

WTF LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



LESSON 4 – JOEL

FACILITATOR'S

Note

In this lesson we will explore the preaching and prophecy of Joel. His message is generally thought to be addressed to the Southern Kingdom, that is, Judah. One of the key messages of his prophecy is repentance. God sent Joel to warn Judah that they would face God's wrath if they did not repent of their sinfulness. While they are not condemned for any specific sin such as idolatry, it is clear from the text that Judah had grown lukewarm in its devotion to the Lord, and God sent (or was preparing to send) a plague of locusts to afflict them so that they would turn their hearts back to Him. Joel warns them to "rend their hearts" and turn back in earnestness, calling on God's mercy to avoid calamity. God Himself, through Joel, tells Judah that if they repent, He will respond with great blessings; there will be physical blessings such as abundant harvest and ample rain, once again bestowed upon Judah. Even more, God promises that great spiritual blessings will follow in later days, marked by the outpouring of His Spirit upon all people and the promise that all who call on the Lord will be saved – another key message of the book. The outpouring of the Spirit is taken by most as a reference to the Messianic age, ushered in at the Pentecost following Christ's resurrection, where Peter himself quotes passages from Joel, and for this reason, Joel is often referred to as the Prophet of Pentecost. Finally, the prophet also warns of a great judgment that awaits those who rebel against God, the so-called Day of the Lord, in which the enemies of God's people, all who have not called on His name, will be destroyed by Him who is sovereign over the nations.

Through this lesson we hope to provide material that will provide knowledge (HEAD); then ask questions that will bring us understanding (HEART); and then motivate participants to go and live the Word in the world and demonstrate Godly wisdom (HANDS).

HEAD  **→ HEART**  **→ HANDS** 

We hope that by this study your class participants will not only hear, know, and understand the Word, but that they will also be driven to become the "Living Word" to the world around us. Your role in this process as a class facilitator is very important. Go beyond these lessons to demonstrate how what the Minor Prophets teach us can and should be lived daily. Use your life and the lives of others as examples of this "Living Word" concept.

WTF LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | from the MINOR PROPHETS



As always, we would encourage you to begin preparing for this lesson by digging into the Word and reading through the book of **Joel**. We also encourage you to read/scan through **Exodus 10:1-20, Deuteronomy 28:38-42, 2 Kings 11:1-21, Revelation 9:1-11** as a background to the book. As you move through **Joel**, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is then that you should approach this lesson plan and use it (and others) only as a guide for the weeks to come. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

PRAYER



Begin your time with a prayer asking God for the guidance of His Holy Spirit as you and your class seek to encounter Him through His Holy Word.

FOCUS

- Presentation of introductory material on the prophecy of Joel.
- Understand that God desires for us to know Him, and that He will do what is needed, even bring calamity upon us, to turn our hearts back to Him.
- Realize that God will respond to our heartfelt repentance by showering His love and blessings upon us.
- For those who do not heed the call of repentance, God's judgment and wrath will be carried out.

DISCUSSION STARTERS (OPTIONAL)

- What sort of affect does calamity have on people's faith/trust in God?

KNOWLEDGE HEAD

From God's Word through Joel

- OVERVIEW
 - Author
 - The author is identified as Joel, son of Pethuel (Joel 1:1)

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



- Joel was a common name and means “Jehovah is God,” alternatively, “Yahweh is God;” it is an inversion of Elijah which means “God is Jehovah”
- Pethuel, the name of Joel’s father (found nowhere else in the Bible) means “the open-heartedness of God” or “the sincerity of God”
- Given his references to Judah, Jerusalem, Zion and the Temple (1:9,13,14,16; 2:1, 15,23,32; 3:1,6,8,16-21), it is generally thought that Joel was a prophet to Judah (the Southern Kingdom)
- There are twelve other Joel’s mentioned in the Old Testament, none of whom can be linked to the prophet:
 - Samuel’s firstborn son and brother of Abijah (1 Sam 8:2)
 - Two Kohathite Levites (1 Chronicles 6:36 and 2 Chronicles 29:12)
 - A Gershonite Levite chief (1 Chronicles 15:7)
 - A chief of Simeon (1 Chronicles 4:35)
 - A chief of Reuben (1 Chronicles 5:4)
 - A chief of Gad (1 Chronicles 5:12)
 - A chief of Issachar (1 Chronicles 7:3)
 - A chief of Manasseh (1 Chronicles 27:20)
 - One of David’s mighty men (1 Chronicles 11:38)
 - A son of Nebo, who divorced his foreign wife during the purge of Ezra (Ezra 10:43)
 - A Benjamite overseer (Nehemiah 11:9)
- **Date**
 - Unknown -- conjectures range over four centuries, with each conjecture based on debatable assumptions.
 - Most place the book either quite early, circa 835-830BC, or quite late, well after the exile, circa 516BC and later.
 - Support for the early, pre-exilic date
 - The Israelite enemies dealt with in the book include the Philistines, Phoenicians, Egyptians and Edomites rather than those of the exilic period (Babylonians, Medes, Persians)
 - There is no mention of Assyria, which emerged as a world power as early as 760 B.C., or Babylon which followed Assyria but fell from power by about 537 B.C.
 - The Temple is mentioned four times (Joel 1:9,13,14; 2:15) so it was standing when Joel wrote
 - No idolatry is mentioned, no king is mentioned, and the temple services and priesthood seem to be flourishing, all indicators of the state of things under the high priesthood of Jehoiada during the time in Judah following King Ahaziah’s death, when Queen Athaliah, Ahaziah’s mother, seized

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* MINOR PROPHETS



power by murdering all the members of the royal family (so there was no king during this time).

- Athaliah killed all the royal sons but Joash, Ahaziah's infant son, who escaped death only because Jehosheba, Ahaziah's sister, hid Joash, along with a nurse to care for him, and kept him hidden for six years (see 2 Kings 11)
- Jehoiada, with support from others, placed Joash on the throne at the age of seven and Athaliah was slain by her own people (2 Kings 11:16)
- Joash's coronation is dated around 835 B.C.
- Support for the late, post-exilic date
 - The Northern Kingdom is not mentioned, only Judah
 - Elders and priests are the authorities in Jerusalem that are mentioned, no king
 - The Temple is mentioned four times (Joel 1:9,13,14; 2:15) so it was present (already rebuilt) when Joel wrote. Note: the second temple reconstruction was completed around 516 B.C.
 - Mentions of scattering among the nations (Joel 3:2), plundering of the temple (Joel 3:5), and sale of the people of Judah/Jerusalem as slaves to the Greeks may suggest a later date
 - The religious conditions typically associated with the earlier date are not reflected – the “high places” and the inclination to fall into idolatry are not mentioned
- There are other arguments regarding the literary style of Joel compared to that of other books which both camps (pre-exilic and post-exilic) make to support their view
 - Approximately 27 of the 73 verses in Joel are paralleled (or echoed verbatim) in other prophets. The following lists some of these for those who want to pursue the topic further:
 - Joel 1:15, 2:1, 3:14 – Isaiah 13:6, Obadiah 15
 - Joel 2:2 – Zephaniah 1:15
 - Joel 2:3 – Isaiah 51:3; Ezekiel 36:35
 - Joel 2:10 – Isaiah 13:10
 - Joel 2:32 – Obadiah 17
 - Joel 3:4-7 – Obadiah 15
 - Joel 3:10 – Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3
 - Joel 3:16 – Amos 1:2; Isaiah 13:13
 - Joel 3:17 – Ezekiel 36:11; Isaiah 52:1; Obadiah 17; Nahum 1:15
 - Joel 3:18 – Amos 9:13

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



- Joel 3:19 – Obadiah 10
 - Those who favor the pre-exilic (early) date argue that Joel is quoted or borrowed from by the later prophets, while those who favor the post-exilic (late) date argue the converse, that is, that Joel borrowed from the other prophets who came earlier
 - The arguments are uncertain, with no clear winner
- **Key Theme(s)**
 - Repentance – God wants His people to turn to Him in heartfelt repentance and if they do so, will shower them with His love and abundant blessings/promises
 - The Day of the Lord – Joel warns that a time is coming when God, who is sovereign over the nations, will judge/destroy the enemies of His people
 - **ASK:**
 - Do these themes still speak/apply to us today?
- **Joel in the New Testament**
 - Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:17-21 to explain the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost that his audience in Jerusalem was observing
 - Paul quotes/borrows from Joel 2:32 in Romans 10:13: “for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”
 - There are also echoes of Joel in the gospels and the book of Revelation:
 - the description of the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:10 and Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24, Luke 21:25)
 - the moon turned to blood (Joel 2:31 and Revelation 6:12)
 - the judgment as a harvest (Joel 3:13 and Matthew 13:39, Revelation 14:17ff)
 - treading the winepress as a symbol of God’s wrath and judgment (Joel 3:13 and Revelation 14:20; 19:15)
 - possibly, the locusts (Joel 2:1-11 and Revelation 9:3-11)
- **Key facts about locusts, germane to Joel’s prophecy**
 - They are orthopterans, along with cockroaches, mantises, grasshoppers, katydids and crickets
 - There are 24,000 different species, some can grow up to 10” in length
 - They multiply by parthenogenesis -- asexual reproduction, so if a male is not around, the female can take care of it by herself
 - Locusts contain a single hormone, which when activated, causes them to swarm, becoming vary aggressive and gregarious
 - When they swarm, they eat every part of the plants, including the roots below ground – causing total destruction
 - They travel in a compact, military-like march
 - They make a wind-like noise in flight, and can fly up to 17 hours at a time

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | from the MINOR PROPHETS



- Swarms have been spotted 1200 miles out at sea
 - In 1889, a swarm in the Red Sea was spotted that covered 2,000 square miles
- Density in a swarm can be as much as 120 million locusts per square mile
- The density of a swarm can be sufficient to darken the sky during the day
- In 1915, from March to October, a plague of locusts in successive stages devastated Jerusalem
 - Articles and pictures of the 1915 locust plague have been preserved by the Library of Congress; you can access the information online:
 - <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/americancolony/amcolony-locust.html>
 - Enter '1915 locust plague' in the Google Search engine to get multiple hits/links, including a Wikipedia article, about the calamity
- **THE TEXT**
 - The text of Joel can be divided into four major sections:
 - Section 1 -- The locust plague and drought, and the impending day of the Lord, call the people to repentance (1:1 – 2:17)
 - Section 2 -- The Lord's response to repentance (2:18-27)
 - Section 3 -- The Day of the Lord, heralded by the outpouring of the His Spirit and various wonders (2:28-32).
 - Section 4 -- The Lord's judgment against the nations and the glorious future of Judah and Jerusalem (3:1-21).
 - **1:1-2:17 (Section 1)**
 - This section of scripture can be split into two largely parallel subsections, 1A and 1B, each of which describes the locust invasion and impending day of the Lord, followed by a call to repentance
 - Section 1A
 - 1:1-12 -- locust invasion and the Day of the Lord
 - 1:13-20 -- call to repentance
 - Section 1B
 - 2:1-11 – Day of the Lord and locust invasion
 - 2:12-17 – call to repentance
 - Have someone read Joel 1:1-12
 - **Section 1A, 1:1-12** – The locust invasion and drought
 - Joel warns of a locust plague unlike anything ever seen by the people of Judah, and one which will be spoken for generations to come
 - The elders, those who sat at the city gate and were considered the wisest, are called to listen carefully to Joel's prophecy
 - All the people are instructed to ensure that the locust calamity is recounted from one generation to the next

WE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



- Recall that Moses had instructed Israel to recount the works of God to their children (Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:6-7) to remind them:
 - of God's mercy and goodness
 - that God would judge sin if they became disobedient (Leviticus 26:14-46; Deuteronomy 28:15-68)
- The prophet describes the locusts and devastation in some detail
 - Four of the possible 12 Biblical Hebrew terms for locusts are used
 - Gazam – cutting (or gnawing) locust
 - Arbeh – swarming locust (the most common)
 - Yeleg – hopping locust
 - Chasil – destroying (or consuming) locust
 - It is generally thought that the emphasis here is not on four types of locusts but four stages of the same plague where each swarm/stage eats what the previous left behind
 - Destruction from God in four stages/sources is seen elsewhere in Scripture (Jeremiah 15:3, Ezekiel 14:21)
 - In 1:6-7, the locusts are compared to an army, laying waste to all
 - Locusts are spoken of as an army in Proverbs 30:27
 - "teeth like a lion" – see Revelation 9:7-8
 - The devastation is immense
 - The vines and fig trees have been stripped, left in ruin (v7)
 - The fields are destroyed, the grain is destroyed (v10)
 - The harvest of the field has perished (v11)
 - The vines are dried up, the trees are stripped and dried up (v12)
 - The food supply is cut off , storehouses and granaries desolate (v16-17)
 - The animals are suffering, no pasture for the cattle or sheep, and drought has dried up the water brooks
 - Fire (presumably resulting from the dry conditions) has burned up the pastures and trees of the fields
 - Devastation to the community cannot be understated; with loss of subsistence comes spread of disease, loss of trade, inevitable inflation – the community can be literally wiped out
- The adverse effect on various classes of society is called out
 - The drunkards and drinkers of wine (v5,10)
 - The farmers (v11-12)
 - The priests (v9)
 - All people, whose joy has withered from the great loss (v12)

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* MINOR PROPHETS



- Note that God's use of locusts as a method of judgment on sin/disobedience was understood (Deuteronomy 28:38-42)
- **ASK:**
 - Have you experienced a calamity like the locust plague described by Joel, i.e., one that you, your children, and their children would remember/recount?
 - If so, how did it impact your faith/trust in God?
- Have someone read Joel 1:13-20
- **Section 1A, 1:13-20** – The call to repentance
 - Joel calls on a national assembly for repentance
 - The priests are called upon to don sackcloth and lament, spending the night in mourning before the Lord because the grain and drink offerings are withheld, i.e., the offerings cannot be carried out in the Temple as required due to the crop devastation (v13)
 - Sackcloth was a coarsely woven fabric, usually made of goat's hair, and came to mean a garment made of such fabric.
 - It was worn as a token of mourning, or also as a sign of submission
 - Examples: Isaiah 22:12, Jeremiah 6:26, 1 Kings 21:27
 - The priests are to declare a fast of repentance and gather the elders and all the people together in a solemn assembly in the Temple to petition the Lord in prayer for mercy, forgiveness (v14)
 - Joel sees the approach/devastation of the locusts as the approach/devastation of a far greater calamity, the Day of the Lord (v15)
 - Day of the Lord is seen in other prophets but most frequently (5x) in Joel. For those interested in further study, see:
 - Within Joel: 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14
 - Amos 5:18ff; Isaiah 2:12, 13:6,9; Zephaniah 1:7ff; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 30:2ff; Obadiah 15; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5
 - The locust plague is coupled with a severe drought that
 - leaves the seed shriveling under the dirt clods (1:17)
 - deprives the cattle and sheep of pasture (1:18)
 - leaves all animals panting for water because the brooks are all dried up (1:20)
 - results in the destruction by fire, due to dry conditions, of pasture land and trees

WE PROPHETABLE

LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | from the MINOR PROPHETS



- **ASK:**
 - Joel directed the priests to call for a fast (1:14). What is the purpose of fasting?
 - Should God's people today engage in the practice of fasting? Why or why not?
- Have someone read Joel 2:1-11
- **Section 1B, 2:1-11** – The locust invasion and the Day of the Lord (parallel to 1:1-12)
 - 2:1-2 parallels 1:2 in that an alarm/warning is issued to the people of something that is coming that is unlike anything they've seen to date, though 2:2 adds the extra descriptor that nothing like this will ever be seen again
 - The language in 2:1, a day of "darkness and gloom", "clouds and thick darkness" calls to mind the account of God's appearance on the mountain prior to giving Moses the Ten Commandments (see Deuteronomy 4:10-13, where the same words for cloud and 'thick darkness' are also used)
 - The people are warned of an immense army that is coming
 - The army is said to be a people in v2, but the army, as subsequently described in vv3-11, seems better interpreted literally as a real locust plague rather than allegorically as human invaders such as the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Macedonians, or Romans
 - 2:3 – stripping of the land
 - 2:5 -- 'like a powerful army drawn up for battle' (why make the comparison if it really is a literal army?)
 - 2:4-10 – their appearance, sound, movements match well with locust swarms moving through the air and on the ground (see facts regarding locusts in the Overview above)
 - **ASK:**
 - The account in 2:1-11 seems to parallel the account in 1:1-12; do you think these passages describe the same event, or are they different? Explain.
- Have someone read Joel 2:12-17
- **Section 1B, 2:12-17** – The call to repentance (parallel to 1:13-20)
 - In 2:12, The Lord speaks directly to the people, calling on them to return to Him in true repentance, as demonstrated by weeping, fasting and a torn heart (rather than the customary torn garments)
 - In 2:13, Joel reminds them of God's mercy and grace, echoing the well-know words God spoke to Moses (Exodus 34:6)
 - In 2:14, Joel appeals to the hope in God's mercy, 'Who knows, he may

WE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



turn and relent ...'

- Moses made the same appeal on behalf of Israel with success (Exodus 32:7-14)
- Ahab, King of Israel, made the same appeal, with success (1 Kings 21:27-28)
- David made the same appeal on behalf of his child conceived in adultery with Bathsheba, without success (2 Samuel 12:22-23)
- The King of Nineveh made the same appeal, with success (Jonah 3:1-10, esp. 10)
- In 2:15-16, as in the parallel passage in 1:13-20, the national repentance should include a solemn assembly of all people, but there is greater emphasis as the assembly should also include:
 - Children, including nursing infants!
 - Newlyweds -- usually exempt from public obligations in their first year of marriage (Deuteronomy 24:5)
- The priests are called upon to intercede for the people in heartfelt prayer, calling on God's mercy to spare the people and prevent the derision of other nations (2:17)
- **ASK:**
 - What is the cause of the coming calamity, as seen by the prophet?
 - Do you think God still brings calamity upon people in our time to get them to turn to Him?
- **2:18-27 (Section 2)**
 - Have someone read these verses
 - This section presupposes the people heed God's call for repentance and describes the Lord's gracious response to them in which He promises:
 - Restoral of oil and wine (2:19)
 - Removal of the northerner (locusts) (2:20)
 - The text says 'northerner/northern horde/northern army'
 - Interpretations of this include:
 - Locusts (while references to locusts as northerners would be unusual because they usually came from the south or the east, they did occasionally come from the north, as was the case in the 1915 locust plague of Jerusalem mentioned in the overview above)
 - An invading human army
 - A final apocalyptic enemy of Israel (common interpretation among dispensational pre-millennialists)

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



- Support for this view includes the portrayal in Ezekiel (chapters 38 & 39) of a great enemy that in the future would come from the north, an event which does not map clearly to anything in our currently known history
- Restoral of pastures for the animals and fruit from the trees and vines (2:22)
- Ample rain in its seasons (2:23)
- Abundance from the harvests, with plenty to eat (2:24,26)
- Restoral/replacement of all that has been lost to the locust army (2:25)
 - the same locusts mentioned in 1:4 are again cited, though in a different order
 - God is the one who sent the locusts, they are His army
- Restoral of their special covenantal favor with Him, as He will dwell in their midst and they will never again be put to shame (2:27)
- **ASK:**
 - What/who do you believe is the northerner (or northern army) of 2:20? A human army? A severe literal locust plague? Something else? Is your belief consistent with what is described in 2:4-11 and 2:25?
- **2:28-32 (Section 3)**
 - Have someone read these verses
 - In 2:28, “And it shall come to pass afterward ...” indicates, presumably, that these verses describe events that follow the events/promises described in 2:1-27
 - The events discussed here seem to occur before the arrival of the great and awesome day of the Lord and include:
 - An outpouring of God’s Spirit on ALL people (2:28-29)
 - Portents in heaven and on earth (2:30-31)
 - The promise of salvation to anyone who calls on the Lord (2:32)
 - The outpouring of God’s Spirit is unlike anything the people of God had experienced in their covenantal relationship with Him to that point, as the Spirit will be given to all flesh without regard to age, gender, or class (slave/servant or free)
 - Interpretations of this section include:
 - A general reference to the Messianic age, as Peter quoted these verses in Joel at the Pentecost following Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:17-21).
 - Note in Acts 2:16 that Peter tells his audience that what they are seeing/hearing is what Joel spoke of, not necessarily a literal fulfillment in time of a specific predicted event in Joel
 - A description of the messianic age but with the day of the Lord being the

WE PROPHETABLE

LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | from the MINOR PROPHETS



specific time of God's judgment when Christ returns

- Peter speaks (2 Peter 3:10) of Christ's second coming as 'the day of the Lord' – is it the same 'day of the Lord' as here in Joel?
 - **ASK:**
 - Joel is sometimes called the Prophet of Pentecost. Why?
- **3:1-21 (Section 4)**
 - This section can be split into two subsections, the first of which announces the Lord's judgment against all the nations who oppose His people, and the second of which announces the glorious future which He promises for Judah and Jerusalem
 - Have someone read Joel 3:1-16
 - **3:1-16** – The Lord's judgment against the nations
 - "For behold, in those days and at that time ..." points to the time of the events in the prior section, verses 2:28-32, marked by the outpouring of God's Spirit and the impending day of the Lord
 - The Lord will restore His people to greatness (restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem) and summon the nations who opposed them into the Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment
 - The Valley of Jehoshaphat is an unknown geographical location
 - Jehoshaphat means "Yahweh judges" so the title "Valley of Jehoshaphat" is a pun
 - In general, judgment against these nations is exacted because their wickedness is great (3:13)
 - The judgment is against MANY
 - 3:2,11 – all nations
 - 3:14 – 'multitudes, multitudes'
 - Specific acts of evil against God's people for which these nations are judged include:
 - Scattering them and dividing up their (God's) land (3:2)
 - God had assigned/apportioned to the Israelite tribes the land as He determined, but these Gentile nations had seized the land for themselves and divided it up as they saw fit
 - Subjecting/selling their boys and girls into slavery (3:3)
 - The Phoenicians (Tyre and Sidon) and the Philistines are explicitly denounced for plundering God's people (3:4-5) and selling them to the Greeks as slaves (3:6)
 - In 3:4, Tyre and Sidon and the regions of Philistia correspond in part to what is today, Lebanon and Palestine

THE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* MINOR PROPHETS



- In eye-for-eye, tooth-for-tooth fashion, God promises He will exact vengeance upon the Phoenicians and Philistines by:
 - Re-gathering His people from the nations where they were scattered when sold as slaves (3:7)
 - Selling the sons and daughters of the Phoenicians/Philistines to the people of Judah who will in turn sell them as slaves to the Sabeans (3:8)
 - Sabeans are thought to be the inhabitants of far away Southern Arabia, near Yemen
- Per 3:9-12, all the nations are called upon to prepare for war, to prepare their mightiest warriors, to begin making weapons, to turn out as many soldiers as possible, even from among the weak, and to come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat for the showdown
- In 3:13, agricultural imagery of the sickle for harvest and treading of the winepress is used to convey that
 - The nations are ripe for judgment due to their wickedness so a harvest, not of grain but of destruction, will occur
 - They will be judged and destroyed by God in His wrath
 - Treading the winepress is an action used symbolically in Scripture to refer to God's wrath/judgment (see Isaiah 63:1-6 and Revelation 14:14-20)
- Per 3:14-16, the nations efforts are in vain because it is God they will face in the Valley of Decision -- another name for the Valley of Jehoshaphat and another pun because it is God's decision/judgment that prevails – and God Himself will protect/preserve the people of Israel
- **ASK:**
 - What traits of God do you see plainly represented in 3:1-16?
- Have someone read Joel 3:17-21
- **3:17-21** – The glorious future of Judah and Jerusalem
 - God, through Joel, promises:
 - a magnificent future for Judah and Jerusalem (His people), marked by bountiful blessings and His presence as He dwells in their midst (3:17-18,20)
 - desolation to Egypt and Edom, to avenge the people of Judah for the violence, including the shedding of innocent blood, carried out against them (3:19,21)
- **ASK:**
 - Do you think that Joel should be interpreted literally or allegorically?

WE PROPHETABLE LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | from the | MINOR PROPHETS



- Do you believe the 'Day of the Lord' is a specific time in history? Is it the terminus of history? Something else? Explain.

• REFERENCES

- Jack P. Lewis, *The Minor Prophets*, Baker Book House, 1988. ISBN: 0-8010-5509-1
- Chuck Missler, *The Prophets to the Southern Kingdom, A Commentary*, Koinonia House, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-57821-501-0

UNDERSTANDING ♥ HEART

- What are some of the modern-day messages that we have heard through Joel today?
 - Would the Lord possibly bring calamity upon us to help turn us back to Him? How?
 - Have we drifted away from whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, i.e., Have we left our first love?
- How might the church need to be restored today?
- What promises did God give that affect us today?

WISDOM ✎ HANDS

- What messages did you hear in this lesson that need to be shared with people you know?
- Who in your group of friends or family do you need to share the message with TODAY? Think specifically.
- Commit to each other that you will all have the courage to share the message. Pray NOW and then pray for each other through the week to have the boldness to share.

PRAYER



End your time together with a prayer. Ask God to help you in sharing His Gospel message of Love and Grace to a lost world. Ask Him to open the eyes of our hearts through this study so that we may know Him more and develop an intimate relationship with Him.

WTF LIFE MAJOR LESSONS | *from the* | MINOR PROPHETS



SEMESTER OUTLINE (SPRING 2016)

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS – Why Study This? (January 3)
2. HOSEA – PART 1 (January 10)
3. HOSEA – PART 2 (January 17)
4. JOEL (January 24)
5. AMOS (January 31)
6. OBADIAH & NAHUM (February 7)
7. JONAH (February 14)
8. MICAH (February 21)
9. HABAKKUK (February 28)
10. ZEPHANIAH (March 6)
11. HAGGAI (March 13)
12. ZECHARIAH – PART 1 (April 3)
13. ZECHARIAH – PART 2 (April 10)
14. MALACHI (April 17)
15. CONCLUSION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS (April 24)