

Hello. /We will begin the 13<sup>th</sup> lecture on the Minor Prophets. /Today's message starts with Joel chapter 3. /Chapter 3 is about the harvest of grain and grape. /Verses 1-8 are about God judging the enemies of Israel.

/In verses 9-13, God prepares for war to judge those who are evil. /In verses 14-17, God is a place of refuge during times of difficulty. /Verses 18-21 are about the church's blessings.

/The overall theme of chapter 3 is God's judgment of the foreign nations that have tormented God's people. /It is God's final judgment of the foreign nations and hostile forces. /It also foretells God's people's entrance into God's perfect kingdom.

/Verse 1. Please read. /"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,"

/The verse speaks about Israel's captivity in Babylon and return. /Israel did not live according to God's word, but it lived a life of disobedience. /For this reason, Israel lived a life without rest.

/Because they did not keep the Sabbath, the Israelites lived for 70 years without rest. /Although they had no rest, when they repented, God restored them to their previous state. /It means he will give them back their freedom.

/Beginning with verse 2, as Israel heals, the other nations that are against Israel face judgment. /Where there is salvation, there is also judgment. /This is true for the day of Jesus's second coming. /The chosen people will be saved, but unbelievers will be judged.

/Verse 2. /I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land,

/ "All the nations" refers to the nations that harassed Israel. / "The Valley of Jehoshaphat" refers to the valley where the LORD's judgment will take place. /The meaning of "Jehoshaphat" is "the LORD judges."

/The nations of Babylon and Assyria scattered the people of Israel to many places. /Now that they had claimed Israel's land, God says he will now punish them. /God is the living God who judges those who torment his people.

/Verse 3. /and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

/The verse explains the reasons for God's judgment of the nations. /They took Israel prisoner and casted lots for the people. /They traded young, healthy boys for prostitutes.

/In their evil, they sold girls for wine to drink. /In today's world, this would be human trafficking. /God judges God's people who have abandoned him.

/Simultaneously, those who harass God's people are punished. /In this way, God deals with his people carefully. /The people may be punished, but God takes care of them in the midst of their punishment.

/Verse 4. /“What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily.

/Tyre, Sidon, and Phillistia are nations located near Israel. /They are Israel's enemies that have continuously attacked Israel. /Because they harassed Israel for so long, God says he will now judge them.

/Attacking Israel is the same as attacking God. /Now, when God intervenes, he says, “Are you paying me back for something?” /No one can fight back against God.

/When we abandon God, God uses foreign things to bring us suffering. /On the other hand, when we repent and come before God, God takes out the enemy and abandons him.

/Therefore, our peace does not depend on the presence or absence of enemies, nor does it depend on our strengths and weaknesses. /It depends on how properly we stand before God.

/Verses 5-6. /For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border.

/After Babylon captured Israel, they took Israel's silver and gold and the treasures of the temple. /Babylon plundered these things and put them in their own temples for idols. /Other strong nations surrounding Israel invaded Israel and took the people as prisoners, selling the people of Israel to the Greeks as slaves.

/Archeologists have confirmed these details as historical facts. /The people of God did not live within the lines of God's law and order, but they lived as a part of the world.

/For this reason, God scattered the people into many nations, and they lived miserable lives. /We need to remember how important it is to obey the word of God and live in peace.

/Verse 7. /Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head.

/If they repent of their sins, they will return to their home. /This does not happen by human power, but it happens with God's almighty power. /Everything happens when God allows it to happen.

/Verse 8. /I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for the LORD has spoken."

/Once God interferes, the nations that bother Israel face trouble. /They are now sold away by the people of Israel to their enemies. /God reveals his justice through this: they are punished according to their actions.

/God gives his grace to his children who return to the presence of God. /And God judges those who torment his children, but he restores his children who return.

/This past July, I went on missions to a country in Asia. /I was deeply moved when I saw the people of the country returning to God and worshiping him. /I saw that God really loved that country.

/When a large population comes back into the arms of God, God rejoices. /Thus I am certain that more people will return to God. /For this to happen, God will use many of his precious people.

/We need to prepare ourselves so that we can be used in these works of God. /In verses 9-13, war is prepared so that God may judge those who are evil.

/Verse 9. /Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up.

/God says to the nations, "Let all the men of war draw near" as he tells the people of the world to try and fight him. /He is daring them to attack his people.

/God is protecting the Israelites in his arms. /This is God's message of encouragement to the believer in faith. /It encourages the believer to keep courage and go forward.

/The devil always tries to give us fear and make us worried. /So on Sunday, I delivered the message to the congregation that we need to drive out fear and worries.

/We need to know if we are walking in faith before God, or if we are not. /If you are not confident before God, you cannot win the spiritual battle.

/Verse 10. /Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior."

/God dares the nations to make spears and attack. /Psalm 2:4 says "He who sits in the heavens laughs" while the nations come against him.

/No matter how powerful the enemy may be, when God intervenes, they can do nothing. / Although they may appear strong in the world, if God is with us, the enemy is nothing.

/Verse 11. /Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD.

/The verse dares the nations of the world to strike at God's people. /God has his own warriors. In the end, God's people win the war. /God's army that protected Elisha was greater than the army of Aram.

/Also, God says that his angel will protect them. /Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them." /Because we know this, there is no reason for us to be afraid or worried.

/Verse 12. /Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

/The nations will come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat to be judged by God. /Because they harassed God's people, God now will torment them. /The Valley of Jehoshaphat's origin is found in 2 Chronicles 20.

/Three enemy nations combined forces to attack Jehoshaphat and Judah. /When the war happened, King Jehoshaphat did not fight the war with power. /He organized a group of singers to stand in the front line of the army and sing praises to God.

/Then, the enemies began fighting and killing among themselves, and they destroyed themselves. /Israel did not lay a finger on them. /But when they went forward praising God, God intervened.

/The enemies fought among themselves, and they perished. /Do you know what they named the valley of the battle in their gratitude? /They named the valley Beracah. / "Beracah" means "praise."

/When we trust in the Lord, God guides us to a place of worship. /In our lives, we need to experience this.

/Two things happen when the believer carries out the work of God. /First, people who agree with the Gospel and share in God's blessings appear. /Also, some collide with the Gospel and are judged as a result.

/Verse 13. /Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great.

/ "The harvest is ripe" means that the time for judgment is near. /The winepress is full and the vats overflow. /Evil has filled the place, and now, only judgment remains.

/ “Put in the sickle” and “tread” mean that judgment is about to begin. /Just like there is a time for salvation, there is also a time for God’s judgment. /Although some people may seem impossible to save, when the time comes, there will be people whose hearts soften and return to God.

/On the other hand, those who do evil will suddenly encounter God’s judgment. /In this way, God’s justice is very precise.

/Verse 14. /Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

/In verses 14-17, God says he will be a refuge during the days of trouble. /Verse 14 says there will be many who face God’s judgment. /On the day of the Lord’s second coming, there will be the sorting of many people.

/Individuals, groups, and churches will be uncovered as if they are naked. /Everyone’s conscience and corruption will be revealed. /The sins of nations will be revealed. /Everything will be revealed.

/But it will be a glorious day for God’s people. /The hard work and true faith of the believers will be displayed. /Our truthful conscience will be uncovered. /We need to remember that the they day of the LORD is near.

/Verse 15. /The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

/The shining objects in the sky, such as the sun, moon, and stars, will fall. /They will disappear into the darkness. /In Matthew 24:29, Jesus says that the sun, moon, and stars will fall from the sky.

/Before Jesus’s coming, objects in the sky, the sun, moon, and stars, will fall onto the earth. /Therefore, we believers must not have our hearts in the world’s money, fame, and glory. /We must look forward to the Lord’s coming and have a faith that says, “Come, O Lord.”

/Verse 16. /The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

/When the Almighty God utters his voice, the heavens and the earth quake in fear. /No one can avoid God’s judgment. /When God’s judgment is upon us, no one can lie or make excuses.

/However, on that day, God’s faithful children do not shake in fear. /They do not fear because God, who is their refuge and shelter, protects them completely. /Therefore, above all else, we must be truthful and faithful before God.

/Verse 17. /“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.

/A complete kingdom of God will be established. /It is a holy nation. /It is a place where nonbelievers, liars, and deceivers cannot enter. /It is a place where the perfect, holy, and righteous lambs of God will dwell.

/Churches and nations are incomplete, so they keep improving and developing. /However, God’s kingdom, where we will enter in the future, is complete. /It is a kingdom of perfect faith. /With the holy faith God has given to us, we will enter the kingdom.

/Salvation is not gained through our efforts. /God’s work of salvation does not require human strength or cooperation. /The faith God gives us is a holy faith.

/A living faith will bear the fruits of faith. /A history of living faith will follow. /The righteous live by faith and faith alone. /We need to become people with this faith who enter the kingdom of God.

/Verses 18-21 are blessed prophecies about the church. /The verses talk about how the repenting children of God and the repenting church will receive abundant grace. /At the same time, the verses prophesy the failures of those who torment and are against God’s children.

/Verse 18. /“And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Shittim.

/The message is that God will restore his grace to his children who return to him. /The mountains and rivers will be blessed. /The land that was unfruitful will now yield fruit in abundance.

/The mountains drip sweet wine. /The hills flow with milk with an increase in sheep. /And the dry streambeds will flow with water. /Isaiah 55:1 says that those who are thirsty will drink when they return to the LORD. /They will eat and they will be pleased.

/This means returning to God and walking with him, seeing a change in spirit. /When the people return to God, it is as if they are drinking wine. /It means they have rediscovered happiness.

/Also, God gives us the works of life, and the works of life will begin again. /The believer may appear to face destruction today, but tomorrow, hope will rise again. /Therefore, there cannot be absolute despair for the believer.

/A believer may fall seven times, but he will stand up. /The verse says, “A fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Shittim.” /The Valley of Shittim is a dry valley near the Dead Sea.

/Apart from acacia trees, nothing grows in the valley of despair. /It seems to be a place where the work of grace cannot happen. /However, stubborn spirits will melt through grace.

/Because Jesus came to this world, the Gospel was able to spread to all the nations. /He changed the hearts of stubborn people. /This change is still happening today.

/It is important that we first return to God and change. /Then, through us, there will be numerous works of change. /The verse says that a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD.

/This means that new works of life will spring from God. /We need to make the word of life and truth flow from the church altar. /Then, we will see the amazing works of God.

/Verse 19. /“Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

/Egypt was Israel’s most notable enemy. /As foreigners, the Egyptians persecuted the Israelites. /Edom, as Israel’s brother, oppressed Israel.

/God’s people were persecuted not only by foreign nations, but also by their brothers. /Now, God will judge Egypt and Edom.

/The reason is they killed the people of Israel and were cruel to them. /If someone leaves God and becomes a force against him, no matter how wealthy he may be, he will not stand a chance against God. /On God’s day of judgment, everything will become a wasteland.

/Verse 20. /But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations.

/The enemies may become strong, but God’s children do not become weak. /God’s church and his people will go on into eternity. /Although Israel’s persecutors disappear, the persecuted Israel will never disappear.

/In Christianity’s history, there have been many records of persecution. /However, the Gospel and the church did not die out, but they became more vigorous and spread through the entire world.

/Verse 21. /I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

/The verse is saying that when the time comes, God's judgment will appear. /Once the time comes, God's just judgment will appear, and the blood of the believers will be avenged. /God saw how Israel was unfairly killed and mistreated.

/Now that the time has come, God says he will avenge them. /God's honesty and love never abandon us. /God loves his people to the end, and he guides their way.

/Let us believe in God's faithfulness, and let us march forward to the end as we triumph in our faith.

/This ends the 13<sup>th</sup> lecture on the Minor Prophets. /Thank you.