance by God judging the nations, and national restoration.**

# The response in Judah from a recent judgment of locusts and the future day of the LORD with Babylonian armies should be repentance (1:1–2:17).

## Joel affirms the divine authority of his prophecy and the uniqueness of the events he will describe so the people will pass his words on to future generations (1:1-3).

### This prophecy came to Joel from God Himself so it carries divine authority (1:1).

### Nothing like what God would reveal here has ever happened so the people should tell it to succeeding generations (1:2-3).

## Readers should mourn and repent to seek God's deliverance from a terrible locust invasion and drought (1:4-20).

### God calls Judah to mourn over terrible locusts that ate their crops and a drought afterwards (1:4-13).

#### A terrible locust invasion has eaten everything in the land of Judah (1:4).

#### A call to mourn is given to the drunkards, land, farmers, and priests for the uncountable invading pests and subsequent drought (1:5-13).

### Judah should repent and seek God's face from this day of the LORD as both locusts and drought have caused man and animal alike to look to God for deliverance (1:14-20).

#### The religious leaders should call the people to repent through fasting and gathering at the temple to pray for God's mercy (1:14).

#### The locust invasion shows that an even greater day of the LORD judgment is imminent from God's hand (1:15).

#### The locust plague is supplemented by a severe drought that limits food for both people and animals (1:16-18).

#### The locusts are like a fire that destroys everything in its path so both man and animal must trust God for deliverance (1:19-20).

## The people should repent since a more dreadful judgment (day of the LORD) will come soon by the Babylonian army and Armageddon in the distant future (2:1-17).

### Judah should repent since the locust plague only prefigured a future day of the LORD judgment by the Babylonians in the near future and Armageddon in the distant future (2:1).

### Joel reiterates the locust plague imagery to prefigure the future judgment (day of the LORD) through the Babylonian army and Armageddon (2:2-11).

#### The locust plague of God's judgment prefigures the worse judgment of armies that the world has ever known (2:2).

#### The havoc by the invasion of "locusts" will leave the land totally devastated (2:3-5).

#### The people's reaction to the "locusts" is one of terror as the organization of the "army" causes them to advance quickly and thoroughly (2:6-9).

#### The approaching “locust army” even has cosmic disorders (2:10-11).

### God and Joel both call Judah to sincere, inner repentance shown in fasting because of God's character that repents from calamity (2:12-17).

#### God Himself calls Judah to sincere, inner repentance demonstrated outwardly in fasting, weeping, and mourning (2:12).

#### Joel adds that due to sincere repentance God may send blessing instead of calamity because of His grace, compassion, patience and love (2:13-14).

#### Joel calls Judah to national repentance shown in gathering the nation together for fasting and prayer (2:15-17).

# The result of Israel’s repentance will be that God will forgive and deliver Israel by judging the nations and restoring Judah in the Tribulation period (2:18–3:21).

## After Judah repents God will forgive and physically bless His covenant people (2:18-27).

### After Israel’s repentance in verses 12-17, God will bless the people through fertility of crops, good reputation, and removal of the Babylonian army (2:18-20).

### God promises to make up for the years of food lost to the locusts so that the people will know He is the only God and so they will never be ashamed again (2:21-27).

## God will deliver His restored people by judging the nations and will send a great time of spiritual awakening to motivate His people to repent now (2:28–3:21).

### In the day of the LORD, God will send the indwelling of the Spirit upon all Jews and celestial signs [when the Jewish nation repents at the return of Christ] (2:28-32; Hebrew text = 3:1-5).

#### The outpouring (indwelling) of the Spirit, prophecy, dreams, and visions will characterize Jews of every class (2:28-29).

#### God will marvelously intervene on His people's behalf through celestial signs and an offer of salvation that will deliver some of His people (2:30-32).

### When God restores Israel as a nation He will judge the nations for abusing Judah (3:1-16).

#### God gives hope to Judah by promising a restoration to the land (3:1).

#### God will judge the nations for scattering Judah to comfort Judah with His loyal love and justice (3:2-8).

#### Joel describes the warfare between God and the nations so that the people would know that God's judgment would be complete (3:9-16).

### Joel describes the fruitfulness of Judah in contrast to the desolation of Edom and Egypt as an indication that Judah will be inhabited forever (3:17-21).

#### Judah will be fruitful but Edom and Egypt will be desolate wastelands (3:17-19).

#### Judah will be dwelt forever due to God's vindication and forgiveness (3:20-21).

**Contrasts Between Joel 1 and 2:21-27**

*Adapted from an Anonymous Handout at Dallas Theological Seminary, about 1985*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **In Joel’s Day** | **In the Day of the LORD** |
| **Land** | Mourned (1:10) | Will rejoice and be glad (2:21) |
| **Animals** | Groaned, wandered, were hungry (1:18) | Will not be afraid (2:22a) |
| **Fields & Orchards** | Were barren & nonproductive (1:7, 10-12) | Will grow and be fruitful and productive (2:22) |
| **Rain** | Drought with dryness causing fire (1:20) | Will pour down in abundance (2:23) |
| **Grain, Wine, Oil** | Ruined and dried (1:10) | Will be plentiful (2:24) |
| **Crops** | Damaged by locusts (1:4) | Damage will be replaced with productivity (2:25-26) |

**Be Disciplined**

***Book of Joel***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*:

# The result of Judah’s repentance over God’s recent judgment of Judah by locusts and future day of the LORD by Babylonian and Armageddon invasions will be forgiveness, deliverance by God judging the nations, and national restoration.

# The response in Judah from a recent judgment of locusts and the future day of the LORD with Babylonian armies should be repentance (1:1–2:17).

## Joel affirms the divine authority of his prophecy and the uniqueness of the events he will describe so the people will pass his words on to future generations (1:1-3).

## Readers should mourn and repent to seek God's deliverance from a terrible locust invasion and drought (1:4-20).

## The people should repent since a more dreadful judgment (day of the LORD) will come soon by the Babylonian army and Armageddon in the distant future (2:1-17).

# The result of Israel’s repentance will be that God will forgive and deliver Israel by judging the nations and restoring Judah in the Tribulation period (2:18–3:21).

## After Judah repents God will forgive and physically bless His covenant people (2:18-27).

## God will deliver His restored people by judging the nations and will send a great time of spiritual awakening to motivate His people to repent now (2:28–3:21).

### In the day of the LORD, God will send the indwelling of the Spirit upon all Jews and celestial signs [when the Jewish nation repents at the return of Christ] (2:28-32; Hebrew text = 3:1-5).

### When God restores Israel as a nation He will judge the nations for abusing Judah (3:1-16).

### Joel describes the fruitfulness of Judah in contrast to the desolation of Edom and Egypt as an indication that Judah will be inhabited forever (3:17-21).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will show they accept God’s discipline by turning from known sin.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Be disciplined or you will be disciplined. This is true because any good leader disciplines those he cares about, and ultimately, God is the best disciplinarian.

### Need: Which better describes your life now? Disciplining yourself or being disciplined by God?

#### If your experiences are *sweet*, thank God. Maybe you are disciplining yourself so God doesn’t have to get your attention.

#### But if your experiences are *sour*, thank God also. Maybe this is just what you need for God to get your attention. Are you listening?

### Intro to MPI: What should we do when we are disciplined? Do you catch my double meaning here?

### Background: Judah had survived the Assyrian onslaught a century earlier when Israel was destroyed. However, things then became tough as God raised up the Babylonians to replace the Assyrians.

### Preview: Today we’ll see what to do about present difficulties, and then how these will all turn out in the end.

### Text: We’ll study the entire prophecy of Joel in all three chapters.

(What should we do when we are disciplined?)

# I. Discipline should bring repentance.

## Judah should repent over a recent judgment of locusts and the future day of the LORD with Babylonian and Tribulation armies (1:1–2:17).

### Joel affirms the divine authority of his prophecy and the uniqueness of the events he will describe so the people will pass his words on to future generations (1:1-3).

### Readers should mourn and repent to seek God's deliverance from a terrible locust invasion and drought (1:4-20).

### The people should repent since a more dreadful judgment (day of the LORD) will come soon by the Babylonian army and Armageddon in the distant future (2:1-17).

## God’s disciplining us should motivate us to seek the Lord.

(What results from repentance like that in Joel 2:12-17?)

# II. Repentance will bring restoration.

## Israel’s repentance will bring forgiveness, deliverance and restoration (2:18–3:21).

### Israel’s repentance will bring forgiveness and blessing (2:18-27).

### God will deliver His restored people by judging the nations and will send a great time of spiritual awakening to motivate His people to repent now (2:28–3:21).

#### In the day of the LORD, God will send the indwelling of the Spirit upon all Jews and celestial signs [when the Jewish nation repents at the return of Christ] (2:28-32; Hebrew text = 3:1-5).

#### When God restores Israel as a nation He will judge the nations for abusing Judah (3:1-16).

#### Joel describes the fruitfulness of Judah in contrast to the desolation of Edom and Egypt as an indication that Judah will be inhabited forever (3:17-21).

## Your trust in the Lord alone will bring his blessing.

(What should we do when we are disciplined?)

# Conclusion

### Let discipline bring repentance and repentance bring restoration (MI).

### The two main points from Joel show us God’s two-fold pattern:

#### Discipline should bring repentance.

#### Repentance will bring restoration.

### Be disciplined or you will be disciplined.

### Questions to consider might include these:

#### Do you need God to strip you of everything before you repent? (Huang Sabin)

#### Is God disciplining you to get your attention on him once again?

#### Have you considered fasting (1:14; 2:12) or do you think fasting isn’t for our modern age? Why wouldn’t it be?



**Rick Griffith**

9 April 2017

Message 8 of 12

**Be Disciplined**

***Book of Joel***

# Introduction

### Be disciplined or you will be disciplined. This is true because any good leader disciplines those he cares about, and ultimately, God is the best disciplinarian.

### Which better describes your life now? Disciplining yourself or being disciplined by God?

### What should we do when we are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

(What should we do when we are disciplined?)

# I. Discipline should bring \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## Judah should repent over a recent judgment of locusts and the future day of the LORD with Babylonian and Tribulation armies (1:1–2:17).

### Joel affirms the divine authority of his prophecy and the uniqueness of the events he will describe so the people will pass his words on to future generations (1:1-3).

### Readers should mourn and repent to seek God's deliverance from a terrible locust invasion and drought (1:4-20).

### The people should repent since a more dreadful judgment (day of the LORD) will come soon by the Babylonian army and Armageddon in the distant future (2:1-17).

## God’s disciplining us should motivate us to seek the Lord.

(What results from repentance like that in Joel 2:12-17?)

# II. Repentance will bring \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## Israel’s repentance will bring forgiveness, deliverance and restoration (2:18–3:21).

### Israel’s repentance will bring forgiveness and blessing (2:18-27).

### God will deliver His restored people by judging the nations and will send a great time of spiritual awakening to motivate His people to repent now (2:28–3:21).

#### In the day of the LORD, God will send the indwelling of the Spirit upon all Jews and celestial signs [when the Jewish nation repents at the return of Christ] (2:28-32).

#### When God restores Israel as a nation He will judge the nations for abusing Judah (3:1-16).

#### Joel describes the fruitfulness of Judah in contrast to the desolation of Edom and Egypt as an indication that Judah will be inhabited forever (3:17-21).

## Your trust in the Lord alone will bring his blessing.

(What should we do when we are disciplined?)

# Conclusion

### Let discipline bring repentance and repentance bring restoration (Main Idea).

### Be disciplined or you will be disciplined.

### Questions to ask:

#### Do you need God to strip you of everything before you repent? (Huang Sabin)

#### Is God disciplining you to get your attention on him once again?

#### Have you considered fasting (1:14; 2:12) or do you think fasting isn’t for our modern age? Why wouldn’t it be?

**Thought Questions**

1. Read the three chapters of Joel and list the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verse** | **Ways God Disciplined Judah** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. When has God disciplined you in your own life?

Text

Text

Text

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