

— **JOEL** & **OBADIAH** —

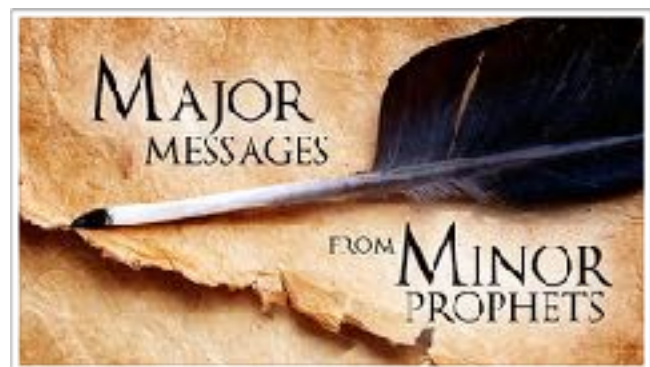
Joel: It's difficult to place Joel on our timeline—some believe he preached as early as 900 BC, while others will place him closer to Malachi's time. There are no explicit references in the book to datable persons or events, so scholars have assigned a wide range of dates to the book.

The main positions are:

- Ninth century BC, particularly in the reign of Joash – a position especially popular among nineteenth-century scholars (making Joel one of the earliest writing prophets)
- Early eighth century BC, during the reign of Uzziah (contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Jonah)[3]
- c. 630–587 BC, in the last decades of the kingdom of Judah (contemporary with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk)
- c. 520–500 BC, contemporary with the return of the exiles and the careers of Zechariah and Haggai.
- The decades around 400 BC, during the Persian period (making him one of the latest writing prophets)

His book can be broken down thusly: Devastation As Judgment (1:1-2:11); Call To Repentance (2:12-17); Restoration & Blessings (2:18-3:21). Joel has much to teach us about the true character of repentance and the inevitability of judgement.

Obadiah: Some believe that due to the attack on Jerusalem mentioned in his book, Obadiah either lived in the time in which the Philistines and Arabians attacked the city (cf. 2 Chron. 21:8-10), or when the Babylonians attacked, which would make him a contemporary of Jeremiah. At any rate, it will not affect the overall message. His prophecy is leveled at the Edomites—the descendants of Esau. Historically, conflict between the descendants of Jacob and Esau began during the Exodus when the Edomites would not allow the Israelites to pass through their land (Num.20:14-21), and they fought against Israel as they entered Palestine. David brings them into subjection, but they revolt under other kings. In New Testament times they are called Idumeans and after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 they disappear from history. Obadiah can be broken down this way: Edom Must Be Destroyed (vv. 1-9); Reasons for the Destruction (10-14); In Judgement, Israel Will Be Restored (15-21). Obadiah exposes the self-destructive nature of pride, and the prevailing justice of God.



1. How does Joel define true repentance? (1:5, 13-15; 2:12-17) To help answer this question, think about what it meant to rend one's garment; what other action is this compared to, why is this significant? What reasons (motivations) does the prophet give for repentance? What is promised if the people actually follow through with repentance? (2:18ff)

2. Joel gives different descriptions of judgment day for different people (2:18-19; 26; 30-32; 3:11-17). What is the determining factor which will make judgment day either a day of mercy versus a day of destruction?

3. Why did Obadiah indict the Edomites? (1:2-3, 10-12; Pro. 24:17-20) How do we reconcile these teachings with passages like Pro. 11:10; Ps. 58:10?

4. What principle do we find in Obad. 1:15? Is this doctrine found in the NT? Who is promised deliverance in the end (17-18)? How is this promise significant today? (Rom. 9:6-8; Gal. 3:39)
