

Minor Prophets, Major Messages: Joel - A Day of Judgment or Salvation?

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Read or watch first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family study, an adult can select suitable portions and accept spoken answers.

Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

[Open the full teaching](#)

Teaching summary

This teaching examines Joel's warning that the Day of YHWH is coming and calls us to repentance and hope in his mercy. The teaching explains Joel's name as YHWH is God. Joel addresses Judah during a devastating locust plague, with the temple operating; the teaching notes that his exact historical date is uncertain. He uses the disaster to warn of a greater day of judgment and calls the people to return to YHWH with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Joel insists that repentance must reach the heart. Rending garments can be an outward sign, but God seeks inward transformation rather than an empty display of sorrow. YHWH is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. If the people return, God will show compassion. The Day of YHWH can therefore change from judgment for God's people into salvation and restoration, while judgment turns toward the nations that harmed them.

Joel's description of the Day of YHWH echoes the Sinai revelation. Both scenes include a loud shofar, darkness and clouds, fire, an earthquake, and God speaking. Sinai's terrifying glory was meant to teach Israel the fear of YHWH so that they would not sin. Joel likewise uses frightening imagery to make clear that judgment is real and that the people must take their relationship with God seriously. God's purpose is life and protection through repentance, not destruction for its own sake.

The teaching connects Joel's message with James's call to draw near to God, cleanse hands, purify hearts, and humble oneself. Genuine repentance confronts the seriousness of sin and the harm done to others. It is not limited to public sorrow. The choice remains the same for believers today: continue in disobedience and face judgment, or call upon YHWH and receive salvation.

Paul quotes Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:9-13: salvation is offered to Jew and Greek through calling on the Lord, confessing Yeshua as Lord, and believing in his resurrection. Peter identifies the outpouring of the Spirit at Shavuot with Joel's promise in Acts 2:16-21. The teaching connects this fulfillment with the continuing mission of Spirit-empowered witness from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Joel's judgment imagery should not be read as though every part of the prophecy was exhausted on that one day.

Joel's major message therefore reaches beyond the ancient plague. The Day of YHWH will be judgment or salvation according to the response of God's people. The Spirit empowers believers to proclaim salvation, and genuine repentance prepares them for the coming day. The teaching

concludes by calling believers to walk in the Spirit, witness to the nations, and proclaim that everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved.

Summary points

- Joel uses a devastating locust plague to announce the coming Day of YHWH.
- God calls his people to return with their whole hearts.
- Rending the heart matters more than an outward display of sorrow.
- God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.
- Repentance can turn the Day of YHWH from judgment into salvation for God's people.
- Joel's imagery echoes the terrifying revelation at Mount Sinai.
- God's warnings are meant to lead people away from sin and toward life.
- Paul uses Joel 2:32 to teach that everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved.
- Peter connects Joel's promise of the Spirit with Shavuot.
- The Spirit empowers believers to witness to the ends of the earth.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. Joel's name means '_____ is God.'
2. Joel calls the people to return to God with all their _____.
3. God wants people to rend their hearts rather than merely their _____.
4. The Day of YHWH can become a day of salvation when people _____.
5. Paul quotes Joel to say that everyone who calls on the Lord will be _____.
6. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to be Yeshua's _____.

Challenging

1. Joel says the people of Judah were suffering from a plague of _____.
2. The Day of YHWH is described as great and very _____.
3. The Sinai revelation included a loud _____ blast.
4. Peter connects Joel's Spirit prophecy with the Feast of _____.
5. Paul quotes Joel 2:32 in Romans chapter _____.
6. Yeshua said the Spirit would empower witnesses beginning in _____.

Group discussion

Discuss respectfully and support answers from the passages. Use these lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. Why does Joel use the locust plague to prepare people for the Day of YHWH?

2. What is the difference between rending the heart and rending the garment?

3. How do the Sinai connections explain the purpose of frightening judgment imagery?

4. Why does genuine repentance require confronting the harm caused by sin?

5. How do Paul's and Peter's uses of Joel connect salvation with Yeshua and the Spirit?

6. How can believers walk in the Spirit and proclaim the warning and hope of the coming day?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching and the passages. Accept equivalent wording that expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. YHWH (also: Yahweh, the LORD)

Teaching overview: meaning of Joel

2. hearts (also: heart)

Joel 2:12-13

3. garments

Joel 2:13

4. repent

Joel 2:12-18; teaching major message

5. saved

Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13

6. witnesses

Acts 1:8

Challenging

1. locusts

Joel 1:4; 2:25

2. awesome (also: terrible, dreadful)

Joel 2:11

3. shofar (also: trumpet)

Exodus 19:16, 19; 20:18

4. Shavuot (also: Pentecost, Weeks)

Acts 2:1, 16-21; teaching Messiah section

5. 10

Romans 10:9-13

6. Jerusalem

Acts 1:8

Facilitator notes

These responses give direction for discussion. They are not a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passages and consider a faithful practical response.

1. The ruined crops make Judah's vulnerability visible and lead into a warning of YHWH's approaching day. Joel calls the community to seek him rather than treat the disaster as ordinary misfortune. The warning is joined to a genuine invitation to return and receive mercy.

Joel 1:4-15; 2:1-13

2. Torn garments can express sorrow, but they cannot substitute for a changed heart. Joel calls for wholehearted return to a gracious and merciful God. We should look for repentance that changes direction, rather than measure sincerity by dramatic public emotion alone.

Joel 2:12-13; James 4:8-10

3. Both passages use trumpet, darkness, fire, trembling earth, and divine speech. The teaching reads the resemblance as a summons to take YHWH seriously. Exodus explains that reverent fear should restrain sin; Joel likewise places the invitation to return beside the terrifying warning.

Exodus 19:16-19; 20:20; Joel 2:1-3, 10-13

4. Repentance involves honestly recognizing what our conduct has done to our relationship with YHWH and to other people. James joins cleansed hands and purified hearts with humility. We can confess and make appropriate repair without requiring someone to display a particular intensity of emotion.

Joel 2:12-13; James 4:8-10

5. Paul applies Joel's salvation promise to calling on the Lord in faith in Yeshua and his resurrection, for Jew and Greek alike. Peter identifies the Spirit's outpouring with Joel's promise. The teaching joins that gift to the disciples' mission of witness.

Joel 2:28-32; Romans 10:9-13; Acts 2:16-21; 1:8

6. We can turn from known sin, rely on the Spirit, and explain both the warning and the invitation to salvation through Yeshua. Choose one respectful opportunity to share that hope. The passage gives a mission and a call to readiness, not a date for the final day.

Acts 1:7-8; Romans 10:9-13; Joel 2:32

Facilitator reminders

Explain shofar as a trumpet or ram's horn and Shavuot as the Feast of Weeks, also called Pentecost. Accept the translation-equivalent answers listed in the key.

Do not prescribe fasting to everyone or require visible distress as proof of repentance. Keep the passage's historical setting and the gospel invitation clear. Avoid setting dates from its warning.

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages. What will we do, and when will we revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.