The time setting of Joel cannot with certainty be identified. Some commentators assign a late date (usually postexilic) for these reasons: (1) It does not mention the Northern Kingdom, therefore it was written after the 722 B.C. demise of Israel. (2) The references to priests but not Kings fit the postexilic period. (3) Joel does not refer to Assyria, Syria, or Babylon, perhaps because these countries have already been overthrown. (4) If Joel 3:2 refers to the Babylonian captivity, this also supports the postexilic date (from a historical view). (5) The mention of the Greeks in 3:6 argues for the late date.

Commentators who believe that Joel was written in the ninth century B.C. answer the above arguments in this way: (1) Joel's failure to mention the Northern Kingdom is an argument from silence. His prophecy was directed to Judah, not Israel (2:1, 15, 32 and 3:1). (2) Other early prophets omit references to a king (Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, and Habakkuk). This also fits the political situation during 841-835 B.C. when Queen Athaliah usurped the throne upon the death of her son Ahaziah. Joash, the legitimate heir to the throne, was a minor and protected by the high priest Jehoiada. When Athaliah was removed from power in 835, Joash came to the throne but ruled under the regency of Jehoiada. Thus, the prominence of the priests and lack of reference to a king in Joel fit this historical context. (3) It is true that Joel does not refer to Assyria or Babylon, but the countries Joel mentions are more crucial. They include Phoenicia, Philistia, Egypt, and Edom---Countries prominent in the ninth century B.C.; but not later. Assyria and Babylon are not mentioned because they had not yet reached a position of power. Also, if Joel was postexilic, a reference to Persia would be expected. Evidence also points to a sharing of material between Joel and Amos (Joel 3:16 and Amos 1:2; Joel 3:18 and Amos 9:13). The context of the books suggests that Amos, an eighth-century prophet, borrowed from Joel. Also, Joel's style is more like that of Hosea and Amos than of the postexilic writers. This would make Joel a contemporary of Elisha in Israel. So whether the time frame here is ninth century B.C.; or postexilic; Joel mentions a plague of locusts and a terrible drought which has come upon the land (chap. 1) as a judgment from God and urges repentance to the people of Judah (2:12-17) so that God
can bless rather than injure them. If they continue to reject God's gracious call to repentance, judgment will be inevitable. Joel uses this to illustrate the coming Day of Judgment when The Lord will directly intervene in human history to vindicate His righteousness. It will be a time of unparalleled retribution upon Jerusalem (2:1-11) and the whole nation (3:1-17), but this time will culminate in great blessing and salvation to all who trust in The Lord (2:18-32; 3:18-21).--- Obviously looking forward many century's to The Messiah's redemptive work.

Joel 2:28-29 predicts the giving of the Holy Spirit many centuries before Pentecost in AD 30 when Peter stood up and proclaimed it's fulfillment on that very day in Acts 2:14-21. Yet there are "futurists" that claim this is yet to be fulfilled.

To the "futurist"; Joel 2:1-11, can be viewed as the 586 B.C invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, and subsequent captivity of Judah into Babylon, (Jer.9:21) and also as a "future coming of The Lord" as predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24 and 25; the 586 B.C. event being only a "forerunner" of the main event which is the "coming of The Lord" cited in Matthew.

To the "Preterist"; the above is viewed as not only the 586 B.C. event; but also of the AD 70 event as well, because both events show how The Lord predicted the downfall of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, the final blow being the complete destruction of their adored Temple; but also the destruction of all priestly documents, all fulfilled precisely as Jesus said in Matt. 24, 25 and Luke 21:5-33. The noted historian Josephus gives a detailed description of the war between Rome and the Jews exactly fulfilling the above scriptures. Joel 3:1-2-12 are parallel with Zechariah 14:1-9 and speak to "The day of The Lord"/ "The time of the end" parallel with Daniel 8:17-19 and Daniel 9:24-27, 11:35-40, 12:7-13; all culminating in the AD 70 event. --Which meant that it was "the end" of old covenant Jerusalem, the temple worship and rituals, and bringing in the New Covenant fully and the New Jerusalem.

Great significance should be placed upon the fact that it is THE REMNANT that is to be saved and delivered per 2:31-32; and Romans 11:5, which is of course, the Church.