

## Introduction to the Minor Prophets

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- A. On a scale of 1-10 how do you rate our country in the following areas?
1. Justice for the poor \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Moral purity \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Pride \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Seeking God \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Do you see the country as improving or decaying in all of these areas? Explain
- B. On a scale of 1-10, in general how do you rate Christians you know in the following areas?
1. Concern for the poor \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Moral purity \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Pride \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Seeking God \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Between 800 – 586 B.C. The nations of Israel and Judah were in decline, both as nations and as God’s people. God sent his prophets to try to persuade them both to turn back to God. Israel fell in 722 B.C. and Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C. After Judah’s return beginning in 536 B.C. , God’s people still showed weaknesses and several prophets were sent to exhort them.
- D. A study of the prophets can be full of applications because our country and our churches are often much like Israel and Judah in the time they were being exhorted.
- \* *Thought question – In what way can we say that Israel and Judah can be compared to the U.S.A. and which ways not. In which ways can they be compared to the church and which ways not?*
- E. Major prophets and minor prophets –
1. Major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezequiel, Daniel) are longer, but not more important.
- F. We’re going to survey three short prophets – You’ll see how applicable they can be.

### Introduction to Obadiah

- A. This prophesy is against the nation of Edom and the descendants of Esau
1. They lived in the mountainous area to the south of Judah
- B. The book was written after Jerusalem had been attacked and sacked.
1. Some feel this is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.. Much of the language is similar to Jeremiah 49:7-22. Perhaps Obadiah used Jeremiah’s terminology or vice versa. See also Psalm 137:7.
  2. Others think that the destruction described is not a total destruction and therefore may refer to a prior sacking of the city, perhaps by the Philistines (2 Chronicles 21:8-20) . They give an earlier date for the book, perhaps 845 B.C.
- C. Instead of helping their neighbors (and relatives) the Jews, the Edomites enjoyed watching their destruction and even helped the enemies.

### I. The false confidence of the Edomites (Read verses 1-4,)

#### A. Things that gave the Edomites confidence

1. Where did they live? (verse 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
(It was easily defended from attack!)
2. What three things are mentioned in 7-9 that might give them confidence?



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3. What was God going to do them in spite of their false confidence?

#### B. Applications – Thought questions

1. What are some things that give Americans confidence that they are secure?
2. Why are these things insufficient to protect us against suffering because of our evil?
3. Can Americans be accused of being proud people? How is this pride seen? What can Christians do to avoid harmful national pride?
4. Have members of known churches of Christ been known for pride? What are some things that can bring on this pride? What is the solution?

5. Write down three things that might tempt you to be proud?

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Why is it irrational to be proud of these things, just as it was of the Edomites to be proud?

**II. Their complete destruction** (vs. 5-9) (Read verses 5, 6 [7-9 already read])

A. Questions

1. How do verses 5 and 6 describe their coming destruction?

**III. The reasons for their destruction enumerated** (verses 10-14)

A. Write a list of the reasons given for their destruction.

1. (vs. 10) \_\_\_\_\_
2. (vs. 11) \_\_\_\_\_
3. (vs. 12) \_\_\_\_\_
4. (vs. 13) \_\_\_\_\_
5. (vs. 14) \_\_\_\_\_

B. Applications

1. Even if we don't participate directly in harmful activities, how can we still do wrong by them?
2. How can people today rejoice when seeing others suffer?
3. If you have siblings, do you sometimes feel happy when you see them get in trouble? (Be honest!)
4. Can this type of attitude (feeling superior upon seeing others suffer) happen in romantic relationships?
5. Can this type of attitude sometimes reveal itself when Christians have disagreements?
6. What are some other Bible teachings and principles that contradict this spirit?

**IV. Why the punishment was justified** – (read verses 15, 16)

A. Questions

1. What are some other Bible teachings that sound like verse 15? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the term "day of the Lord" refer to here? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some other passages that refer to "drinking" as symbolic of punishment? (If you can think of any) \_\_\_\_\_

**V. The strength of spiritual Israel contrasted with the destruction of Edom** (verses 17-21)

A. Read verses 17-18

1. Where would deliverance come from? \_\_\_\_\_

\* This term often refers to God's coming spiritual kingdom in Christ.

2. In contrast with God's kingdom still seen today, How many Edomites do you know today?

B. Read verses 19-21 (The specifics of these verses can be tough but the primary message is obvious – Evil people will be punished and displaced, the righteous will triumph in God's kingdom.)

1. To whom would the kingdom (the dominion, the rule) always belong? \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion**

A. All the political maneuvering and battles of that time seem so petty and insignificant now. Surely the same can be said of human battles today. All that matters is submitting to God and accepting His rule.

B. Summary - Make a list of any further

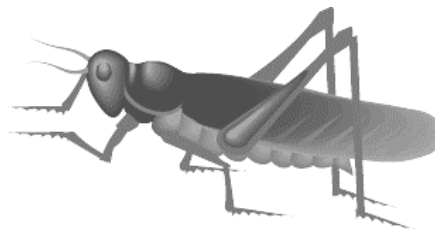
## Summary of the Book of Joel

Intro. The book gives spiritual messages based on an invasion of locusts.

- A. A word about locust invasions
  - 1. Locusts are like grasshoppers and in Africa and the Middle East will occasionally fly in swarms, devouring every green leaf in sight. (I have a friend named Foy Short who lived on a farm in Africa [Zimbabwe] and he described how locusts ate almost all of their crops on one occasion.)
  - 2. Poor farmers could do nothing as they watched these “grasshoppers” devour all their crops.
  - 3. The loss of their crops represented the loss of all their work, their food and sometimes meant starvation.
- B. Thought question – Which do you think would be most like the equivalent of something like a locust invasion in our economy? Loss of gasoline supplies? Crash of banks? Poisoning of air or water system?
- C. The book can be divided into two parts:
  - 1. The prophet speaks (chapter 1 – 2:17)
    - a. About the destruction of the locusts and the need for repentance
  - 2. Jehovah speaks (2:18 – 3)
    - a. About the blessings that would follow repentance. (2:18-27)
    - b. About the inauguration of His universal kingdom on Pentecost.(2:28-32)
    - c. About the destruction of enemy nations contrasted with blessings for God’s people. (chapter 3)

### I. The Locust Invasion!

- A. Read chapter 1 verses 1-4
  - 1. Who should the elders tell about the locust invasion?  
*\* Application – Thought question - Why is it good to know the history of things that have happened to God’s people?*
  - 2. How much was left after the locust invasion? \_\_\_\_\_



- B. Read verses 5-7
  - 1. How does Joel describe the locusts in verse 6? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Mourning - Read verses 8-12
  - 1. What three types of people are mentioned here as examples of mourning?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. According to the last part of verse 12, what happens to the joy of mankind after such a disaster?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. A call to repentance - Verses 13-20
  - 1. Read 13, 14 - What four things does the prophet call for in verse 14? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*\* Thought question – What would be occasions of sufferings that would motivate Christians today to meet together to cry out to the Lord?*
  - 2. Read verse 15 – What does the term “day of the Lord” refer to here? \_\_\_\_\_  
*\* This term is important in the prophets and also in New Testament prophecies.*
  - 3. Read verses 18-20 – Why did the flocks of cattle and sheep suffer? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. A graphic description of the locusts (Someone who reads well, read out loud chapter 2, verses 1-11)
  - 1. Talk about some things that grab your attention about this description of locusts!

### II. The people repent and God promises blessings (2:18-32)

- A. Read verses 18, 19 What does God promise the people after their repentance? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Summary of verses 20-27 (reading these verses is optional)
  - 1. The Northern army would be driven away
  - 2. God would heal the land and send the rains for abundant crops
- C. Beyond the immediate healing of the land, God promises an even greater outpouring of His Spirit and spiritual blessings in Christ that would begin on the day of Pentecost (verses 28-32)  
**Read verses 28 and 29**
  - 1. In the latter days would God pour His Spirit out only on Jews? \_\_\_\_\_ Who would it be poured out upon?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What would sons and daughters do? \_\_\_\_\_ Old men? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* To what day does Peter apply this prophesy in Acts 2:16-21? The day of \_\_\_\_\_

**Read verses 30-31**

1. What were the signs that would be seen before the coming of the day of the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\* Perhaps the prophet is seeing that God's kingdom and universal rule would be established just before the destruction of Jerusalem which is perhaps described symbolically in these verses.

**Read verses 32**

1. Would only Jewish people be saved in the new kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_ Who would be saved?  
\_\_\_\_\_

\* *Thought question - Does "calling on the name of the Lord" mean just saying "Lord, Lord?" What is implied in the term "calling on the name of the Lord?"*

2. Where would deliverance come from? \_\_\_\_\_ \* A reference to God's kingdom.

**III. Judgment against the nations, especially Philistia, Blessings for His people**

A. Read chapter 3 verses 2.3 and 5, 6

1. What were some of the sins that had been committed against Judah?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Summary of verses 7-16

1. There is a description of preparation for war in verses 9-11
2. God would bring out the final battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Armageddon) (verse 12)
3. There His enemies would be trampled and utterly defeated (verses 13-16a)

\* *Revelation 14:17-20 uses terminology from here to describe God's judgment against the evil nations.*

C. Blessings in God's new kingdom (that we enjoy today!) (verses 16b-21)

1. What about verse 17 lets you know that the term "Jerusalem" refers to spiritual Jerusalem (God's church) and not to physical Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you think verse 18 refers to? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you think verse 30 refers to physical Judah or to spiritual Judah? \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary** – Write a list of good applications for today that we can take from the book of Joel

## Summary of the book of Habakkuk

Intro. This book is a dialogue between Jehovah and the prophet.

A. Background – 610 – 605 B.C.

1. The nation of Judah has grown increasingly corrupt.
2. The prophet is outraged at all the injustice he sees in Judah and thus the dialogue begins.

B. Organization of the book

1. Habakkuk complains – Do something about this mess! (1:1-4)
2. God’s answer – I’m bringing the Babylonians to punish Judah (1:5-11)
3. Habakkuk’s response – Not them! They’re worse than we are! (1:12 – 2:1)
4. Jehovah answers -
  - a. Faith will be rewarded (vs. 4)
  - b. Evil will be punished
5. Habakkuk’s prayer (chapter 3)

### I. Habakkuk’s Complaint

A. Read 1:1-4

1. What did Habakkuk cry out? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Habakkuk feel that God was allowing that he shouldn’t allow? \_\_\_\_\_
3. According to Habakkuk, what had happened to the law and justice? \_\_\_\_\_

B. *Thought questions*

1. *What are some evil things that prevail now in our country?*
2. *Do you ever feel that things are out of control?*

### II. Jehovah’s answer – I’m sending in the Babylonians to punish the evildoers

A. Read verses 5, 6

1. Was what God was going to do? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was God raising up to punish the evildoers? \_\_\_\_\_ (Chaldeans = Babylonians)

B. Verses 7-11 are a description of the power and destructiveness of the Babylonians – Have someone read them.

C. *Thought questions*

1. *Can God use evil people and nations to punish others?*
2. *Could events such as 9/11 be “wake up calls” that God allows? (This is a tough question! We shouldn’t be dogmatic in answering it!)*

### III. Habakkuk’s second complaint - “They’re worse than we are!”

A. Read verses 12-13

1. What question does Habakkuk ask at the end of verse 13 that sums up his complaint?  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Read verses 14-17

1. What does Habakkuk compare the Jews to here? \_\_\_\_\_ The Babylonians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* *What does the concept of the wicked sacrificing to the net mean?*  
\* *Does it seem sometimes like the people of the world are like dumb fish and Satan is scooping them up his big net?*

C. Read chapter 2:1 - What did Habakkuk say he would do after making his complaint? \_\_\_\_\_

- \* What should we do when we don’t understand God’s ways?

### IV. Jehovah’s Reply (2:2-20) – The just will live by faith. I will take care of the Babylonians later for their cruelty.

A. Read verses 2 and 3

1. What was to be done with Jehovah’s revelations? \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to verse 3, what is necessary to do with God’s revelation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* *Thought question – Why is it so difficult for us sometimes to wait on God?*

B. Read verses 4, 5 – A contrast between an evil man (a Babylonian in particular) and a righteous one

1. How is the evil man according to these two verses? \_\_\_\_\_
2. But how shall the righteous live? \_\_\_\_\_  
\* *Though Judah would be destroyed, would God forget the few righteous there? How would they live?*

\* *Thought question – Even if God allows the United States to be destroyed by terrorists or decay, what will happen to us if we have faith?*

\* *This verse is quoted several times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) to point out that faith is the key to salvation in Christ, not cold traditional observance of laws.*

\* *Some talk as if the basis of man's response to God in the Old Testament were different than in the New. What in this verse discounts that?*

C. God is going to punish the Babylonians as well for their evil (verses 6 –20)

Write down the reasons God was going to punish them.

1. Verses 6-8 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Verses 9-11 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Verses 12-14 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Verses 15-17 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Verses 18-20 \_\_\_\_\_

\* In contrast to the stupidity of idolatry, where is Jehovah according to verse 20?

**V. Habakkuk's prayer or psalm** (chapter 3)

A. Habakkuk remembers God's power as shown in the past – The idea seems to be that this power will be used against the evil Babylonians after they punish Judah.

1. Have someone who reads well read verses 1-15.

\* Which of these expressions of power and justice impress you the most?

B. Habakkuk reveals his attitude as he waits for justice against Babylon and against Judah

**Read verse 16**

1. What happened to Habakkuk's body as he considered the coming judgments? \_\_\_\_\_

\* When have you ever felt like this? Do you remember the attacks of 9/11? What about then?

**Read verses 17, 18**

2. What examples of keys to Judah's economic survival might fail?

3. Even so, What would Habakkuk do?

\* *What are some keys to our economic survival that could fail?*

\* *What would our country be like without oil, without food? Without cell phone service?*

\* *Even if our economy and our country are completely destroyed, what should be our attitude?*

Read Verse 19

\* What does your happiness and confidence revolve around? Things? Culture? Or the Lord? Be honest!