

# THE HEART-CRY OF A DISTRESSED PROPHET

## Joel 1:5-20

Intro: As far as we can tell, Joel is the oldest of the writing prophets--possibly 850 B. C. Therefore, he mentions things for the first time, and sets a pattern, in some respects, for all future prophecies.

*DID NOT COVER AN EXTENDED TIME, BUT WAS CONCERNED WITH ONE PARTICULAR EVENT: THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS!*

Like all prophets, HIS MAIN MESSAGE WAS FOR THE PEOPLE OF HIS OWN GENERATION. However, it becomes clear in Joel's prophecy that this unprecedented judgment foreshadows THE GREATEST JUDGMENT THIS WORLD WILL EVER SEE: THE JUDGMENT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD, THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

FIRST  
PROPHET  
MENTIONED  
IN ACTS.

Before the children of Israel ever entered the land, Moses told them that they would depart from the Lord. The history of Israel proves that prediction to be true, and gives witness to the sinful tendencies in the hearts of the people of God!

In vv. 1-4 we see how God had sought to speak to His people through judgment--a judgment which had never been visited upon them before. From v. 5 on we see that their hearts were so blinded that they did not realize what was going on.

Even the animals showed more intelligence than they did. Cf. vv. 18, 20. Cf. also Isa. 1:3.

Therefore, a prophetic voice is needed. And so we have Joel. How gracious of God to use all means possible to reach His people!

Even from a practical standpoint you would think that the people would know that something was wrong, BUT WHEN YOU READ A CHAPTER LIKE DEUT. 28 IT BECOMES EVEN MORE APPARENT THAT THE PEOPLE WERE NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE WORD OF GOD!

Read Deut. 28:15, 17, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 45-48!

So now we begin to get a clearer picture of what the issues really were.

In vv. 5-13 Joel is speaking to the people of his own day.

- (1) In vv. 5-7 to the drunkards.
- (2) In vv. 8-10--still apparently to the drunkards, but emphasizing the degree of their grief, or what it should be.
- (3) In vv. 11, 12 he calls upon those who work in the fields.
- (4) In v. 13 he addresses the spiritual leaders of Israel (or Judah) who are to take the lead in turning the people back to the Lord.

Then in vv. 14, 15 ALL OF THE PEOPLE are called upon to join in a day of national repentance--the reference to the day of the Lord meaning that only greater judgment could and would fall on them if they persisted in their present path.

Vv. 16-18 tell WHY they should repent, and then in the last two verses (vv. 19, 20) it is almost as though Joel's words are directed to the Lord even though there seemed to be so little response from the people.

# I. THE CALL OF THE PROPHET TO HIS PEOPLE (Joel 1:5-18). This is a real heart-cry.

*Vine, a  
symbol of  
Israel -  
cf. Isa. 5:  
1-7.*

First, we see how the people had become pleasure-loving, and in seeking pleasure "joy is withered away from the sons of men" (v. 12b, cf. vv. 5-7).

Secondly, the prophet speaks of what the depth of their grief should be like--see v. 8. This was because of the fact that fellowship with God had been broken off because "the meal offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord"--the offerings which were used with the animal sacrifices. See also v. 13. The one could not be offered without the other.

Thirdly, the farmers and vinedressers were rebuked because of the fruitlessness of their labors. THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT THIS IF THEY HAD KNOWN THE WORD OF GOD! This was their shame!

But grief is not enough. THERE MUST BE REPENTANCE, AND THAT REPENTANCE MUST BEGIN WITH THE PRIESTS, THE MINISTERS OF THE ALTAR.

And so, fourthly, we have this appeal in vv. 13-15, with the prophet's arguments which follow in vv. 16-18.

For the moment, the prophet sensing the urgency of the need, turns from the people and we have

## II. THE HEART-CRY OF THE PROPHET TO GOD (Joel 1:19, 20).

Note also that we have here the cry of the beasts.

Concl: Cf. Matt. 23:37-39.

The people of Judah now had three ways in which God was seeking to speak to them:

- (1) Moses.
- (2) The plague.
- (3) The prophecy of Joel.

The judgment of the Day of the Lord will be the worst the world has ever experienced, but one which the people of God have been warned about from the very beginning. They are without excuse!