# Joel

Joel is the record of a late 7th Century BCE prophecy given to Prophet Joel.

It dates from before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, and concerns the city’s destruction and later restoration. In the book of Acts, Peter quotes part of this prophecy when explaining how some of these words were fulfilled in JeruSalem on the Day of Pentecost in 33 CE.

*Most of this book is poetry*

Something that only a Bible translator would notice is when words are in the form of Hebrew poetry. There’s a definite cadence that can be seen in the original language. Therefore, because this is the chosen style of God, we’ve tried to recreate it as it was originally intended: in poetic verse.

*Why use poetry?*

Poetry must conform to a certain rhythm and style. These act as memory aids, helping you to recall the words, making it easier for messages to be spread via the most common communication method of the time: song.

*Who was talking?*

When translating the words of the Prophets, you can’t help but notice the constant changing personal pronouns (I, you, he, they, etc.) used in the text. It makes it very confusing to figure out exactly who’s talking.

However, we now realize one reason for the confusion that’s usually overlooked: God didn’t speak to the Prophets personally. Rather, He sent His messages through a mediator, either referred to as a messenger (an angel), or sometimes as ‘The Word’ (which some interpret to mean Jesus).

So there are actually *three* voices speaking:

 1. That of the Prophet, who sometimes quotes himself,

 2. That of the angelic messenger who’s bringing the message from God,

 3. The words of God Himself (which we put in italics).

How can we tell the difference? From the context, the pronouns, and the tenses:

 1. When the Prophet speaks, he’s either clearly reporting what he said or did, or is simply saying what was happening.

 2. When the angelic messenger speaks, he talks about God in the third person.

 3 When God is speaking, all references to God are naturally spoken in the first person.

Did we get it all right? Probably not, but it has been an honest attempt at doing so. If you think you’ve spotted a place where our choice is incorrect, please let us know and we’ll reconsider it.

### Joel

## Chapter 1

1These are words of Jehovah that came to JoEl (son of BathuEl).

2[Joel says:]

 ‘Listen to these things, O you elders…
 Give ear, all you who live in the land!
 Have you seen such things in your [lives]?
 Were they seen in the days of your fathers?

 3‘Describe these things to your children,
 And to all the generations that follow!

 [‘For God says:]

 4*‘For, caterpillars ate all that there was,*
 *And locusts devoured what they didn’t eat;*
 *Then, grasshoppers ate what remained from the locusts,*
 *And what the grasshoppers didn’t consume,*
 *Was thereafter destroyed by the blight.*

 5*‘Now, sober up and start crying,*
 *All you who are drunk from your wine;*
 *For, joy and gladness are gone from your mouths,*
 6*Since a powerful and populous nation,*
 *Has now arrived in your land.*

 *‘They have teeth that are like those of lions,*
 *And molars like those of young bears.*
 7*They’ve appointed your grapevines to extinction,*
 *And condemned your fig-trees to splinters.*
 *They’re searching for you and cutting you down,*
 *So now, all of your branches are white.*

 8*‘Therefore, wail like woman wearing sackcloth,*
 *[Who mourns] for the man of her virgin years.*
 9*For the drink offerings and other sacrifices,*
 *Have been removed from [His Temple].*
 *Yes mourn, O you Priests who serve at the Altar,*
 10*For all of the fields now lie bare!*

 *‘And mourn, O land, for the grain is now gone,*
 *Also, the wine has all dried,*
 *And the oil is in short supply,*
 11*Because the farmers have withered away.*

 *‘Therefore, wail for all that you own,*
 *Since the wheat and barley are gone from the fields!*

 12*‘The grapes [have shriveled and] dried;*
 *Very few fig-trees remain;*
 *The pomegranates, palms, and the melons,*
 *And all the trees in the plains are now dry…*
 *Yes, all that brings joy to sons of men,*
 *Has been taken away!*

 13*‘So Priests, tie your [hands] and beat on your chests…*
 *Yes wail, you who serve at the Altar!*
 *Go to bed wearing sackcloth,*
 *You who are serving before Me,*
 *Since there’s nothing left to be sacrificed,*
 *And nothing to bring as drink offerings,*
 *To the House of Jehovah!’*

14[And Joel says:]

 ‘Call for a period of fasting…
 Proclaim a solemn assembly!
 Gather the elders and all of the people,
 To the House of Jehovah your God,
 Where all must fervently call to the Lord!

 15‘Woe, woe, woe for this time!
 For the Day of the Lord has arrived,
 And misery upon misery has reached you!
 16Before your eyes, all the food was destroyed,
 With the rest that brings joy to your people.

 17‘In the stables, the cows are now restless,
 Since all that they treasure is gone.
 The wine vats have all been cut down,
 And all of your grain is now parched…
 18So you’re left with nothing at all.’

 ‘The herds of oxen are bawling,
 Because they don’t have any pasture,
 And your flocks of sheep have all been destroyed.
 19So, you should call out to Jehovah,
 For your beautiful fields have been burned,
 And the flames have consumed all your trees.

 [‘For God says:]

 20*‘Now, even the beasts in the plains,*
 *Have all started looking to Me,*
 *Because their springs have gone dry,*
 *And the desert’s beauty has vanished.’*

### Joel

## Chapter 2

 1[‘For God says:]

 *‘So, sound the trumpets in Zion,*
 *And on the Holy Mountain, you must proclaim,*
 *That all should bow to their faces,*
 *For the Day of the Lord is at hand (it’s near)!*

 2*‘It’s a day that’s gloomy and dark…*
 *It’s a day that’s cloudy with fog.*
 *And as dawn peaks over the mountains,*
 *[You can see] a vast, mighty people.*

 *‘Throughout the ages, such a thing hasn’t happened,*
 *And through coming years, it won’t happen again…*
 *From one generation to another.*

 3*‘A consuming fire is raging before you,*
 *And all that’s behind you is burning.*
 *A paradise of delights lies before you,*
 *But all that’s behind is extinction and desert,*
 *From which no man can escape.*

 4*‘The sight of them is like horses…*
 *Like cavalry in hot pursuit.*
 5*Theirs is the sound of chariot wheels*
 *Leaping across tops of mountains…*
 *Like the sounds of flames burning stubble,*
 *And of a vast mighty hoard of warriors.*

 6*‘Before them, the people will all be destroyed,*
 *And their faces will be like burnt pots.*
 7*For as soldiers, they’ll attack you;*
 *And as men of war, they’ll then scale your walls.*

 *‘Each of their men will go their own ways,*
 *And they’ll not be turned from their paths…*
 8*But, none will stray far from their brothers.*

 *‘They’ll arrive here with shields,*
 *And by their arrows, the people will fall…*
 *For no way will they tire [of killing].*

 9*‘They’ll thereafter capture the city,*
 *And along its walls, they’ll run.*
 *Then, into your homes, they’ll descend*
 *And climb through your windows like thieves.*

 10*‘Before their faces, there’ll be just confusion,*
 *And even the skies will be shaken.*
 *Then the sun and the moon will grow dark,*
 *And the brightness of the stars will decrease.*

 11*‘Before his armies, the Lord will call out;*
 *For he’s leading a great mighty hoard.*
 *His power will be seen in the things that he does,*
 *For great is the Day of the Lord,*
 *Since none can stand and oppose him.*

 12*‘Now run,’* says Jehovah your God!
 *‘Flee to Me whole-heartedly…*
 *Come fasting, weeping, and beating your chests!’*

13[Joel then says:]

 ‘So, tear at your hearts, not your clothes,
 And turn to Jehovah your God!
 For, He shows mercy and pity…
 He’s gentle and He’s forgiving,
 [So He’ll overlook] the bad things you’ve done.

 14‘Who knows if He’ll stop and consider,
 Then change His plans and bless you instead.
 So, bring sacrifices and drink offerings,
 To Jehovah your God!

 15‘Now, blow the trumpets in Zion…
 Proclaim a [day] of holy fasts…
 A day of sacred service must be declared!

 16‘Yes, gather all of the people,
 And proclaim a holy assembly!
 Choose your elders, then gather your young…
 Even those who are nursing at breasts!
 Call the grooms from their bedrooms
 And the brides from their wedding chambers!’

 17‘Now, Priests, you should all start to weep…
 Yes, you who serve before God,
 At the base of the Altar.
 Then pray:

 *‘Spare Your people, O Lord!*
 *Don’t hand them over for scorning*
 *And to be ruled by the gentiles!*
 *Then the nations will never have reason to ask,*
 *What has become of your God?’*

 18‘O Jehovah,
 ‘Show zeal for Your land,
 And please show mercy to Your people!

 19‘O Jehovah,

 ‘Reply to Your people and say:

 *‘{Look!} I’ll send enough grain that you’ll be full,*
 *Along with much wine and olive oil…*
 *And you’ll be scorned by the nations no more!*

 20*‘Then I’ll drive away those who have come from the north*
 *And push them into a waterless land…*
 *I’ll remove their faces to the farthest of seas,*
 *And their rears to the opposite end,*
 *Where they [will lie] rotting and groaning,*
 *And where nothing that they’ve done can be seen.’*

 21‘So, be courageous O land…
 Yes, you should rejoice and be glad,
 For Jehovah will be moved to take action!

 22‘Also take courage, you cattle;
 For, pastures will burst from the desert,
 And all the trees will bear fruit…
 The fig-trees and grapevines will then yield their strength!

 23‘And be glad, O children of Zion…
 Find joy in Jehovah your God.
 For to the righteousness, He will send food,
 And He’ll bring the rains (both the early and late)
 Just like He’s done in the past.

 24‘Then your threshing-floors will be covered with grain,
 As your vats of wine and oil overflow.
 25He will repay you for all of those years
 When your things were devoured by blight…
 By grasshoppers, caterpillars, and locusts,
 And by the great army that He sent against you.

 26‘Then you’ll all eat and be filled,
 And you’ll praise the Name of your God…
 The One who sent you great wonders.
 And thereafter, His people won’t meet with disgrace
 Throughout the ages that follow.

27[Now God says:]

 *‘O IsraEl,*

 *‘At that time, you’ll come here and know*
 *That I’m here in your midst…*
 *Yes Me, Jehovah your God!*
 *For there are no Gods other than Me,*
 *And I’ll not leave My people disgraced throughout the age!*

 28*‘Then, in the last days, I’ll pour out My Breath,*
 *And your sons and daughters will all prophesy,*
 *Your aged men will dream dreams,*
 *And young men in your midst will see visions.*

 29*‘In those days, I’ll pour out My Breath*
 *Upon My male and female attendants.*
 30*Miracles, I’ll bring to the skies,*
 *And fire, smoke and blood to the land.*

 31*‘For the sun will then become dark,*
 *And the moon [will be changed] into blood,*
 *Before the great and apparent arrival,*
 *Of the Day of the Lord.*

 32*‘Then, all who call on the name of the Lord*
 *Will be the ones who are saved,’* said Jehovah.

 *‘For, to Mount Zion and JeruSalem,*
 *Will come a person who saves,*
 *Announcing good news to all those*
 *Who’ve been called by the Lord.’*

### Joel

## Chapter 3

1[And God continues to say:]

 *‘For, {Look!} in those days and at that time,*
 *I’ll return all those who were taken away*
 *From Judah and JeruSalem.*

 2*‘Then I’ll gather all of those nations*
 *To the Valley of JehoShaphat;*
 *And on behalf of My people, I’ll judge them…*
 *On behalf IsraEl (My inheritance)…*
 *Those whom I’d scattered among all the nations…*
 *Those among whom I’ve divided My land…*
 *My people, over whom I’ve cast lots…*
 3*Those who once gave their boys to the whores*
 *And sold their young women for wine (which they drank).*

 4*‘What are you to Me, O Sidon and Tyre,*
 *Or Galilee of the Philistines?*
 *Shouldn’t I repay you for the things that you’ve done…*
 *What reasons did I give you to hate Me?*

 *‘So I’ll swiftly bring what’s due on your heads;*
 5*For you’ve taken My silver and gold,*
 *As well as the things that I’ve chosen,*
 *Then carried it back to your temples!*
 6*And the sons of Judah and JeruSalem,*
 *You’ve given to the sons of the Greeks…*
 *You pushed them away from your borders.*

 7*‘But Look!*

 *‘In every place where you’ve sent them,*
 *I’ll make them stand once again,*
 *And I’ll lay the payment for them on your heads.*

 8*‘Then, after that, I’ll give*
 *Your sons and daughters to the sons of the Jews.*
 *And many will be taken as captives*
 *To nations that live far away;*
 *For, I Jehovah, have spoken.*

 9*‘So, proclaim these things to the nations!*
 *Declare a holy war against them…*
 *Yes, awaken the soldiers and shout:*

 ‘[Attack and conquer], O men of war!
 10Cut your plows into broadswords,
 And beat your scythes into spears!
 Let the weak among you say they’re strong,
 11And attack the nations that live roundabout!
 Come and assemble [your armies],
 And let your meek become warriors!’

 12*‘Yes, awaken the gentiles and send them*
 *To the Valley of JehoShaphat;*
 *For there, I’ll separate nations*
 *(Those who live round-about you),*
 13*And then, I’ll send for the scythes…*
 *For the crops are now ready for harvest!*
 *Climb in and tread, for the wine vat is full…*
 *The vats overflow with their badness!*

 14*‘Then throughout the valley, [you’ll hear] the cries*
 *Of those who are about to be punished;*
 *For the Day of the Lord is at hand!*

 15*‘Then the sun and the moon will grow dark,*
 *And the stars will start to grow dim.*
 16*And from Zion, the Lord will then shout…*
 *From JeruSalem, his voice will be heard.*

 *‘At that time, the lands and skies will be shaken…*
 *But the Lord will spare all his people.*
 *For I’ll make the sons of IsraEl strong,*
 17*And you’ll know that I am Jehovah your God!*

 *‘On Zion, My Holy Mountain, I’ll camp,*
 *And JeruSalem will be holy once more…*
 *The nations won’t overrun her again.*

 18*‘And in that day,*
 *The mountains will trickle down sweetness,*
 *Milk will flow from the hills,*
 *And from the springs of Judah, water will flow.*

 *‘Then a spring will flow from My [Temple],*
 *And its waters will become a great river!* [Ezekiel 47:3]

 19*‘Egypt will no longer be,*
 *And Edom’s land in the plains will be gone;*
 *For to the sons of Judah, they were unfair,*
 *And in their lands, they shed righteous blood.*

 20*‘Throughout the ages, they’ll be living in Judah again…*
 *Throughout generations of generations in JeruSalem.*
 21*Then I’ll avenge all the blood that I’ve not avenged,*
 *And the Lord will be camping on Zion.’*