

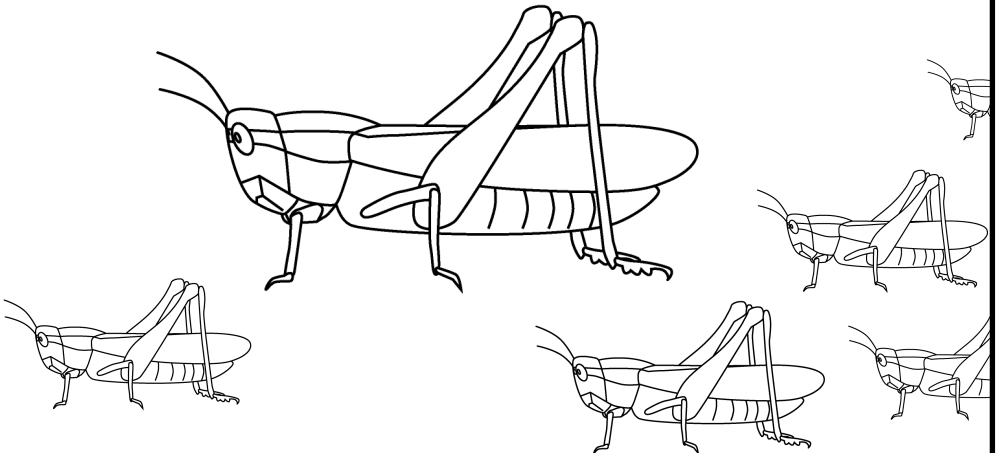


TRINITY CHURCH

THE DAY IS NEAR

Growth Group Studies in JOEL

Term 2, 2023



TERM 2 OUTLINE

Date	Book	Bible Passages	Title	Page #
Week 1 (1-7 May)	Jonah	Jonah 1 & Mark 4:35-41	The Messenger & the Storm	-
Week 2 (8-14 May)		Jonah 2 & Matt 12:38-41	A Fishy Burial	
Week 3 (15-21 May)		Jonah 3 & Luke 18:9-14	A Dramatic Transformation	
Week 4 (22-28 May)		Jonah 4 & Luke 15:11-32	The God Who Shows No Favouritism	
Week 5 (29 May - 4 June)	Joel	Joel 1	Time to Wake Up	7
Week 6 (5 - 11 June)		Joel 2:1-17	Blaze & Blessing	13
Week 7 (12 - 18 June)		Joel 2:18-32	An Outpouring of Grace	18
Week 8 (19 - 25 June)		Joel 3	The Harvest is Ripe	22
Week 9 (26 June - 2 July)	Trinity Church Mt Barker Prayer Night: Monday 26th June			
Week 10 (3 - 9 July)	Growth Group Social/Mission Night			

OVERVIEW

Author & Date

We don't have any personal information about the man Joel, other than the fact that he was the son of Pethuel and wrote to the elders living in the promised land in Judah.

The date of Joel, as with many of The Prophets, is contested. Some scholars argue that it was written after the exile to Babylon, looking backwards. Others argue that it was written before the exile, as it draws near. These studies were written on the basis that it is set during an invasion of Jerusalem and Judah, which would place it either during the Assyrian invasion of 701 BC, the first Babylonian invasion of 598 BC, or the second Babylonian invasion of 588 BC. However, the exact dating isn't critical to our understanding of the book itself.

Themes

The Day of the LORD

Joel addresses the distress of Israel under attack by her enemies in Joel's day. This is a contemporary day of judgement for Israel (ie. 'day of the LORD' 1:15). That 'day of the LORD' (**now**) was a pointer to the ultimate 'day of the LORD' (**then**, ch3) which Joel warns is coming. Following this "**now > then**" theme, Joel calls the people to lament their present circumstances and turn to the LORD for help. Joel then turns to God's divine answer and the ultimate day of judgement and deliverance that is coming when the wicked will be harvested and God's people established in safety forever.

Pestilence

Joel describes Judah's plight in many ways: locust plague (1:4), invading nation (1:6), temple worship disrupted (1:9), drought (1:10), famine (1:16) and fire (1:19). It is possible that all these things happened in quick succession, but likely that Joel is using poetic language to describe a disastrous event in such a way that it has universal application in times of disaster for God's people.

Repentance

In light of God's day(s) of judgement, Joel calls God's people to return to the LORD.

God's Sovereignty & Goodness

Yahweh has absolute authority over all nations and peoples on earth. All of history is under God's control. All people will be brought under God's final judgement.

God's Faithfulness to His Covenant

God is always faithful to the covenant he made with his people. He will rescue his people and establish them in his place under his rule and blessing.

The Coming of the Spirit in Salvation

Joel prophesies the pouring out of God's Spirit on all people, bringing salvation to all who call on the name of the LORD before the final day of the LORD.

Structure

Joel is centred around two 'days of the LORD': a present day of the LORD in Joel's day and the final day of the LORD at the end of world history. Joel moves from the now (Joel's day of the LORD) –to the time in between Joel's day and the final day—to the final day of the LORD.

Joel moves from:

- ❖ 1: A call to mourning in a time of pestilence and judgement (a day of the LORD in Joel's day)
- ❖ 2:1-12: Joel reminds his contemporaries that there is a future and final day of the LORD coming
- ❖ 2:13-17: Joel calls for Judah to repent and call on God's grace to deliver them from their present predicament
- ❖ 2:18-27: Joel records God's promise that in between he will respond to their cry for mercy by ending the current crisis and blessing his people:
- ❖ 2:28-32: This blessing will culminate in the pouring out of his Spirit on all people in between
- ❖ 3: Joel moves to the final day of the LORD where all people of the earth will be judged and God's people rescued and vindicated

WEEK 1: TIME TO WAKE UP

Looking Back

[All Together or Pairs/Triplets]

Connecting

3 quick questions:

- ❖ What was your first car?
- ❖ If you could have a pet, what would you have?
- ❖ Favourite fruit?

In 60 seconds, share:

- ❖ One thing from this week you'd like to thank God for
- ❖ One thing you'd like to ask God for

Last Week's Application

- ❖ Last week in Jonah 4, we thought about how God calls us to love our enemies and calls us into mission to rescue them. What did you decide you need to do in response?
- ❖ In trying to put the applications into practice, share what you learnt, how you were encouraged and where you got stuck
- ❖ Help each other identify ways to overcome these road-bumps

Pray

- ❖ Give thanks to God for each other
- ❖ Ask God to grow each of you as disciples as you walk together in Christ
- ❖ Pray for specific thanks and requests
- ❖ Pray for help with what we're trying to apply
- ❖ Ask that God will transform us as we read and reflect on his word together

Looking Up

[All Together]

1. What is a crisis you have lived through? (Not a personal crisis, but communally shared with the whole community/nation you lived in eg. fires, floods, war etc.)

Joel is an Old Testament book most likely written while the Babylonians were attacking Jerusalem (during either the first invasion of 598 BC or the second invasion of 588 BC). At this point in history, Israel has been split into two. The northern kingdom (Israel) has already been destroyed and scattered, and only the southern kingdom (Judah—where the capital, Jerusalem, is) remains (but they are about to be taken into exile). Joel begins with a national crisis that is happening at the time God spoke to Joel.

Read Joel chapter 1

[Pairs or Triplets]

2. Put together all the different descriptions Joel gives us of their current crisis.

Looking Forward

6. The crisis in Judah was the result the nation turning it's back on God. What are the tragic results we see today of a world that turned its back on God?

7. God calls the people to (v5) weep, wail and (v14) cry out to God over the crisis.
 - a) What crises in this world have you wept over?

 - b) What things in the world around us are we acclimatised to that we need to wake up and weep over?

 - c) What things in the church do we need to wake up and weep over?

 - d) Do you weep and pray for the nation of Israel who are rejecting Jesus?

8. Should fasting be something we practise today? If so, when?

[Pairs or Triplets]

9. Put what you've learned today into 3 short points:



10. Who will you share this good news with this week?

Practice different ways you could share this (eg. "Just the other day I read the Bible with a group from church and learned...")

11. What will you do as a result of what we've learned?

[Sin to repent of? Actions to take? Beliefs to change? Things to praise or thank God for?]

Pray for each other: Thank God for what he's taught us, ask for his help to put his word into practice, pray for help to share what we've learnt.

WEEK 2: BLESS & BLESSING

Looking Back

[All Together or Pairs/Triplets]

Connecting

3 quick questions:

- ❖ If you could have the ability to play any musical instrument, which one would you choose?
- ❖ Ice cream or hot chips?
- ❖ What's a part of scripture that is precious to you?

In 60 seconds, share:

- ❖ One thing from this week you'd like to thank God for
- ❖ One thing you'd like to ask God for

Last Week's Application

- ❖ Last week in Joel 1, we were called to weep and wail over the crisis of faith in our world. What did you decide you would do in response? Who did you plan to share this with?
- ❖ In trying to put the applications into practice, share what you learnt, how you were encouraged and where you got stuck
- ❖ Help each other identify ways to overcome these road-bumps

Pray

- ❖ Give thanks to God for each other
- ❖ Ask God to grow each of you as disciples as you walk together in Christ
- ❖ Pray for specific thanks and requests
- ❖ Pray for help with what we're trying to apply
- ❖ Ask that God will transform us as we read and reflect on his word together

Looking Forward

[Pairs or Triplets]

10. Someone asks you, "How can a merciful God punish people?" How would you respond? (Take turns role playing both sides of a conversation.)

[Pairs or Triplets]

11. Put what you've learned today into 3 short points:



12. Who will you share this good news with this week?

Practice different ways you could share this (eg. "Just the other day I read the Bible with a group from church and learned...")

13. What will you do as a result of what we've learned?

[Sin to repent of? Actions to take? Beliefs to change? Things to praise or thank God for?]

Pray for each other: Thank God for what he's taught us, ask for his help to put his word into practice, pray for help to share what we've learnt.

WEEK 3: AN OUTPOURING OF GRACE

Looking Back

[All Together or Pairs/Triplets]

Connecting

3 quick questions:

- ❖ If you had time to learn a new skill, what would you choose?
- ❖ Do you prefer working from home or on-site?
- ❖ What's one thing you wish was still in fashion?

In 60 seconds, share:

- ❖ One thing from this week you'd like to thank God for
- ❖ One thing you'd like to ask God for

Last Week's Application

- ❖ Last week in Joel 2, we reflected on the certainty and nearness of the terrifying day of the LORD, and God's overarching mercy. What did you plan to do as a result / who did you plan to talk to about what we learned?
- ❖ In trying to put the applications into practice, share what you learnt, how you were encouraged and where you got stuck
- ❖ Help each other identify ways to overcome these road-bumps

Pray

- ❖ Give thanks to God for each other
- ❖ Ask God to grow each of you as disciples as you walk together in Christ
- ❖ Pray for specific thanks and requests
- ❖ Pray for help with what we're trying to apply
- ❖ Ask that God will transform us as we read and reflect on his word together

Looking Up

Today Joel looks beyond his contemporary crisis to what God promised would come afterwards, the in-between before the final day of the LORD where God pours out his blessing in an unparalleled way.

Read Joel 2:18-27

1. Isn't jealousy usually a bad thing? How can the bible describe God as jealous (v18)?

[Pairs or Triplets]

2. Compare the blessings God promised, to the crisis in ch1. What do you notice?

Read Joel 2:28-32

3. How do you think Israelites in Joel's day might have responded to this?

4. How does what happened 600-odd years later on the day of pentecost (see Acts 2) affect how we read Joel 2?

Looking Forward

Read Revelation 7

5. God promised to repay Israel for the years the locusts have eaten. All who suffer for Christ will be repaid for their suffering a million times over. How would remembering and believing this change your perspective on suffering in your life?

6. How much comfort does it give you to have received God's Spirit?

[Pairs or Triplets]

7. Put what you've learned today into 3 short points:



8. Who will you share this good news with this week?

Practice different ways you could share this (eg. "Just the other day I read the Bible with a group from church and learned...")

9. What will you do as a result of what we've learned?

[Sin to repent of? Actions to take? Beliefs to change? Things to praise or thank God for?]

Pray for each other: Thank God for what he's taught us, ask for his help to put his word into practice, pray for help to share what we've learnt.

WEEK 4: THE HARVEST IS RIPP

Looking Back

[All Together or Pairs/Triplets]

Connecting

3 quick questions:

- ❖ You can have 3 ingredients plus sauce on your pizza. What do you choose?
- ❖ Have you ever had a close call / near miss?
- ❖ What is something you find hard to believe or understand about God?

In 60 seconds, share:

- ❖ One thing from this week you'd like to thank God for
- ❖ One thing you'd like to ask God for

Last Week's Application

- ❖ Last week in Joel 2 we reflected on the rescue and blessing God promised for his people, and that our suffering will end in blessing. What did you plan to do in response / who did you plan to share this with?
- ❖ In trying to put the applications into practice, share what you learnt, how you were encouraged and where you got stuck
- ❖ Help each other identify ways to overcome these road-bumps

Pray

- ❖ Give thanks to God for each other
- ❖ Ask God to grow each of you as disciples as you walk together in Christ
- ❖ Pray for specific thanks and requests
- ❖ Pray for help with what we're trying to apply
- ❖ Ask that God will transform us as we read and reflect on his word together

Looking Up

Joel's prophecy ends with the end. In chapter 3, Joel takes us to the battle on the final day of the LORD, it's aftermath, and the eternal security of God's people and God's place.

Read Joel 3

1. What imagery does God use to describe what will happen on that day? What do these images teach us?

Verse	Imagery	Meaning
1		
2		
2		
9		
13		

13		
15		
18		
19		
20		

2. How do you react to Joel 3?

3. What could happen if we zoomed in on Joel 3 and forgot all of the calls to repentance and mercy in Joel 1 & 2 (and the rest of the Bible!)?

4. Why does it matter so much to God that people know that he is God? (v17)

Read Psalm 2

5. Where does Jesus fit in all this?

Looking Forward

6. If this is where history is headed, what responsibility do we have now that we know what we know?

[Pairs or Triplets]

7. Put what you've learned today into 3 short points:



8. Who will you share this good news with this week?

Practice different ways you could share this (eg. "Just the other day I read the Bible with a group from church and learned...")

9. **What will you do as a result of what we've learned?**

[Sin to repent of? Actions to take? Beliefs to change? Things to praise or thank God for?]

Pray for each other: Thank God for what he's taught us, ask for his help to put his word into practice, pray for help to share what we've learnt.



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