

Joel 1:1

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/joel/joel-1/joel-11/>

The prophet Joel receives a revelation from God for the people of Judah.

The book begins with a title verse identifying the nature of the prophecy as *the word of the LORD*. The phrase *the word of the LORD* is often used in Scripture to refer to God's revelation (Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zephaniah 1:1). This formula tells us that the prophet received a revelation that came directly from *the LORD*, either by hearing His voice (Isaiah 6:8) or by seeing a vision (Amos 7:1). *Joel* was a true prophet because *the word of the LORD came to him*.

Besides clarifying the nature of the prophecy, the title verse also identifies the author of the book. The author's name is *Joel*, which means "Yahweh is God." The meaning of the name suggests that *Joel* was born and raised by godly people. The verse tells us that *Joel was the son of Pethuel*.

This is the only reference to *Pethuel* in Scripture. Besides this simple statement, virtually nothing else is known of *Joel's* ancestors. His hometown is not listed either. Neither are we told in the introduction who is reigning at the time of his prophetic message, nor to whom the prophecy is addressed. Later in Joel, both Israel and Judah are mentioned, indicating that the prophecy applies to both. It can also be inferred that this prophecy was prior to the invasion of Judah by Babylon, given that one of the kinds of locust in the prophecy appears to describe the Babylonians. It could also have been prior to the Assyrian invasion of Israel.

It is likely that the reason we are not told much about Joel's life and circumstances, or the time in which he prophesied, or the rulers at the time, is because this prophecy looks forward to future events; therefore the current circumstances are not particularly relevant to Joel's message. His message is intended to state with certainty the judgment that will come upon Israel in future generations. Joel was quoted by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2 to explain events on the Day of Pentecost, which would possibly have been seven or so centuries after this prophecy.

Biblical Text

¹*The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.*