

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 29

Joel

Objects to have:

A calendar

Your new sign for this Bible book: JOEL
About Jesus' Coming

A picture of a worm

Pictures of animals: a lion, lamb, wolf, leopard, baby goat, baby cow, a bear, a cow, etc.

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Talk with the children about a future event to which it would be fun to look forward: a coming special day, like Thanksgiving or Christmas, or their birthdays, something which your class is planning to do together, or a special Sunday in Sunday school, etc. Show the children on the calendar the dates of these events. Talk with them about looking forward to the events and about how much fun they will have, how exciting it will be, etc.)

(Lay down your calendar. Review with the children the books of the Bible which have been learned thus far. Tell them the name of the new book—Joel. Tell them that in that book we learn of something that is going to happen; we learn of something wonderful that is going to happen. It will be wonderful for people who have trusted Jesus as their Saviour. But, first, bad things happened and will happen.)

Telling the story:

(Lay down the calendar, and pick up your Bible.) What trouble the children of Israel had! They were called “children,” but there were daddies and mommies as well as boys and girls. God called the Israelites His children—the children of Israel. The Israelites had been very, very wicked. They had decided not to obey God any longer; they had become very disobedient. They were not living right. They were drinking liquor and getting drunk. Some married men and ladies were leaving their homes to become the husbands or the wives to people who were not their husbands or wives. That was very wicked. The Israelites would not read their Bibles anymore. They would not listen to anyone else read the Bible, either. They were not going to church when they were supposed to go; like we are to go to Sunday school and church on Sundays and on Wednesday nights. They would not listen to the preacher. They were not giving the part of their money that belonged to God. They had become very, very wicked.

God saw what they were doing. He saw how they did not love Him any longer. He saw that they were disobedient to Him. He had to punish them. God loved His people; He had to punish His people to help them turn to Him again—to pray and to be sorry for their sins. (Put down your Bible and pick up your picture of the worm.)

God punished His people by sending bugs and all different kinds of worms to go into the food that was growing in the fields. One kind of worm ate the buds and the leaves on the fruit trees and vines and bushes so that no apples or pears or grapes or bananas or any other kind of fruit would grow. God let these worms come so that the people would not have any fruit to eat. Another kind of worm ate other plants that were growing in the fields. The Israelites then would not have any grain with which to make bread; they would have no beans to eat. Another kind of worm came and ate bushes of berries. Bugs called locusts came and ate what the worms did not eat.

What trouble the Israelites were having! They were running out of food to eat, and they could not find any grapes or figs or grain or beans or anything to eat. Of course, they were very, very unhappy. The sins of the mothers and the daddies and the young people caused little children to go hungry. God was having to punish His people.

God did not like to see His people unhappy. He decided to let them know of something wonderful that was going to happen someday. Even though they were being punished, they would be happy to know that a happy and wonderful event was going to take place. It was to Joel the preacher that God told of the wonderful things that were going to happen. God also told other preachers about this wonderful event that was going to happen.

(Lay down the picture of the worm and pick up your calendar again.) Maybe we ought to mark the calendar with this event; we should mark on our calendar when this is going to happen. I wonder when that will be. (Open your Bible and act as if you are searching for the time of this future event.) The Bible does not tell us when it is going to happen. We cannot mark it on this calendar or any other calendar. This wonderful, exciting, important event that will take place might happen today! It might happen before we get home. It might happen after we get home and eat lunch. It might happen while we are asleep. It might happen tomorrow or next week or next month or next year or many years from now. We do not know the date; God has not told us the date, but He has told us that it will definitely happen. We can trust God. Anything that He says will happen will happen. (Lay down your calendar.)

Listen to what Joel wrote down many, many years ago. The Holy Spirit told Joel: “Someday we will get to see Jesus and be with Him. This is what is going to happen: Some people in the world will be riding in automobiles, some people in the world will be in airplanes, some people in the world will be sleeping in beds, some people in the world will be working in the fields with crops, some people will be walking, some people will be working, some people will be playing. Suddenly, faster than you can blink your eye, Jesus will come in the clouds. As quickly as He comes, we who love Him will get to rise to go up, up, up to the clouds where Jesus will be.”

If we're alive when Jesus comes, we won't be the first ones to go up to meet Him. The bodies of the people who have already died will rise and the living part of the people will go into their newly-made bodies. These people will be the first ones to go up to meet Him! They will rise from the graves, and that will be exciting! They will get brand new bodies. Quicker than you can bat your eyes, we who are alive on earth then will get brand new bodies when we go up to be with Jesus. We will still look like ourselves, but our bodies will never again get sick or die or hurt. As quickly as He comes, we who love Him will get to rise to go up, up, up to the clouds where Jesus will be.

We'll be with Jesus in the clouds for seven years. While we're with Jesus, no person who is left on earth will be a good person. It is Jesus Who brings good into anybody's life, and all the people who love Him will not be on earth; they will be in the clouds with Jesus. Can you imagine how horrible earth will be then? Only wickedness, only fighting and terrible times will be on earth then. There will be a terrible war on earth, but we won't be here if we have trusted Jesus. During these seven years some people will get saved because of Christian books. Some people will trust Jesus when they listen to Brother Hyles' sermon tapes.

At the end of those seven years, the earth will be a peaceful place. We'll happily come back to earth with Jesus. Jesus will be crowned King. He will be on His throne in Jerusalem.

I'm going to show you some animals, and you tell me which ones are dangerous and which ones are not dangerous. (Show the pictures of the animals. After showing each one, pause to let the children tell you whether the animal is a dangerous or a peaceful animal: lion, lamb, wolf, leopard, etc.) When Jesus and we come back to earth, lions will not be dangerous anymore. Lions will even lie down with calves—baby cows—and they will walk with calves. Lions will not try to kill or hurt other animals or hurt or kill people. Leopards will walk calmly with baby goats. Wolves will not try to harm little lambs. Bears will not try to kill and eat cows or people. Everything and everybody will be peaceful when Jesus comes back with His own to the earth. It is Jesus Who brings peace. It is Jesus Who does everything wonderfully well and perfectly right.

That is what is going to happen. That is the most important, wonderful event that Joel tells us about. The book of Joel tells us of the sad, punishing time with the children of Israel when they did wrong, but it also tells us about the wonderful time that we who have trusted Him as our Saviour will have when Jesus comes again.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Joel 2:13, "...turn unto the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness...."