



# BIBLE IN A YEAR 2020

## JOEL



### THE DAY OF THE LORD

## OBADIAH



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## Summary

Joel's prophecy was delivered in a time of extreme crisis for God's people, attacked by a plague of locusts and desperate to be saved. God urges them to turn back to him and find more in their future than they had lost. He also points to a bigger day of reckoning for the world and times of blessing and salvation, open to all, leading up to then.

Obadiah's prophecy was given to the people of Judah shortly after most of them had been forced into exile in Babylon. God promises a reckoning to come and that, in the end, the kingdom will be the Lord's.

**Bern Leckie**

# Friday July 17: Joel & Obadiah

## The day of the Lord

Every day we're reading or listening to part of the Bible together and sharing thoughts with you. Today it's Bern Leckie:

### What did I like about today's reading?

How would you feel if we had a plague? Before rushing to identify with this too much, it's worth knowing that Joel's prophecy was during a plague of locusts, we're not sure when, and its disruption to life was recognised as God's intervention, "his army", with a purpose to grab his people's attention. If it didn't directly, the famine and fire would. Thank God that's not us today.

But what I like about Joel's prophecy, as well as Obadiah's brief words around the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon, is that they point to things to look forward to which are in our future too.

Obadiah names "the day of the Lord" as a time of reckoning for all nations and an unmistakable deliverance of holiness from God as "the kingdom will be the Lord's". That would have been a complete reversal of fortune from the time he was speaking.

I love Joel's broader picture of "those days" before the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" as a restoration we may already recognise in progress. This is now, with God's Spirit poured out, prophecies, dreams and visions far more widespread than in Joel's day, and a promise realised in Jesus that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Now that can find our place in this picture, we can see that promises of struggles, conflicts and judgement to come apply to us too. But so does this: "the Lord will be a refuge for his people."

### What did it show me about Father God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

God works in power over a very, very long time to bring change to the world. He wants us to know that evil will be reckoned with and defeated. Opposing God is as much of a mistake now as it was in the days of a temple which could be looted or a nation which could be fought directly. God does not just fight on the side of one country but promises to welcome all people who want to draw back to him, and to defeat and judge all opposing forces.

### What am I going to do differently as a result?

It's not a comfortable thing to think about God's judgement. But I want to reflect on God's promises here not to leave the world as it is. I'm reminded that as uncomfortable as the last few months have been, my experience has been nothing compared with real suffering which God is determined to deal with. I need to ask what God wants to do with me and the rest of us to help bring his kingdom to come and his will to be done here, looking forwards.

### Who am I going to share this with?

My family and people I pray with.