

*Spare Your
People, Lord
Leader Guide*
(NASB and ESV)

KINGS & PROPHETS SERIES

Course 4
Obadiah, Joel

Spare Your People, Lord Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)
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USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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SPARE YOUR PEOPLE, LORD LEADER GUIDE Obadiah

Lesson emphasis:

- Obadiah
- Edom's judgment
- The relationship between Israel and Edom

OVERVIEW

Since your group began their study with a brief overview of Obadiah, you might open the discussion the same way, giving them a background from which to discuss the remainder of the lesson. Ask them about the kind of book this is and who it is about.

This book is Obadiah's vision and includes prophesy.

It's a report from the Lord concerning Edom.

It's about Edom, but might have been spoken to Judah or Israel.

Since it was a vision, Obadiah saw as well as heard it.

The theme is the judgment of Edom.

But "the nations" and Israel are also mentioned.

HISTORY OF EDMON AND ISRAEL (JACOB)

Ask what they learned about Edom's history from the cross-references, especially in relation to Israel, in order to set the historical context for Obadiah's message.

Tell them to look at the map as a visual aid for this discussion. Also there is a short list about Edom and Israel at the end of this guide.

Genesis 25, 27, and 28

Isaac, Abraham's son, had twin sons. The older, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob.

Romans 9:10-13

Before these twins were born, God chose Jacob according to His purpose.

Esau was called Edom, because he asked for a swallow of that "red" stuff (ESV – some of that red stew), for which he sold his birthright to his brother. *'ēdōm either means red, or sounds like the Hebrew for red.*

Jacob, Israel, also received the blessing of the firstborn by deceit; he would have abundance and nations would bow down to him. He would be master over his brothers.

Hebrews 12:15-17

Esau was an immoral and godless / unholy man. He sold his birthright for a single meal. When he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected. There was no opportunity / chance for him to repent, change his mind.

Esau vows to kill Jacob, but Isaac and Rebekah send Jacob to Paddan-aram to find a wife.

Genesis 32, 33 and 36

These chapters tell what happened between Jacob and Esau when Jacob returned to Canaan after being gone for many years. He expected Esau to still be harboring a grudge against him, and perhaps even still considering killing him.

But instead, Esau was very friendly toward Jacob and welcomed him with an embrace.

Canaan could not hold both of their households and livestock, so Esau went to Seir, and Jacob inherited the promised land of Canaan.

Esau was the father of the Edomites, who lived at Mount Seir.

Numbers 20 and Deuteronomy 2

When Israel came out of Egypt, God said to go through the territory of their brothers. Edom would not allow them to pass through their land, but came out against Israel. So they went a different way.

God gave Mount Seir to Edom. They took their land and even overcame some giants who lived there.

Kings and Chronicles

1 Chronicles 18 says David put garrisons, military outposts, in Edom. Probably this was when Joab struck down every male in Edom, except Hadad and some of his father's servants, 1 Kings 11.

Then when Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord, He raised up Hadad as an adversary to Solomon.

In the days of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, there was no king in Edom. But in the days of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, Edom revolted and made a king over themselves.

Psalm 137:7

This psalm, apparently written during the time of Judah's captivity in Babylon, says Edom encouraged Babylon to destroy Judah.

This would have been after the time of Obadiah, probably during Babylon's assault on Jerusalem.

OBADIAH

Verses 1-9

Ask your group what they learned from these verses. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid.

Obadiah had a vision concerning Edom.

A messenger was sent among the nations to call them to battle against Edom.

God was going to make Edom small among the nations, even though Edom thought it could not be brought down.

NOTE: Some might have read about Edom's topographical situation with the main cities situated high on a ridge in the mountains.

Ask about the definition of “arrogance / pride” and what they learned from the cross-references about it.

zadon—the concept of an inflated view of oneself; self-willed and not humble¹

Jeremiah 48:42

Moab, the mid-section of modern Jordan, was arrogant (ESV—magnified himself) toward the Lord and will be destroyed because of that.

Isaiah 10:12

God used Assyria to judge His nation of Israel, but He'll also punish the king of Assyria for his arrogance of heart and his boastful look.

Jeremiah 50:29-32

Babylon was another nation who became arrogant against (ESV—proudly defied) the Lord and was used by Him to judge His people.

Zephaniah 2:10-11

Those who become arrogant / proud toward Israel will be terrified by God (ESV—the Lord will be awesome against them).

Malachi 4:1-6

The day of the Lord will be a time of judgment for all the arrogant.

Romans 1:28-32

Those who don't acknowledge God are arrogant (ESV—haughty and boastful) toward Him. They deserve death.

¹ J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

2 Timothy 3:1-7

This warns believers about the arrogant who have only a form of godliness. Avoid such men.

Lead your discussion back to Obadiah. According to verses 5-7, how will Edom be brought down by God?

He will use the nations, Edom's allies, to turn against them and overpower them. This shows His sovereignty over the nations.

What will the results be in verses 8-9?

Wisdom and understanding would be gone, and the mighty would be dismayed. Everyone would be slaughtered.

NOTE: Teman is Edom's capital, named for Esau's grandson (Genesis 36:10-11).

Verses 10-14

According to verse 10 why was God going to bring down Edom, destroy them, slaughter them?

For violence done to his brother Jacob

Genesis 12:2-3

The one who curses, goes against, Abraham's descendants (through Isaac and Jacob) will be cursed by God Himself. God has never changed that promise. Nations now still suffer the same consequences when they go against Israel.

When will the events of verses 10-14 possibly take place?

There was a time when Israel was invaded by another nation(s) and Edom participated. This can also point to future events.

It could have happened when the Philistines and Arabians came against Jehoram king of Judah in about 848-841 BC, 2 Chronicles 21:8-20.

or

It could have been at the time of the Babylonian captivity.

and

It can also be prophecy for the future.

Either way, Edom participated by not only gloating over Judah's distress, rejoicing over Judah's time of destruction, but they also entered and looted Judah.

Edom cut down the fugitives as they fled and imprisoned the survivors. That was enough to bring God's judgment on Edom.

Jeremiah 1:1-3 and 49:7-22

Jeremiah prophesied from the time of Josiah king of Judah until the Babylonian exile.

His prophecy against Edom is very much like Obadiah's. Jeremiah even says that he heard Obadiah's message from the Lord regarding Edom in verses 14-16.

In verse 7 it says that there is no more wisdom in Teman, Obadiah 8-9.

Edom's overthrow will be as final as that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Verses 19-20 speak of the Lord's sovereignty.

Verses 15-21

What are these verses about? Discuss related cross-references.

The day of the Lord will bring judgment for all the nations, not just Edom.
This is still future.

Revelation 19:13-16

When Jesus returns, smites the nations, and rules them with a rod of iron.

They'll be judged according to what they've done, especially in reference to Israel.

The house of Jacob, Joseph, will consume the house of Edom. There will be no survivor of Esau's house. The exiles of Israel at that time will possess all of their possessions. The kingdom will be the Lord's, and Esau will be judged from Mount Zion.

Ezekiel 35

Verse 5 is especially interesting as it seems to identify the time of Edom's sins against Israel as at the Babylonian captivity. God said that He will give them bloodshed for bloodshed. Relate this to Obadiah 15.

A time is coming when the inhabitants of Edom, modern Jordan, will know that the Lord is God. But that time will be when He judges them. Edom will be a desolation.

Numbers 24:15-19

Relate this to the end of Obadiah.

- One from Jacob will have dominion
- Edom will be a possession (ESV—Seir will be dispossessed)
- Israel will perform valiantly

Isaiah 11:12-14; Amos 9:11-12

When the Lord gathers Israel back to their land, they'll also possess Edom.

Malachi 1:2-5 (quoted in Romans 9:10-13)

The Lord chose Jacob, not Esau.

Edom says they'll return and build up the ruins, perhaps from the time of a previous destruction, but God will tear it down again. He is against them forever.

Zechariah 14:16-19

Relate this to Obadiah 21. The kingdom will be the Lord's and those left of the nations, after He judges them, will come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. It's at the time when Jesus rules them with the rod of iron, right after His return.

The judgment of the nations and the day of the Lord are still future events.
 Edom's final judgment is still waiting.

Ask your group to share what they learned from studying this short prophecy of Obadiah.

ISRAEL	EDOM
Two nations Older will serve the younger	
Jacob = Israel Younger Took the blessing Given the land of Canaan Holy nation	Esau = Edom Older Sold birthright Godless / unholy Immoral Given Mt. Seir Violence to brother No survivor

**SPARE YOUR PEOPLE, LORD
LEADER GUIDE
Joel, Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Joel 1
- Locust plague on Israel
- God's purpose for calamity

OVERVIEW

You could begin your discussion by asking your group how they answered the questions on Day One.

Joel spoke God's Word to the elders and inhabitants of Judah. It was a warning, a trumpet alarm, for God's people that judgment was coming on them. They were to both listen and tell it.

The occasion which got their attention to listen was a devastating locust plague on the land. And the Lord said it was His army, His judgment, on His people.

Unlike other "minor prophets" Joel doesn't dwell on the people's sins, but on the results of the judgment of the plague and the coming judgment in the day of the Lord.

It was like a foreshadowing of His judgment in the day of the Lord, which is a main theme in Joel. There had never been anything like the locust plague, and there has never been, nor ever will be, anything like the day of the Lord.

In Joel 2, God calls His people to return to Him—one of the reasons for God's judgment on His people.

But God's judgment is not only for His people. Joel also spoke a good bit about the judgment of the nations.

And there is also hope for Judah in this prophecy. The end of chapters 2 and 3 speaks of the restoration and deliverance for Judah in the last days.

You could ask about the timing of Joel. Tell your group to look at the chart "The Rulers and Prophets of Joel's Time" as a visual aid.

This short prophetic book does not say when Joel spoke, but it was after the devastating locust plague on Judah.

NOTE: Although it is on the chart in the lesson as during the time of Joash king of Judah, both Obadiah and Joel could also have been closer to the exile of Judah by Babylon.

JOEL 1

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance chart as the theme of this chapter.

Hear the Lord's word, locusts, a nation, destruction

Verses 1-3

How does Joel begin? What are these verses about?

The elders were told to hear this prophecy.

All the land's inhabitants were to listen to it.

The question was asked about anything like this happening in their or their fathers' days.

They were to tell their children and grandchildren about it.

Verses 4-7

What had happened? What were they to tell about?

Locusts—gnawing / cutting, swarming, creeping / hopping, stripping / destroying
Everything was eaten.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about this, the reason for a plague.

Deuteronomy 28

God said that if His people Israel obeyed Him, He would bless them. They would be the head of the nations and not the tail. But in the text of Joel it seems that the nations were coming against Israel with success.

He also said that if they didn't obey His commands (His Word), curses would come upon them, calamities or extraordinary plagues. One was locusts.

Exodus 10

The Lord had sent plagues on Egypt when Pharaoh didn't allow Israel to leave. One of the plagues was locusts, which came and went according to the Lord's direction. The text says that there had never been so many locusts in Egypt, nor would there be so many again. It's similar language to what Joel said about the locusts in Judah.

Amos 3 and 4

Amos prophesied during the days of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam king of Israel. He also spoke of God using plagues like the caterpillar / locust (the same Hebrew word as "gnawing / cutting locust" in Joel 1:4) to judge His people, yet they didn't return to Him.

Ezekiel 14

God will judge the unfaithfulness of a country against Him. Even the presence of righteous men such as Noah, Daniel, and Job could not deliver the country.

God sometimes uses His creation as tools of judgment.
God is the One Who creates calamity. If it happens, He has done it.

Isaiah 26 and 45

Another reason for God's judgments is for the earth's inhabitants to learn righteousness.

You might ask your group if any of this is applicable for now.

Lead your discussion back to Joel 1: 5-7. What were the people to do and why?

The people were called to wake up and mourn / wail.
“Weep,” “wail,” “mourn(s),” “cry,” and “dry/dried up” are repeated words in this chapter.

The Lord, through Joel, likened the locusts to a mighty and numerous nation.

Verses 8-12

What was it like?

Because of the locust plague the priests were unable to offer grain and drink offerings, offerings which were to be made daily, on the Sabbath, monthly, and on some feast days in God's temple, the house of the Lord. So they were unable to worship God the way He had instructed them.

Ask about the “drink offering.”

It was cut off because the vine had dried up. The locusts had devoured it.
There was no wine to pour out as a drink offering to the Lord.

It was a liquid offering which accompanied the other offerings in the temple.

Genesis 35:14

Jacob set up a pillar where God spoke to him, and he poured a drink offering on it.

Exodus 25:23-30

The tabernacle bowls for pouring drink offerings were made of pure gold.

Exodus 29:38-42

It was part of the daily offering in the tabernacle.

Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:6 and Romans 12:1-2

Paul likened it to a believer pouring out his life on the sacrifice and service (offerings) of others.

Direct the discussion back to Joel 1:13-20.

The priests were called to put on sackcloth.

Genesis 37:34

Jacob mourned in sackcloth when he thought Joseph was dead.

Revelation 6:12

Black like sackcloth

Esther 4:1-3

Mordecai and the Jews put on sackcloth because of their mourning.

Isaiah 15:1-3 and Jonah 3:4-10

Moab and Nineveh also put on sackcloth when mourning.

Matthew 11:21

Sackcloth is connected with repentance in this verse.

Mourn over sin.

Daniel 9:1-3

In sackcloth Daniel begged God for mercy on Israel.

They were to consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all who lived in Judah to the house of the Lord, the temple in Jerusalem, to cry to the Lord because of the devastation.

Leviticus 23:36; Numbers 29:35 and 2 Chronicles 7:9

On the 8th day of the Feast of Booths there was a holy convocation. It was a solemn assembly and no work was done that day.

Solomon dedicated the temple, at the time of that feast. Again, the last day was a solemn assembly.

Deuteronomy 16:8

On the 7th day of Unleavened Bread there was to be a solemn assembly with no work.

2 Kings 10:18-28

Jehu ordered a solemn assembly for Baal.

Amos 5:21

Because of Israel's sin, God didn't like their solemn assemblies.

What time is introduced in verse 15 and how does it relate to the rest of this chapter?

The day of the Lord is near.
It's a day of destruction from the Almighty.

It seems that the utter devastation of Judah right after the locust plague was a foreshadowing of what the day of the Lord will be like.

Ask about the total effect of the locusts in verses 16-20.

No food for people or animals

No gladness and joy in being able to worship the Lord

Fire also came as dryness followed the plague

Help your group to understand that when their lives seem to be void and dry that there is only one place to go. Why would God use Joel to call the priests, the elders, and the people to a solemn assembly?

They needed to cry out to the Lord.

He is the only one who can bring life.

He is the only restorer, the only joy-giver.

For a nation or individual who has sinned and suffered the consequences of that sin, there is only one place to go.

Turn, repent, to the Lord Himself

Encourage your group to be like Joel in his time. They can take the message of the Word of God to people who are living in desperate times, people who are suffering the judgment of their sins, people who don't know where to turn.

Also encourage them to continue in their study of Joel.

JOEL
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2

Lesson emphasis

- Joel 2
- Fasting

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember from the short overview of Joel and what they remember from Joel 1. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid.

Joel doesn't give the time of his prophecy, except that it was after the worst locust plague Judah had ever suffered.

He compared this with the day of the Lord; there has never been anything like it nor will there ever be.

Joel called God's people to return to Him after the plague.

Chapter 1 presents the devastation of the locust plague and the priests are told to consecrate a fast and solemn assembly to cry to the Lord.

Chapter 2 emphasizes the day of the Lord.

Chapter 3 focuses on the judgment of the nations and the restoration of Judah.

JOEL 2

Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as the theme of this chapter.

Alarm; day of Lord is coming; a great and mighty people

Verses 1-11

What are these verses about? Discuss relevant cross-references and application.

Blow a trumpet, sound an alarm for the day of the Lord is coming.

Numbers 10, 29, 31

Trumpets were used for summoning the congregation of Israel to gather before the Lord. If only one trumpet were blown, then only the leaders gathered.

Another use was to let them know that they were about to leave a place.

Trumpets were also blown by Aaron's sons to sound an alarm for war. So they would be remembered before the Lord and saved from their enemies

Numbers 29 tells of a special holy day for blowing trumpets—the feast of trumpets, now sometimes called Rosh Hashanah.

So it seems that only the priests, Aaron's sons, blew the trumpets in Israel.
Relate this to Joel 1:13-14 and 2:15-17.

Now consider the context of Joel 2; the locust plague had been the worst Judah had ever experienced, and the Lord spoke through Joel to sound an alarm and gather the people. They were to cry to the Lord, but there was another reason for sounding the trumpet—the day of the Lord, nothing like it ever, was near.

In Joel 2:1 the trumpet was to sound an alarm because of the day of the Lord.
In Joel 2:15 it was to consecrate a fast and proclaim a solemn assembly—gather the people before the Lord, as in Joel 1:13-14.

The day of the Lord is near for God's people Israel/ Judah.
It's described as a time for alarm, and for the inhabitants to tremble.
Darkness
Gloom
Clouds
Never been anything like it, nor ever will be
Great
Very awesome
Who can endure it?

Now ask your group what the other emphasis of verses 1-11 is. Who is this about?

There is a great and mighty people connected with the clouds and thick darkness of the day of the Lord. And this is all compared to the locust plague.

Relate the darkness to what your group read in the article about a swarm of locusts. Also ask what they learned from Revelation 9.

The great army described in Joel 2 is frightening because it's called the Lord's army. Some believe that this is merely a reference to the locusts in chapter 1, but others think it somehow foreshadows a real army of people in the day of the Lord.

Revelation 9:1-11

When the 5th angel sounds a trumpet, locusts come from the bottomless pit to torment men on earth for 5 months. Their leader is Abaddon (Hebrew meaning “destruction”¹) and Apollyon (Greek meaning “destroyer”²). Compare their appearance with that of the army in Joel 2.

Verses 12-17

What are these verses about?

As none can endure the day of the Lord, Joel called the people of his day to return to the Lord since the locust plague had gotten their attention. They suffered part of God’s judgment in that plague, but He called them to Himself so that they didn’t have to be destroyed in the coming judgment.

How did the people demonstrate outwardly that they had returned, repented, to the Lord?

Fasting, weeping and mourning, rending their hearts

Ask what your group learned about fasting. Tell them to look at their charts on fasting in the lesson as a visual aid for this part of the discussion.

Fasting is most commonly abstaining from food and sometimes drink.

There were several instances in Israel’s history when there was sin followed by consequences. When they gathered before the Lord, mourned over the sin, and fasted to seek Him, He answered them.

David fasted as he lay before the Lord all night praying that his child would live.

Fasting is accompanied by humility and/ or prayer many times in Scripture.

It seems that it is a way of seeking the Lord in humility

- seeking Him with repentance
- seeking Him for guidance
- seeking Him for answers to requests
- or just seeking Him

There were times when the whole nation of Israel fasted and prayed together.

In Acts it says that the church prophets and teachers fasted together and sent out “missionaries.” There was corporate fasting and prayer before appointing elders in the churches.

¹ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Rev 9:11) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

² *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Rev 9:11).

But Jesus mentioned a time of individual fasting, when no one else knows.

Direct the discussion back to Joel 2:13-17.
What does this say about God?

Verse 13 especially tells who He is.

- Gracious
- Compassionate
- Slow to anger
- Abounding in lovingkindness
- Relenting of evil

Joel reminded them of who He is so that they would turn and call on Him based on His character of possibly relenting of the evil against them. The plague was done, but they were facing a greater one—the day of the Lord.

As they sought Him in fasting and mourning, they knew that He could leave them a blessing and not the punishment they deserved.

In verse 17, the priests cried for Him to spare His people because of who He is.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

Verses 18-27

Ask what the emphasis of these verses is and how it relates to the rest of the chapter.

God will have pity on His people.

When there is true turning to Him in His holy land, then He will be zealous for His people Israel.

This has not happened yet. Israel as a nation has not turned back to Him. So the events of these verses are still future for them.

When they do turn—

- He'll have pity on His people.
- He'll give them abundance.
- They'll never again be a reproach among the nations.

Some think verse 20 is a description of the locust plague.

If this is future and related to the day of the Lord, then it could be the same “army” as in verses 1-11.

Verses 21-24 speak specifically of the abundance God will give His people. He will make up for, and more, what the locusts ate.

Verse 25 says that the locusts were His great army. Compare this to 1:4-7 and 2:2-11.

Verses 26 and 27 say Israel will never be put to shame again. At that time, they'll know He is in their midst.

He is the Lord, and there is no other. Encourage your group to hold firmly to this knowledge which can hold them in times of trouble.

Verses 28-32

Ask about the focus of these verses, but leave most of the discussion about them for the next lesson.

This is about God pouring His Spirit on all mankind, not just Israel in the future. Whoever calls on the Lord will be delivered “in that day.”

There will be signs and wonders on earth and in the heavens.
There will also be survivors—those who call on Him.

Relate this to Joel 2:12-13.

One of the main points of this chapter is that there is hope for those who return to the Lord; there is escape from the day of the Lord for those who call on His name.

Get your group excited about beginning with the end of this chapter for their next lesson. The story continues.

JOEL
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3

Lesson emphasis

- Joel 2:28–3:21
- The day of the Lord
- The judgment of the nations

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what Joel is about? What are the themes of the chapters? Tell them to look at their At a Glance charts as a visual aid.

Joel wrote his prophecy as a result of the worst locust plague Judah had ever experienced. It was not only the sounding of an alarm about the coming day of the Lord, but also a call for them to return to the Lord.

Joel 1 Hear the Lord’s word, locusts, a nation, destruction

Joel 2 Alarm; day of Lord is coming; a great and mighty people

Joel 3 The nations judged

JOEL 2:28-32

Ask what your group learned from their study of these verses and related cross-references. There is a simple time line on the last page of this guide which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

This part of Joel is the whole third chapter in the Hebrew Bible.

When it begins with “after this,” it’s a reference to after the time of Joel.

You could ask how Peter explained, interpreted, it in Acts 2.

He said “in the last days.”

What would happen in the last days, after the time of Joel? And what is the other time reference in both passages?

“Before the . . . day of the Lord” God would pour forth His Spirit on all mankind, not just Israel—on God’s bondservants, both men and women.

The beginning of that fulfillment was on Pentecost in Acts 2 for Israel and about eight years later in Acts 10 for the Gentiles.

You could ask what your group learned about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel 36

Ezekiel was another Old Testament prophet who foretold God's promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In verse 27, Ezekiel said that the Spirit would cause them to walk in God's statutes and observe His ordinances.

They had turned away from God, but there would come a time when He would put His Spirit within them, and they would not turn away from Him. They would know how to keep His commands.

Romans 10

All who call on the Lord are saved; there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the church.

Ephesians 1:13-14

He is given at salvation, believing the gospel.
Believers are sealed with the Spirit.
He's the pledge of our inheritance.

Joel 2:17 and 3:2 refer to Israel as God's inheritance.

Romans 8

The Spirit testifies within believers that we belong to God.
If He is not indwelling, then there is no life, no salvation.

Continuing in Acts 2 (but watch your time), you might ask what the text says about receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of Peter's sermon describing the pouring forth of the Spirit on believers, the people listening asked what they should do.

He told them to repent (that's what Joel called Judah to do) and be baptized in Jesus' name for forgiveness and they would receive the gift of the Spirit.

Then he said that the promise of the Spirit was for them, those there on Pentecost

- Their children, Jews who believe in Jesus
- All who are far off, Gentiles
- As many as the Lord calls to Himself

At this point you could direct the discussion back to Joel 2:30-32 and Acts 2:19-21 and ask what else those verses say will happen before the day of the Lord.

There will be wonders and signs in the sky and on earth.

- Blood, fire, smoke
- Sun turned to darkness and moon to blood

Review what Joel said about the day of the Lord up to this point.

Destruction from the Almighty

2:1-2 “nothing like it” spoke of the locusts, but could also be giving a comparison with the day of the Lord

clouds, gloom, darkness, great and very awesome

Ask how Daniel 12, Matthew 24, and Jeremiah 30 compare with Joel’s statements about the day of the Lord.

Daniel called it a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation (of Israel) until that time.

Jesus said in Matthew 24 that there would be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world. It begins with the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, an event which Daniel wrote about, and it continues until Jesus’ coming.

“tribulation,” *thlipsis*—primarily means a pressing, pressure;¹ from the word meaning to crush, press, compress, squeeze²

Jeremiah 30:7 says that the day is great, “there is none like it.” It’s called here the “time of Jacob’s distress.”

Let your group discuss if they think based on their study that Joel, Daniel, Jeremiah, and Matthew all speak of the same time.

If so, then it’s the day of the Lord and the great tribulation, or the great tribulation is part of the day of the Lord.

Compare the rest of what Daniel 12:1 says about Daniel’s people Israel with Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, and Jeremiah 30:7.

There will be those who are rescued, delivered, saved at that time. Jeremiah said that Jacob would be saved from his day of distress.

Daniel said that it will be those of Israel whose names are found written in the book.

Joel and Acts say that it will be those who call on the name of the Lord.

¹ W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), pp. 38-39.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* (Chattanooga, Tennessee: AMG Publishers, 1992), p. 736.

Ask what your group learned about the ones who will be saved at that time.

Joel 2:32

There will be those who escape, survivors whom the Lord calls.

Isaiah 10:20-23

Those who escape will turn to the Lord; they're called the remnant.

Zechariah 13:8-9

But only 1/3 third of the nation of Israel at that time will survive.

They'll call on His name, and they'll be refined.

But 2/3 will perish for disobedience, turning from their God.

JOEL 3

Ask what this chapter is about and how it relates to the previous chapter in Joel.

This is a continuation of Joel's prophecy of what will happen "in those days and at that time," not during his own time.

God will restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, Joel 3:1, 17-18, 20.

Compare with Jeremiah 30:3.

And He will gather the nations and judge them in the valley of decision, the valley of Jehoshaphat (Jehovah judges³).

He'll judge them on behalf of His people Israel.

It seems that in times when God judges Israel, He uses nations to scatter them and divide up their land, but He will also judge those nations for coming against His people.

He will return their recompense / payment on their own heads. He'll recompense / pay back the nations for what they did to Israel. Edom is specifically mentioned for violence done to Jacob. Ask your class what they remember from studying Obadiah.

This judgment of the nations will also take place in the day of the Lord.

He'll judge them from Jerusalem.

Now ask your group what they learned from other passages they studied about this judgment of the nations and a possible chronological order.

Revelation 16 and Joel 3:9, 11-12

This is the 6th bowl of God's wrath poured on the earth.

³ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Joel 3:2) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

The Euphrates River is dried up so kings from the east can gather in the valley of Har-Magedon (the valley of Jezreel in Israel).

They will gather for the war of “the great day of God.”

- The armies of the nations gather for war against God.

Zechariah 14 and Joel 3:12

The nations come against Jerusalem to battle.

Many call the valley of Jehoshaphat the same as the Kidron Valley in Jerusalem. The city will be taken and half exiled, but the Lord will come and fight against the nations.

- There will be a battle at Jerusalem.

Revelation 14, Isaiah 63:1-4, Revelation 19 and Joel 3:13

The earth is ripe for reaping, and her fruit is thrown into the wine press of God’s wrath. Two hundred miles of blood is the result.

The Lord treads the wine press alone in His anger in the day of vengeance.

- The Lord will fight for His people against the nations.

Matthew 25, Revelation 6 and Joel 3:11-18

Jesus will gather the nations for judgment after He returns to earth.

He’ll judge the individuals of the nations based on how they treated Israel during the tribulation. The righteous will enter His earthly kingdom, and the unrighteous (accursed ones) go away into eternal punishment.

- The nations are judged.

Let your group close this discussion by telling what they learned about God from this study.

