

Minor Prophets

Small in Size, Mighty in Message
A 12-Week Journey Through the Minor
Prophets



Introduction

Small in Size, Mighty in Message is a 12-week Bible study journey through the twelve Minor Prophets—Hosea through Malachi. Although these prophetic books are called “minor” because of their shorter length, their messages are anything but minor. Together, they reveal God's holiness, justice, mercy, faithfulness, and unwavering desire to restore His people.

Throughout the series, participants will explore the historical setting and central message of each prophet while discovering how these ancient words continue to speak powerfully to believers today. The study will examine recurring themes such as spiritual unfaithfulness, idolatry, injustice, pride, repentance, judgment, restoration, faithful living, and hope.

Each week will introduce the prophet, explain the historical context, examine key passages and major themes, identify connections to Christ and the New Testament, and provide practical applications for Christian living. Participants will also see how the twelve books fit within the larger biblical story—from Israel's divided kingdom and the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, through exile and restoration, to Malachi's anticipation of the coming Messiah.

The books may be minor in length, but their message about God and His



Syllabus

- Week 1 (9/9): Hosea — wedding ring or broken/restored heart
- **Week 2 (9/16): Joel — locusts**
- Week 3 (9/23): Amos — scales of justice
- Week 4 (9/30): Obadiah — mountain/cliff representing Edom and pride
- Week 5 (10/7): Jonah — sea/great fish
- Week 6 (10/14): Micah — scales/justice
- 10/21: **KAHOOT TIME! What did you remember?**
- Week 7 (10/28): Nahum — Nineveh/ancient city
- Week 8 (11/4): Habakkuk — watchtower
- Week 9 (11/11): Zephaniah — trumpet or approaching day
- Week 10 (11/18): Haggai — rebuilding the Temple
- Week 11(11/25): Zechariah — lampstand/visions
- Week 12(12/2): Malachi — messenger or sunrise
- 12/9: **KAHOOT TIME! What did you remember?**

Book Resources

1. The Holy Bible
2. Mark J. Boda — The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets
3. T. Desmond Alexander & David W. Baker, eds. — Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets
4. Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart — How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth
5. Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton — A Survey of the Old Testament
6. Tremper Longman III — Old Testament Commentary Survey



Why Were They called Minor Prophets?

They are called the Minor Prophets because their books are shorter, not because the prophets themselves—or their messages—were less important.

The Old Testament prophetic books are traditionally grouped into two categories:

- Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These books are generally much longer.
- Minor Prophets: Hosea through Malachi—the final 12 books of the Old Testament. These writings are considerably shorter.

The word “minor” refers to length, not significance.

For example, Obadiah has only 21 verses, while Isaiah has 66 chapters. Yet Obadiah's message concerning pride, judgment, justice, and God's sovereignty is still significant.

Why are the 12 grouped together?

In the Hebrew tradition, these twelve prophetic books were collected together as a single collection often called “The Twelve.” Because the individual books were short, placing them together on one scroll also helped preserve them as a collection.

Each prophet may have given us a relatively short book, but each carries a powerful message from God concerning sin, justice, repentance, judgment, mercy, restoration, hope, and the coming Messiah.



Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

Understanding when the prophets spoke helps us understand why they spoke.

The Minor Prophets ministered across several major periods of Israel's history:

1. Divided Kingdom

Israel divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah).

2. Assyrian Crisis

The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 BC.

3. Babylonian Crisis & Exile

Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC.

4. Return & Restoration

Jewish exiles began returning under Persian rule in 538/537 BC.

Divided Kingdom → Assyria → Babylon → Exile → Return → Restoration

Bottom takeaway:

The prophets didn't speak in a vacuum. God sent His messengers into real historical circumstances with a specific word for His people.

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

Before the Exile: Warning Is Coming		
Prophet	Approx. Period	Primary Setting
Jonah	c. 790–750 BC	Sent to Nineveh
Amos	c. 760–750 BC	Northern Kingdom
Hosea	c. 755–715 BC	Northern Kingdom
Micah	c. 735–700 BC	Judah
Nahum	c. 660–630 BC	Judgment against Nineveh
Zephaniah	c. 640–609 BC	Judah
Habakkuk	c. 609–597 BC	Judah/Babylonian threat

The Pre-Exilic Prophets
Theme:
“Return to God before
judgment comes.”

Major Turning Point
722 BC — Assyria conquers the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Bottom takeaway:
God repeatedly warned His people before judgment came.

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

From Judgment to Restoration

722 BC

Israel falls to Assyria



586 BC

Jerusalem falls to Babylon

Temple destroyed • Judah exiled



539 BC

Persia conquers Babylon



538/537 BC

Jewish exiles begin returning to Jerusalem



520 BC

Haggai & Zechariah minister



516 BC

Second Temple completed



c. 450–430 BC

Malachi ministers

Obadiah

Often associated with Jerusalem's destruction, although **its precise date is debated**.

Bottom takeaway:

Judgment was not the end of Israel's story. God preserved His people and brought them home.

Judgment → Exile → Return → Restoration

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?



After the Exile: Rebuild & Prepare

Title:
The Post-Exilic Prophets

Theme:
“You've returned—now return to God with your whole heart.”

Haggai — 520 BC
Message: Put God first and rebuild His house.

Zechariah — 520 BC onward
Message: God has not forgotten His people. Restoration is coming, and God's purposes will be accomplished by His Spirit.

Malachi — c. 450–430 BC
Message: Return to faithful worship and covenant living while awaiting God's coming messenger and Messiah.
Then add a separate box:

What About Joel?

Joel's date is uncertain. Scholars have proposed both pre-exilic and post-exilic dates. Rather than forcing Joel into a specific period, acknowledge the uncertainty while emphasizing his clear message:
Repentance • Day of the LORD • Restoration • Promise of the Spirit

MALACHI → WAITING → MESSIAH → NEW TESTAMENT

The Minor Prophets end with God's people waiting—but God's redemptive story isn't over.



Week 2: Joel

It's Time to Come Back

Big Idea: *God uses moments of crisis to call His people back to Himself, offering restoration to those who genuinely return.*

Key Scripture: Joel 2:12–13

That is why the LORD says,

“Turn to me now, while there is time.

Give me your hearts.

Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

¹³ Don't tear your clothing in your grief,
but tear your hearts instead.”

Return to the LORD your God,

for he is merciful and compassionate,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

He is eager to relent and not punish.

We may wander from God, but His faithful love continues calling us home.



Week 2: Joel

Meet the Joel the Prophet

Name: Joel — means “**The LORD is God**”

Father: Pethuel — Joel 1:1

Audience: The people of **Judah and Jerusalem**

Date: Uncertain

Unlike several other prophets, Joel doesn't identify the king who was reigning during his ministry. Scholars therefore have no idea how long or significantly concerning when Joel prophesied.

What do we know?

Joel's message centers around:

- A devastating locust plague
- The Day of the LORD
- Repentance
- Restoration
- The outpouring of God's Spirit (Joel prophesied Pentecost as in Acts 2:16-17)

Key Truth

We may not know exactly when Joel preached, but we clearly know what Joel preached: Return to God.

Week 2: Joel

The Crisis: The Locust Plague When Everything is Devoured

Name: Joel — means “The LORD is God”

Joel 1:2-4 (NLT)

Mourning over the Locust Plague

² Hear this, you leaders of the people.

Listen, all who live in the land.

In all your history,

has anything like this happened before?

³ Tell your children about it in the years to come,

and let your children tell their children.

Pass the story down from generation to generation.

⁴ After the cutting locusts finished eating the crops,

the swarming locusts took what was left!

After them came the hopping locusts,

and then the stripping locusts,^[a] too!

Joel describes a catastrophic invasion of locusts that devastated the land.

The destruction affected:

Crops → Food → Economy → Worship → Daily Life

Joel 1:4 describes successive waves of locust destruction.

Joel's Question

Essentially:

“Have you ever seen anything like this?”



Week 2: Joel

The Crisis: The Locust Plague When Everything is Devoured

The crisis becomes a **spiritual wake-up call**.

Joel calls:

Elders → Farmers → Priests → The entire nation
to recognize the seriousness of what has happened.

Teaching Point

Sometimes a crisis exposes what ordinary life allows us to ignore.

Canva visual: Locusts over a barren agricultural field.



Week 2: Joel

A Recent Locust Plague : Las Vegas (A modern illustration for Joel) When Everything is Devoured

The insects commonly reported in Las Vegas are usually **pallid-winged grasshoppers**, not the biblical desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*). During favorable weather conditions, especially after unusually wet periods that increase vegetation, enormous numbers can migrate through the Las Vegas Valley. They can gather around bright city lights at night, making the swarms look particularly dramatic.



Week 2: Joel

A Recent Locust Plague : Las Vegas (A modern illustration for Joel) When Everything is Devoured

One especially famous event occurred in **2019**, when huge numbers descended on Las Vegas. Radar reportedly detected the mass of insects, and news images showed them clustering around lights and buildings along the Strip. Similar outbreaks have occurred again in later years.

Check out YouTube for some video footage of Las Vegas when enormous swarms of grasshoppers descended on the city. Imagine something far more devastating—not merely insects around streetlights, but a swarm consuming the crops your family and your entire nation depended upon for food and livelihood.



Week 2: Joel

The locust plague Joel describes wasn't simply an **inconvenience**. In an agricultural society, widespread crop destruction could threaten **food supplies, livestock, economic survival, and offerings associated with Temple worship** (see Joel 1:9–12).

That makes Joel's opening much more vivid:

- The vines are ruined.
- The grain is destroyed.
- The fields are devastated.
- The farmers mourn.
- The priests mourn.
- The entire nation is affected.

And Joel essentially tells Judah:

“Don't just look at the locusts. Ask what this moment is saying to you spiritually.”

That becomes his bridge from the **locust plague in Chapter 1** to the **Day of the LORD and the call to repentance in Chapter 2**.

One caution for your Bible study: Las Vegas swarms are NOT a modern fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. They work very well as a **modern visual analogy for understanding the scale and emotional impact of an insect swarm**, but Joel's message needs to be interpreted within its own historical and prophetic context.

Although In the Bible, locusts symbolize divine judgment, destruction, and the call to repentance, while also carrying themes of restoration and spiritual renewal.

Week 2: Joel

The Day of the LORD

The Crisis Points to Something Greater

Joel 1:15; 2:1–2:

Alas for that day!

For the day of the LORD is near;
it will come like destruction from the Almighty.^[a]

Blow the trumpet in Zion;

sound the alarm on my holy hill.

Let all who live in the land tremble,

for the day of the LORD is coming.

It is close at hand—

² a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and blackness.

Like dawn spreading across the mountains

a large and mighty army comes,

such as never was in ancient times

nor ever will be in ages to come.



Week 2: Joel

THE DAY OF THE LORD

This phrase describes God's decisive intervention in human history, particularly in **judgment and deliverance**.

For Joel, the locust devastation becomes a warning:

If this disaster is terrible, God's coming judgment is even more serious.

Throughout the prophets, the Day of the LORD can involve:

Judgment • Justice • God's intervention • Deliverance • Restoration

Key Question

Are we prepared to meet God?

This theme will return when we study **Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, and Malachi**.



Week 2: Joel

God's Invitation: RETURN

“Turn Ye Even to Me”

Joel 2:12–13 (NIV)

Rend Your Heart

¹² “Even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

¹³ Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.



Week 2: Joel

RETURN TO ME

“with all your heart”

Joel calls the people to return with:

Fasting • Weeping • Mourning

But then comes an important statement:

“Rend your heart, and not your garments...”

In Biblical culture, tearing one's garments could outwardly express grief or repentance.

But God wants something deeper.

Not merely outward religion.

Inward transformation.

True repentance isn't simply looking sorry. It is a genuine turning of the heart back toward God.

Week 2: Joel

Why Can We Return?

Because of Who God Is

Joel doesn't merely tell Israel to repent.
He gives them a **reason** to repent.

Joel 2:13

¹³ And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

God is:

Gracious

Merciful

Slow to anger

Abounding in steadfast love

Joel's message isn't:

“Come back because God can't wait to punish you.”

It's:

“Come back because this is who your God is.”

This is an important connection with Hosea.

Hosea: God pursues His wandering people.

Joel: God calls His wandering people to return.

Key Truth

Repentance isn't running away from an angry God. It is returning to a gracious and merciful God.

Week 2: Joel

God Can Restore What Was Lost

“I Will Restore the Years”

Joel 2:23–27 (KJV)

²³ Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

²⁴ And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁷ And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

One of Joel's best-known promises appears in verse 25:

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten...” — Joel 2:25 KJV

The people had experienced devastating loss.

But devastation wasn't going to have the final word.

God promises:

- **Provision**
- **Renewal**
- **Restoration**
- **His presence among His people**

Week 2: Joel

God Can Restore What Was Lost

Important Teaching Distinction

Restoration doesn't necessarily mean God recreates every circumstance exactly as it existed before.

Rather:

God is able to bring renewal, fruitfulness, and purpose even after seasons of devastating loss.

Then emphasize Joel 2:27:

"I am in the midst of Israel."

The greatest restoration isn't merely getting things back.

It's experiencing God's presence.



Week 2: Joel

“I Will Pour Out My Spirit”

From Joel to Pentecost

Joel 2:28–29(NIV)

The Day of the LORD

²⁸ “And afterward,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

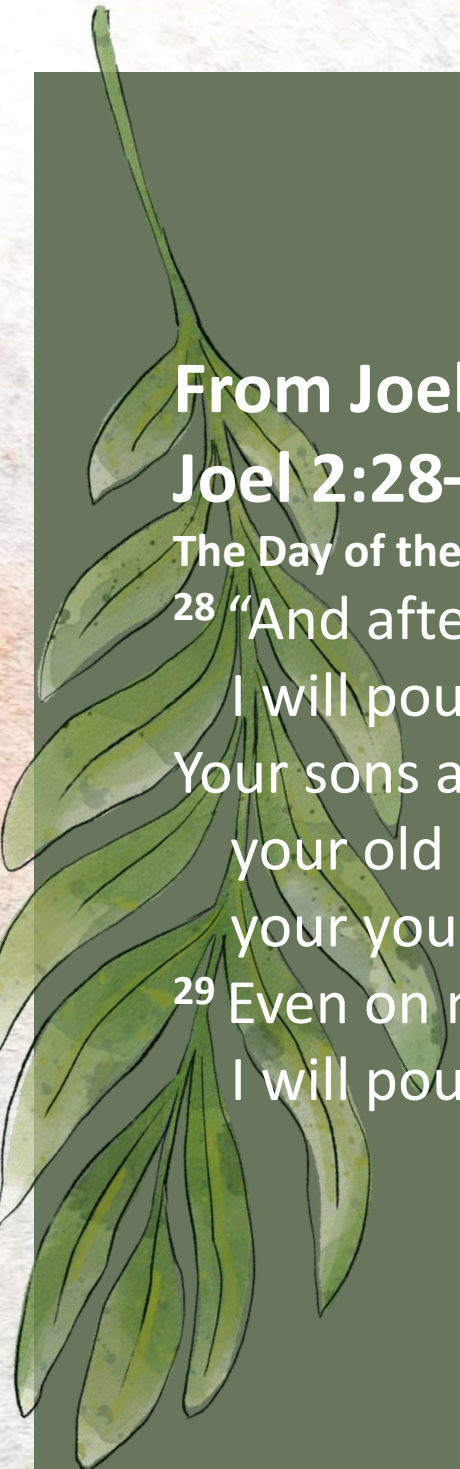
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams,

your young men will see visions.

²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days. Joel looks beyond immediate restoration toward something extraordinary.



Week 2: Joel

“I Will Pour Out My Spirit”

God promises:

“I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT”

Upon:

- **Sons & Daughters**
- **Old & Young**
- **Male & Female Servants**

God's Spirit would be poured out broadly among His people.

Then make the New Testament connection:

ACTS 2

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is poured out.

Peter stands before the crowd and declares:

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...” — Acts 2:16

Then Peter quotes **Joel 2:28–32**.

Joel → Pentecost

Promise → Fulfillment

This is one of your strongest opportunities in the series to demonstrate that the Minor Prophets point forward into the New Testament.

Week 2: Joel

From Disaster to Hope

The Journey Through Joel

I would make this a large visual progression across your Canva slide:

DEVASTATION

Locusts destroy the land.



AWAKENING

The people recognize their condition.



REPENTANCE

“Return to Me.”



RESTORATION

“I will restore...”



THE SPIRIT

“I will pour out My Spirit...”



HOPE

“Whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.”

— Joel 2:32

Then connect Joel 2:32 → Acts 2:21 → Romans 10:13.

Key Truth

Joel begins with devastation but moves toward restoration and hope.



Week 2: Joel

What Does Joel Say to Us?

Bringing Joel Home

Ask Yourself:

1. Has God been using something to get my attention?
2. Is my repentance merely outward—or has my heart genuinely turned toward God?
3. Is there something from which God is calling me to turn?
4. Do I believe God can bring fruitfulness after a season of loss?
5. Am I depending upon the power of the Holy Spirit or primarily upon myself?

BIG IDEA

God doesn't simply call us away from sin—He calls us back to Himself.

Closing Prayer Focus:

Lord, search our hearts. Show us where we have wandered. Give us genuine repentance, restore what You desire to restore, and empower us through Your Holy Spirit to live faithfully before You.

Discussion



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1. What is the difference between **“rending your garments”** and **“rending your heart”**?
 2. What can keep Christians from genuinely returning to God?
 3. Why does Joel emphasize God's character when calling people to repentance?
 4. What does “restore the years the locust has eaten” mean—and what should we be careful *not* to make it mean?
 5. What does Joel's prophecy of the Spirit teach us when we read it alongside Acts 2?
 6. And finally: **Is there an area of your life where God is saying, “Return to Me”?**

Conclusion



BIG IDEA

God doesn't simply call us away from sin—He calls us back to Himself.

Closing Prayer :

Lord, search our hearts. Show us where we have wandered. Give us genuine repentance, restore what You desire to restore, and empower us through Your Holy Spirit to live faithfully before You.



Thank You

Presented by Rev. Dianne Tam