



# Minor Prophets – Major Challenges

## Cell Notes 2019

### Study 2. Joel (Part 2) Promises of Hope

**Aim:** To reflect on how God's promise of his Spirit with us means that we can face the future with hope rather than fear.

**Resources:** A copy of the questions for each of the three small groups & 3 colours of ribbon/thread/wool so people can have a length of each for the final prayer activity.

**To start with:** Orange Phones once famously used the advertising slogan, "The Future's bright; the future's orange". What would your one sentence view of the future be?

**Engaging with the text:**

**Read Aloud:** *The Book of Joel shows how sin can wreak havoc on our world, but that God's mercy creates hope for the future. The first half focusses on past events calling people to repentance the second half looks forward to God's promises of restoration.*

Divide the group into 3 for 10-15 minutes. One group will look at each of the 3 promises God gives through Joel and feedback what it was. You might want to let people choose depending on what they are interested in but try to keep the groups roughly even. (N.B. give them a copy of the questions, so they don't have to keep asking you what they are!)

#### Group A. The Promise to Empower:

Read **Joel 2. 28-32**

1. A. What do you find comforting and/or unsettling about this promise?  
B. Compare it with Isaiah 44.3 & Ezekiel 36.26-27
2. Famously Peter quoted this prophecy as fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (17-21)  
A. Why did God send his Spirit at that particular time?  
B. How do you feel about the Holy Spirit and the promise that God will empower you to serve Him in building his kingdom?  
C. Where are you aware of the Spirit at work in and through you? (If you are not, why do you think that might be?)

#### Group B. The Promise to Protect and Bring Justice

Read **Joel 3.1-16** and pick out

1. A. Who is being oppressed, how and by whom?  
B. How is God going to bring about justice on the exploiters?
2. Jesus famously preached about the struggling and their oppressors. Read Luke 6.20-26  
How does this compare with Joel's vision of judgement?
3. In our world, what sorts of people do you think these words ought to encourage and disturb? How do you think we should be responding to them?

#### Group C. The promise to Envision for the Future

Read **Joel 3.17-21**

1. A. What is God's promise to his people about their long-term future? (what does it include?)  
B. Why do you think they would find this comforting?



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2. What do verses 17 & 21 (that start and close this promise) have in common and why do you think it's significant? (N.B. *if you get stuck, God dwelling with his people is a promise of both blessing and security, that he will never leave them.*)
3. This promise is echoed in a number of places in Scripture – famously in Revelation 22.1-5.
  - A. What are the parallels?
  - B. What in these promises gives you most comfort personally and why?

**All together:** Have each group share briefly (2 mins max) the key points they discussed and how the promise they read about offers us hope. Then discuss.

4. How could this practically shape our thinking, speaking and acting in a world that feels dark and hopeless and among people who so often feel powerless?

### **Response:**

As a prayer activity give people 3 coloured ribbons/ threads: One for Spirit, One for Justice, One for Hope of Shalom. Spend some time praying and plaiting those together as a bookmark/reminder of the three promises in Joel.