

Unit 14, Session 3: Joel, Prophet to Judah

Dear Parents,

This week we turned our attention back to Judah and picked up the big story with God's people in quite a bind. The prophet Joel spoke to the Southern Kingdom of Judah at a time when the nation faced a crisis. The land had been invaded by locusts; swarms of the insects had devastated the plants. Judah was also affected by a severe drought.

Joel looked back on these events and announced that these were not mere natural disasters—the Lord was judging the people for their sin.

In Deuteronomy 28, God told His people, “If you do not obey the Lord your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake you ... You will sow much seed in the field but harvest little, because locusts will devour it” (vv. 15,38). That is exactly what happened.

These disasters were a wake-up call. Joel told the people to repent. He told them to fast. He told them to gather and repent together, crying out to God and asking Him to show them mercy. Then Joel looked ahead to the future. In essence he said, “You think this is bad? This is only the beginning!”

God's judgment of Judah was not over. The Day of the Lord was coming, a day when God would show His strength through an invading army. For those who were not right with God, this was bad news. God's power would be against them. So Joel implored them, “Return to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.”

God had pity on His people and promised to restore them. God would rather forgive His people than punish them.

Joel warned God's people about the Day of the Lord a day when God will judge His enemies, free His people, and make the world right again. Those who trust in Jesus will escape God's punishment for sin. Jesus was punished in our place, and we share in His righteousness.

Help your kids see that God takes sin seriously, but at the same time, He showers grace upon those who trust in Jesus. God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for sins so people could be right with God. An ultimate Day of the Lord is coming, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Check this session's Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

FAMILY STARTING POINT

- Kids
 - What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful, and loving.
 - God warned His people to repent before the Day of the Lord.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE ● Joel 2:13

NEXT WEEK ● "God Called Jeremiah" (Jeremiah 1)