

A Study of the Minor Prophets
The Book of Joel ~ Chapter 2
Lesson 2

1. 1:15 The prophet joins with the people in their lament because he shares in their loss and foresees that more judgment is on the way. This section introduces the phrase “Day of the Lord,” an expression that becomes a central theme in the twelve Minor Prophets. The Day of the Lord is the time when Yahweh will come to judge his enemies, and the prophets warn of various judgments the Lord plans to bring against his people in the near future, culminating with the final Day of the Lord in the eschatological future. In the first half of Joel, the prophet preaches concerning the Day of the Lord that is coming soon, while his focus shifts to the distant future in the second half.
2. When Joel warns that the “Day of the Lord is near,” he is not suggesting that the locust invasion was not a Day of the Lord, but rather that an even more intense judgment is on its way.
3. This term in the Minor Prophets reoccurs because the people of Israel and Judah refuse to turn from their sin.
4. In chapter two Judah faces a new crisis -- the attack of an impending army. The prophet portrays an invading army storming the land, with Zion (Jerusalem) in its sights as its ultimate target. Joel portrays an invading army storming the land, with Zion (Jerusalem) in its sights as its ultimate target. 1). The opening and closing verses of this section identify this assault as “the Day of the Lord” for Judah because Yahweh himself leads and directs the invading army against his disobedient people.
5. This army covers the land with darkness and ominous clouds like the arrival of a devastating thunderstorm (v. 2). The army also devours the land like a consuming fire (v. 3). The land in front of them is green and verdant like Eden; the land behind them is a scorched desert. Unlike the cloud of protection that God provides the people in the Exodus, now God comes to bring judgment.
6. Vs 12-17, Joel cries out for the people to assemble and cry out in repentance to the Lord. The ritual of tearing one’s garments is not enough; the people are to approach the Lord with a broken heart. The motivation for repentance is the possibility that the Lord would graciously extend a blessing in the place of sending judgment. Joel reminds the people of the theological confession first expressed after Israel worshipped the golden calf in Exodus.
7. Vs 18-27 reveal that the people heeded Joel’s cry. Their repentance brought blessing. Vs 28-32 What the Lord does for the people in the present anticipates the even greater blessings he has in store for them in the more distant future.
8. In Joel 2:30–32, the prophet announces that the pouring out of the Spirit would come at a time of worldwide judgment in the form of cosmic signs and catastrophic events. The promise in the midst of this announcement of coming doom is that the Lord will save those who call upon his name, and the remnant saved from this judgment will become his people.