

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter One:**

### **Verses One to Seven**

## INTRODUCTION

Being written we believe, at the time of Zedekiah, the Prophecy of Joel begins with an exhortation to the Elders, and other inhabitants of the land to “Hear this”, and “Give ear”, to “The word of Yahweh”. The Judgments of God had already begun. Like a swarm of Locusts, Yahweh’s “great army”, the Babylonians - led by Yahweh’s servant, Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:9) - had come upon the Land, and made it desolate. The Temple had been plundered, and the offerings had ceased. None remained in the land, “save the poorest sort” (2Kings 24:14). It was to these that Yahweh spoke to through His Grace, giving them yet another opportunity to repent.

It is significant that throughout the whole prophecy, there is no direct mention made of any specific sin which the people had committed. This was not a prophecy of condemnation, but rather an exhortation to obedience. The whole prophecy is a declaration of the Power and Might of God, that Yah alone is El (the meaning of Jo-el). The emphasis therefore is placed not on the people’s wickedness, but rather the Judgments of Yahweh. These proclaimed His Greatness, and it is by these that He makes Himself known to His people (cp. Ex 10:2, Joel 2:27).

Vivid symbology is used to describe the different aspects of the invaders: locusts are used to emphasize the total desolation that came, a lion, the ferocity of the attack, and so on. Yet all these are designed to emphasize one thing alone - the Glory of Yahweh. He alone is the Lord, and He must be worshipped in the way He so chooses.

Chapters 1-2 describe the Judgments Yahweh was to bring upon His people, and chapter 3 then describes His dealings with other nations in relation to His people. It describes, among other things how the present-day gathering together of nations, at a time when the Jews are returning to their own land, is the beginning of the assembling together of all nations to be judged by the Almighty God.

We are living in the last days. As Joel shows us, the Lord’s Return is Imminent. The kingdoms of men will soon be crushed, and the Kingdom of God will be established. These are not merely abstract doctrines, but definite realities which should be manifested in every minute of our existence. Let us “give ear”, to the words of Yahweh. Let us be strengthened and encouraged by the study of this prophecy. Let us pray earnestly that before the year is out, we shall see for ourselves that “Yahweh dwelleth in Zion”, for His Christ shall be seated on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

## When Was The Prophecy Written?

It is important for us to learn a little about the background of any section of the Scriptures which we are studying, in order to understand what the passage is about. This is no less true with the Prophecy of Joel. Although in the introduction to the prophecy there is no direct reference to the period in which the prophecy was given, there are indications within the Book which enable us to determine the precise time.

The first indication is the use of the past and present tenses in verses 4-7 of Joel Chapter 1:

“That which the Palmerworm **hath** left **hath** the Locust eaten, and that which the Locust **hath** left **hath** the Cankerworm eaten ... for a nation **is** come up upon my land ... he **hath** laid my vine waste”.

Thus, the Locusts, Yahweh's “great army”, (Joel 2:25) - the Babylonians (see study on “The Locusts”), had already invaded the land, and the vine had already been laid waste. Yet in verse 14, we read:

“gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of Yahweh your God ... “

This implies that the temple had not yet been destroyed. The prophecy then was given after Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of the land during the reign of Jehoiachin, and before the final overthrow. That is, during Zedekiah's reign, at the time of his rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar – 2 Kings 24:29, 2 Chron. 36:13 (see also “*The Prophecy of Joel*” in “*The Testimony*” magazine, June 1976). This makes Joel contemporary with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

In 2 Chronicles 36:15, we are told that at this time, “Yahweh Elohim of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place”. Joel was one of those messengers. His prophecy was a declaration of the Greatness of the Lord God of Israel. The people had already seen the beginning of Yahweh's judgments which were coming upon them, as foretold by the prophets, and now, through His compassion, the Lord gave them yet another opportunity to repent. He spoke at a time when the Temple was broken down and the meat offerings, and drink offerings had ceased, for Nebuchadnezzar had “carried of the vessels of the house of Yahweh to Babylon, and had put them in his temple at Babylon (2 Chron. 36:7), in times of terrible famine (2 Kings 25:30, cp Joel 1:10-12), when the final destruction, “the day of Yahweh” was at hand (Joel 1:15).

It is a wonderful example of the great longsuffering and grace of Yahweh towards his people that even at this stage, at the brink of destruction they were given yet another opportunity to repent. Yet the people refused: “they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of Yahweh rose up against his people, till there was no healing (*margin*)” (2 Chron. 36:16).

We are living in times when “the day of the Lord” is “at hand”. The words of the prophets remain for our learning and correction. We must therefore heed Israel's example of unbelief, and hearken to the words before us that when our Master comes he shall find a people patiently continuing in well-doing, and seeking first the coming kingdom and the righteousness of Yahweh.

## Verse by Verse Commentary

### Chapter One, Verse One

*“The word of Yahweh that came to Joel the son of Pethuel”*

It is significant that in this brief introduction, there is no reference given to the time period in which the prophecy was written. This deliberate omission emphasizes the fact that the prophecy applies not to one, but a number of time periods, relating from the time of the prophet, to the establishment of the Kingdom.

“Joel” is from two Hebrew words, “Yah”, and “El”: “Yah” being the shortened form of “Yahweh”, and “El” being one of the Titles of the Creator, signifying “Power”. Thus, the name means “Yahweh is Power”. This emphasizes the main theme running throughout the prophecy, that it is Yahweh who is all-powerful, and not the Idols, which His people served. His Power was demonstrated to the people through the Judgments He was to bring upon them, as described by Joel.

“Pethuel” is from the 2 Hebrew words - “Pathah”, “to open” and “El”, and thus means “opened”, or “enlarged” by El. However, it is interesting to note that the word “pathah” is also used in the context of deceiving, as in Deut 11:16 - “take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them”. This was the state of the Israel-ites, at the time of which Joel writes. They had forsaken Yahweh, and so the “first rain and the latter rain” (Deut 11:14) were withheld, the consequence being that the “harvest of the field” was dried up (Joel 1:11-12,17).

### Verse Two

*“Hear this, ye old men, give ear all ye inhabitants of the land ... “*

And so the prophecy commences by calling the people to attention, exhorting them to “hear” the Word of Yahweh, their Master. 2 Chronicles tells us that “the Priests and the people” at this time “transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of Yahweh, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And Yahweh God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place” (v 14-15). Joel, one of these messengers was sent because the Lord “had compassion upon his people”. Continually, He exhorted His rebellious people to obedience, yet, as Zechariah later lamented, “they did not hear, nor hearken to me, saith Yahweh”. And so the Lord brought the Babylonian Lion upon them and “cast them out of his presence”.

*“Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?”*

Joel addresses all classes of society, the old men, and all the other inhabitants of the land, though he does not refer to the King, or his family. It was to the people that he spoke. Jeremiah however, spoke to the king, “speaking from the mouth of Yahweh”, yet Zedekiah “humbled not himself” before him.

Joel first called upon the “old men”, or “elders” (verses 14,2:28) to “hear this”, then he addresses the rest of the people. Moses sang of the elders: “remember the days of old, consider the years of generation and generation (Marg). Ask thy father and he will shew thee: thy elders, and they will tell thee” (Deut. 32:7). Joel does this, asking the elders to remember the days of old, their days, and even the days of their fathers, yet they could not “shew” the matter, for “there hath not been the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of generation and generation (marg)” (2:2). Moses also wrote in his song of the judgments of Yahweh, saying “I will send the teeth of beasts upon them” (v 24). These teeth Joel informs us, “are the teeth of a lion” - the Babylonian Lion.

### **Verse Three**

*“tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation”.*

The account in Exodus 10 of how Yahweh was to bring upon Egypt a plague of locusts seems to parallel in some measure the way in which similar judgments are described in Joel (see study on *“The Locusts”*). Verses 1-2 of Exodus 10 tells us that “Yahweh said unto Moses, Go into Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of they sons' son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them: that ye may know how that I am Yahweh”. Thus, one of the reasons why the plague came upon Egypt, and later upon Israel, was so that the “signs” which Yahweh had done might be taught to repeated generations, that the people would know that their Redeemer is Yahweh.

This is further brought out in Psalm 78, which begins: “Give ear, o my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of Yahweh, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.” Then the Psalm continues to show that the people had failed to obey this: “they remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan ... he sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar and their labour unto the Locust” (v 42-46).

### **Verse Four**

*“That which the Palmerworm hath left hath the Locust eaten; and that which the Locust hath left hath the Cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the Caterpillar eaten”*

So, this great event to be told to all succeeding generations was the great plague of Locusts, under which the nation was suffering. The invading army, the Babylonians were to come from the north (2:20). Locusts do not ordinarily come from the north, and so truly it could be said that “there hath never been the like, neither shall be any more after it”. This was an unnatural invasion, brought about, not by the natural thinking of man, but by the Ordinance of the Almighty, to proclaim his greatness to Israel.

After each wave of locusts, the remnant gets smaller: the remnant of the palmerworm is devoured by the locusts, and so on, leaving a smaller remnant, until all that is left is the faithful few - those who heard the words, and walked in the way of life (cp Amos3:12). See also study on *“The Locusts”*.

### **Verse Five**

*“Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine”*

This seems to give some indication of the way of life at the time. The people were living lives of gross self-indulgence, giving themselves over to wine. Speaking at an earlier time, Isaiah said of the people: “But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment ... Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” (Is 28:7,9). Because of their drunkenness, they could not make judgment, but rather stumbled. In this state, they were in no fit state to be taught, they were intoxicated not only with strong drink, but also with the doctrine of the heathen. It was necessary for the wine to be removed, so that the people could take the “sincere milk of the word”. But we, ourselves know perfectly “that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1Thes 5:2, cp Joel 2:1,9). We are not “in darkness” (cp Joel 2:2), but are

the “children of light”. “Therefore, let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober” (1Thes 5:5-7).

*“because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth”.*

The people would not “awake” because they saw the error of their ways, but rather because Yahweh had “cut off” the “new wine” (cp Acts 2:31) from them, that they could not drink. The Locusts had stripped the land, the vines had “dried up”, and so no wine could be made—and this also meant that the drink offering could not be provided (v 9,13). The fact that Yahweh had done this, preventing the offerings being made, shows how obedience was more important than sacrifice. Because the people were not obedient, their sacrifices were not acceptable to Him. As Yahweh said through Jeremiah “I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings, or sacrifices, but this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Jer 7:22). Yet because “truth is perished and cut off from their mouth” (v 28), the wine was cut off, the offerings ceased, and “joy withered away from the sons of men”.

### **Verse Six**

*“for a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number”*

(cp Deut 28:49, Jer 5:15, Am 6:14). Note: “inhabitants of the land” in verse 2, now “my land”. The people had turned away for long enough. Now Yahweh was to reassert His authority. It is His land, and it was by His Grace that it was given to the people to dwell there - now they were being evicted. Jeremiah had prophesied: “lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, o house of Israel, saith Yahweh, it is a mighty nation ... and they shall eat up thy flocks and thy herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees ...” (Jer. 5:15,17). Now, because the people refused to hear, this nation had come and stripped the land bare.

*“Whose teeth are as the teeth of a Lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion”*

(Cp. Rev 9:8). Thus, the invaders, whilst bearing the characteristics of a swarm of locusts in some respects are also said to have the teeth, and the cheek teeth (cp Job 29:17, Pro 30:30) of a lion. That is, the way in which the land would be devoured was to be with all the ferocity with which a Lion devours its prey. We have already established that the locusts, this nation which was “strong and without number,” refers to the Babylonians who Jeremiah says “are more than Locusts, and innumerable” (Jer 46:23). The Babylonians, then, devoured the Israelites as a lion, as the Assyrians did to Judah (Jer. 50:17). Isaiah speaks of this: “their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry away safe, and none shall deliver it” (Is 5:29). The people were carried away by the lion, under Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 4:7, 5:6, 50:17, Dan 7:4).

### **Verse Seven**

*“he hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree, he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away”*

Although, as verse 12 shows us, vines and fig trees did suffer, and were “dried up”, the expressions, “**my** vine” and “**my** fig tree” indicates that these are used as figures to describe the effects of the Babylonian desolation upon Israel.

Jeremiah prophesied: “they shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine; turn back thine hand as a grape gatherer into the baskets” (6:8,9). And in the parable of Ezekiel 17, Yahweh likens the “rebellious house” of Israel to a vine which “was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine”. Then Ezekiel was instructed

to say to Israel “thus saith the Lord Yahweh: shall it not prosper? Shall he not pull up the roots thereof that it wither? It shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof” (v 8,9). Thus, the vine represents Judah, who were “laid waste” by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah 24 reads: “Yahweh shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of Yahweh ... one basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad”. Then the interpretation was given: “like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good ... for I will set mine eyes upon them for good ... And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am Yahweh: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith Yahweh, so will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: and I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.” Thus, the figs represented the people of Judah. Those who obeyed the voice of Yahweh allowed themselves to be carried into Babylon, but those “naughty figs”, which, who, like Zedekiah, rebelled, and rejected the Word of their Lord were to be consumed.

The tree was “barked”, and made “clean bare”. With the bark of the tree removed, the tree was naked. Yahweh was to strip the “harlot” daughter of Jerusalem, “that they may all see thy nakedness” (cp Ezek 16:35-40).

*“the branches thereof are made white”*

The branches also have been stripped, and made naked. The only other place where the word for “branch” is used is in Gen 40:

“and the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, this is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler”.

Here, we have a contrast to the Israelitish vine, whose branches were destitute of the fruits of righteousness. Therefore, rather than being restored, Israel spiritually died (Ezek 37). Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ taught that this withered tree would grow once more: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”

We are the generation witnessing the resurrection of Israel, and the re-growth of the fig tree. Let us therefore, be sober, be awake, and watch, keeping our garments, lest we walk naked, and they see our shame (Rev 16:15).

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter One:**

### **Verses Eight to Thirteen**

## INTRODUCTION

In the last study, we looked at the background to Joel, noting that it was given during the time of Zedekiah's rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, during the time in which the nation was upon the land (1:6), but before the desolation of the Temple (1:14). We saw how the different characteristics of the invading army were described in the symbols of Locusts, and a Lion. Verse 7 then continues to inform us of the total desolation of the Land, how it was stripped bare, and wasted.

In this next section, we are to consider the exhortation to "lament". Great destruction had come upon the land, and the people were to lament, and humble themselves. Firstly, the people are addressed, and called upon to "lament" in verse 8, then the reason is given. Then, the husbandmen and vinedressers are addressed in verse 11, being told to "be ashamed", and "howl", and then the reason is given. Finally, the priests are addressed in verse 13 - they are told to "lament", and "howl", and then, again, the reason is given. Significantly, the command to lament begins and ends with reference to the offerings.

Spiritual things should have been at the foremost of their minds. The fact that the offerings had ceased should have given greatest cause for mourning. But it was not so. The people rejected the words of the prophet, even turning to the Queen of Heaven for deliverance (Jer. 44:18). There was no repentance, no humbleness, and so the nation was to be carried away into captivity.

## Verse Eight

*"Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth"*

Jeremiah said to the people, "though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair" (Jer. 4:30). Although they had created an outward impression of beauty, inwardly they were corrupt. The Lord was to strip these garments from off her, so that all would see her nakedness - what she was really like. Thus the exhortation was given for Judah to humble herself, and gird herself with sackcloth, a sign of mourning: "the Lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the gentiles is on his way: he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate: and thy cities shall be laid waste without an inhabitant. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of Yahweh is not turned back from us" (Jer. 4:7,8). Yet they did not hearken, and so when the Lion had come upon the land, and it had been made desolate, this exhortation was given once more by Joel.

The "husband of her youth" was Yahweh. As it was testified: "I will make a new covenant ... not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (the days of her youth, Eze. 23:19), which my covenant they broke, although I was an husband unto them, saith Yahweh" (Jer. 31:32, Cp 3:14). However, she had played the harlot with many lovers (Eze. 23), so when Joel and Jeremiah spoke, she was no longer a "chaste virgin". Yet she was commanded to turn back to Yahweh, her husband (cp Jer. 3:1). She was to put away her lovers, and act as if she were a virgin - to "lament like a virgin". But she left it too late before she took heed to this warning, for after the final overthrow, Jeremiah lamented: "the elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground (Lam 2:10). It was too late.

## Verse Nine

*"the meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of Yahweh".*

Verse 13 describes the offerings as being "witholden". Thus, Yahweh had caused them to cease. He said through Jeremiah, "when they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence" (Jer 14:12). And so the sacrifices were no longer acceptable to Him. Exodus 29 tells us of the meat offering, and drink offering: "now this is that which thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: and with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto Yahweh" (vv 39-41). Joel goes on to show why the offerings had ceased: the people had ceased to have joy in the Lord, and so because of the drought, there was nothing to offer.

*"the priests, Yahweh's ministers, mourn"*

The priests had "forgotten the Law" of their God, and so God was to "punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings" (Hos. 4:6,9). As Ezekiel testified "Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord Yahweh, and they shall bear their iniquity" (Ezek 44:12). Rather than ministering to Yahweh, and teaching the Law (Lev. 10:11), the priests had forgotten the Law, and ministered to Idols, "trans-gressing very much after the abominations of the heathen; and polluting the house of Yahweh, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem".

"Be not many teachers", said the apostle, for they "shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas 3:1). As teachers, the Priests had a high position of responsibility, and were to be judged accordingly. Among

these priests were "Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest" (2Kings 25:18). Their names are interesting, for Seraiah means "Yah has prevailed", and Zephaniah, "Yah has secreted", or "Yah has hidden". Through His judgments, Yahweh prevailed against the gods of the heathen, but for those who hearkened to the voice of his messengers, they were "Hid in the day of Yahweh's anger" (Zeph 2:3).

### **Verse Ten**

*"The field is wasted, the land mourneth"*

Hosea speaks of this, although a different word for "land" is used: "Therefore shall the land mourn, and everyone that dwelleth therein shall languish with the beasts of the field ... " (Hos 4:3). This, he says is because "there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land" (v 1,6). The priests had failed in their duty to teach the people (Lev 10:11, Deut 24:8), and so all were to suffer "as with the people, so with the priest", for "the land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled", saith Yahweh (Is 24:2,3). "The earth mourneth, and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do sigh ... there is a crying for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone" (Isa. 24:4,7,11). The literal desolation reflected the spiritual condition of the people, for they were also wasted, and in mourning.

*"for the corn is wasted; the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth".*

Because of the lack of these things, the sacrifices could not be offered. In Deut 28, Moses told the people "Yahweh shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth ... and He shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine or oil ... " (v 49,51). This nation was now upon the land, and the famine had begun, as Jeremiah later lamented: "they that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field", as the children said to their hungry mothers "Where is corn and wine, when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mother's bosom" (Lam. 2:12)

### **Verse Eleven**

*"Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers"*

Speaking of the coming desolation of Israel, Amos prophesied, "Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandmen to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing, for I will pass through thee, saith Yahweh" (Am 5:17). Judah, having followed the example set by her rebellious sister was to suffer similarly, as Jeremiah spake, saying, "Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen (Heb. Husbandmen) were ashamed, they covered their heads. They were to be "ashamed", and "howl" for the coming atrocities.

James writes "be patient therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandmen waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh". The day of the Lord was at hand, and the people were both unfruitful and unfaithful.

*"For the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished"*

The husbandmen were to be ashamed, for the harvest of the fields under their care had perished, but the physical condition of the land also reflects the spiritual. The Lord Jesus told a parable of "a certain householder which planted a vineyard and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit

drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it" (Mat 21:33). "The vineyard of Yahweh Tzavaoth is the house of Israel" (Is 5:7), and He "sent unto them" "His servants the prophets" (2 Chron 36:15, Jer 25:3) to persuade the people to walk in a way which would bring forth fruit to their Lord. These were "mocked", and "misused", "stoned", and "persecuted". Lastly, the householder sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. They slew him also, and so they themselves were cast out of the vineyard and we are told the Lord shall "Let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons". These are Christ and His redeemed, as it is written, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers" (Is 61:5).

The principles of this parable also apply to the situation of the Jews, during the period of Jeremiah, and Joel's prophecy. The Day of the Lord was near. The Lord had appointed pastors, the priests to feed his people, but they destroyed, rather than fed, as Jeremiah said "Many pastors have devoured my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness" (Jer 12:10). And so, in refusing to hear the Word of Yahweh, despising and abusing His messengers, these husbandmen were worthy only to be cast out.

### **Verse Twelve**

*"The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered."*

Moses had promised the people: "Yahweh thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks, of water, of fountains ... a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey" (Deut. 8:8). Now these things had "withered", thus the vinedressers had great cause to lament. Although this verse describes the physical poverty of the land, it also describes the spiritual state of the people. The nation (vine, Eze. 17:8) was dried up and fruitless, for the priests, the rulers could provide neither nourishment, nor healing (Fig, 2 Kings 20:7, Mat. 21:19, see future study on the Fig tree). This was because their minds (Pomegranate, Song 6:7) were sinful and sick, there were no righteous in the land (Palm, Psa. 92:12), and there were no wise words spoken by them (Apple, Prov. 25:11) for them to feed on. So, all the other trees of the field, the people withered, for lack of knowledge.

*"Because Joy is withered away from the sons of men"*

Both Oil and Wine are associated with joy (Psa. 104:15, Is. 61:3), and these have been cut off (Joel 1:16). The harvest was perished, and the vineyard was desolate, for Joy had withered from the sons of men. (Men = adam, earthy). Their thinking was earthly, fleshly and not spiritual. Just as the land (or dust, from Heb "adam", v 10), was parched, so in the people, Joy had withered. They no longer served the Lord "with gladness, (or "Joy") and singleness of heart", and so they were to mourn under His Judgments.

### **Verse Thirteen**

*"Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: Howl ye ministers of the altar"*

The priests were spiritually naked, and so were commanded to gird themselves. They should have been rejoicing, "clothed with the garments of salvation", with "the robe of righteousness" (Is 61:10), but now they walked naked, and all could see their shame. Joel addresses them as "ministers of the altar". Exodus 30:20 speaks of this: "when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto Yahweh. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not ... ". This washing symbolised the "washing of water by the word" (Eph 5:26). Before he could minister to the altar, the priest had to first cleanse himself with the Word, ensuring that the things he did, and the way in which he walked

were acceptable to the Lord. Thus they had an added responsibility to hearken to the words of the prophets. The sacrifices had ceased, and would not be restored unless they cleansed themselves with the word.

*"come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God".*

The priests were to wear the clothes ordained by the Lord, "for glory and for beauty", that is, to reflect the glory and beauty of Yahweh (Ex 28:40). Now, because they no longer reflected His Glory, or Beauty, they were told to lie all night in sackcloth. That is, they were to mourn (2Sam 12:16, 13:31), in humbleness (1Kings 21:27-29). "Ye ministers of my God", not "Your God". As far as they were concerned, He was not their God, they did not minister to him, but rather to Idols, (Ezek 44:12). This is a statement of Irony, reminding the priests of their duties before the Lord.

*"For the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God"*

Now here, "Your God". Although they did not recognize this, Yahweh was their God, and they had responsibilities to serve Him. This section begins and ends with the offerings. This should have been the greatest cause of mourning for the people, for without sacrifice, there was no forgiveness. Although the offerings had no intrinsic value in themselves, a person making the offering in faith, recognizing what they represented, could have their sins forgiven. Now, Yahweh had withheld the things necessary to make the offerings, therefore they could not be made, and so under the Law there was no way of remission for sins. The people had to rely totally on the mercy of God, that he might treat them under the terms of the New Covenant. But as long as they remained arrogant and disobedient, even this was "cut off" from them.

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter One:**

### **Verses Fourteen to Twenty**

## INTRODUCTION

In verses 1-7, Joel asks the people to think back to the days of their fathers, and look on the atrocities which had recently come upon them. Then, in verses 8-13, he exhorts them to look at the present situation, how they were suffering from the effects of the invasion of Locusts, calling upon them to "Lament". In this next section, he calls upon them to look to the immediate future, for the Day of Yahweh was at hand.

In this section, we shall see how during a time of pestilence, famine, and the immediate threat of invasion, the people were to prepare for the coming day. They were to dedicate themselves wholly to the Lord, to Sanctify a fast, proclaim a day of restraint, restraint, that is, from the works of the flesh and cry to Yahweh, their deliverer for forgiveness.

This section begins by calling upon the people to gather together at the House of Yahweh, and cry unto him, for the Day of Yahweh was at hand. But most of this section is taken up by the prophets' lamentation for the atrocities which had come upon the people. By looking at their present situation, and comparing it with their redemption from Egypt and subsequent prosperity in times of obedience, the people should have been strengthened to prepare themselves for the coming Day, that they might have Grace. Yet they were not.

We are in a similar situation. The Day of the Lord is at hand. We must not forget that were purged from our old sins (2 Pet. 1:9), and through the eye of faith, see those things which are afar off (Heb. 11:13). Regardless of what hardships we might be enduring for the moment, let us fix our eyes upon the Kingdom, and rejoice, for the Day of our salvation is near.

## **Verse Fourteen**

*"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly"*

In response to hearing the words of Yahweh against Nineveh, "the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth ... ", for, said the king, "who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jon. 3:6,9). And so, "God repented of the evil that he said that he would do unto them; and he did it not". Joel exhorts the Jews to do likewise, to gird themselves with sackcloth, and sanctify a fast, for "Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him" (Joel 2:14).

Joel also tells the people to "Call a solemn assembly", or "Day of restraint". We read of this day in Leviticus 23: "And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying ... The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto Yahweh ... Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh: on the eighth day shall be an holy con-vocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein."

The "Solemn assembly" was normally after a time of feasting, in this case, on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles (see also Deut 18:6, cp 2Chron 7:9). On this day, no servile work was to be done, yet the offerings were still to be made before Yahweh. That is, the people were to restrain themselves from the works of the flesh, and dedicate themselves wholly to Yahweh.

But through Joel, the Lord commands the people to call a solemn assembly, not after a feast, but after a fast. The teaching behind this was that the people were to afflict their souls in abstaining from the meats, or spiritual diet of Babylon, as did Daniel, and dedicate themselves wholly to Yahweh. They were to restrain themselves from all worldly activities, and devote themselves entirely to do the things of God.

It is perhaps not insignificant that it was on this day, the "great day" of the feast that the Lord Jesus "stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (Jno. 7:37). What we must do in preparation for the Day of Yahweh, is to abstain from the spiritual diet which the world can offer us, through mediums such as the Radio, Television and the Internet, and dedicate ourselves wholly to the Lord, eating the Bread of Life (Jno. 6:50), that we might drink the "Living waters" (Jno. 4:14, 7:38), which the Lord will provide us with.

*"gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the Land into the House of Yahweh your God, and cry unto Yahweh"*

Joel addressed these people himself in verse 2, calling upon them to lament for the atrocities which were upon the land. Now, still speaking to the priests, he calls upon them to gather the people into the house, that they might cry unto Yahweh.

In his prayer at the dedication of the House, Solomon asked "If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts or caterpillars: if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; ... then hear thou from Heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive ..." (2 Chron. 6:29,30). Then "Yahweh appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer ... If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land". (2 Chron. 7:12-14). Now, finding themselves in these circumstances the Jews are told to seek this forgiveness.

## **Verse Fifteen**

*"Alas for the Day! For the day of Yahweh is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come."*

See study on "The Day of Yahweh".

We are living in similar times to the Jews of Joel's day. For we ourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord is at hand. We can look upon this reality in two ways. We can say with fear, "Alas for the Day!", or we can be like Abraham, who rejoiced to see the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must diligently apply ourselves to the Word, that we might be justified by our faith, to the end that in the Lord's Day, we shall stand, and be invited to take up our position in the Kingdom.

### **Verse Sixteen**

*"Is not the meat cut off before our eyes"*

Not only did the people have to contend with the threat of an imminent invasion, but also famine, for suddenly the food was cut off before their very eyes. Jeremiah spoke of this, saying "hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the spirit in the city, while they sought meat to relieve their souls (Lam 1:18,19). The Elders and Priests to whom Joel spoke were dying of starvation. Yet those who feasted upon the Word, who repented, recognized that these things were of the Almighty. They could have joined with Habakkuk in saying "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall gain no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in Yahweh, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab 3:18)

*"Yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God"*

Once again we see that the lack of food is linked with the lack of Joy in the house of God. Deuteronomy 12 reads "unto the place which Yahweh your God shall choose ... thither thou shalt come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: and there ye shall eat before Yahweh your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your house-holds, wherein Yahweh thy God hath blessed thee." (vv 5-7, cp 16:11,14,15).

Thus, Moses told the Israelites that in the Land, they were to eat, and rejoice before Yahweh. But now the offerings could not be made, no tithes could be given, and there was no food to eat, because the people had ceased to rejoice. True joy can only come from the Lord, the Idols of the world provided no joy, or gladness, but only sorrow.

### **Verse Seventeen**

*"The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down"*

Once again the Lord brings our attention to the physical calamities which came upon the land. We have already been told how the present year's harvest had failed through the drought, and now we see how that even the storehouses were empty. The supplies of seed had "dried up" (Strong), the garners were empty, and the barns were broken down for lack of corn. The word rendered "Garners" is more usually translated "treasure", or "treasury" (cp Psa. 135:7, Jer. 38:11). Although the people were laying up for themselves treasures upon earth, "where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal (Mat. 6:19), they had not laid up for themselves treasure in heaven. And so, when their worldly goods were gone, they had nothing. Their hearts were in their material possessions, not in the power of Yahweh - joy and gladness were cut off, therefore, the corn withered, and the storehouses remained empty. Here again, we see a parallel with the spiritual condition of the people. Because the treasure of their hearts was evil, Yahweh was to "Break down" the house which He had built (Jer. 31:28, 45:4), and the House of Israel, not being built upon the Rock was to fall and become like the empty barns.

## Verse Eighteen

*"How do the beasts groan"*

Thus, the famine affected all quarters, from the King right to the beasts of the field. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke of this: "And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. And afterward, saith Yahweh, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants and the people from the pestilence, from the sword and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchaddrezzar ..." (Jer 21:7, 7:20) "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it" (Ezek 14:13).

*"The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture"*

The word translated "*Perplexed*" is used twice elsewhere, firstly in Exodus 14:3:

"For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, they are *entangled* in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in".

This resulted in Pharaoh and his army pursuing after the Israelites, seeking to destroy them. The second place is in Esther 3:15:

"the posts went out, being hastened by the kings' commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the King and Haman sat down to drink, but the city Shushan was *perplexed*".

The context of this verse is that Haman the Agagite had obtained a decree from the king to destroy the Jews.

In Joel, once again the Jews were threatened with destruction and they had become perplexed. Whilst the words obviously applies to the cattle of the land, it also has a spiritual application to the people. The word "herds" is more usually rendered "flock", and is so used in Jeremiah 13:17: "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride: and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Yahweh's flock is carried away captive". Thus, Yahweh's people are likened to a flock. The Lord had appointed shepherds to feed the flock, the priests, who became the subject of Chapter 34 of Ezekiel's prophecy: "Thus saith the Lord Yahweh unto the Shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks". These shepherds were "feeding themselves without fear" (Jude 12), rather than feeding the flock. There were "no pastures", or feeding places (cp Lam 1:6), for the shepherds had devoured them: "Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures" (v 2,18).

In the spiritual application of these verses, the shepherds represent the priests, and those whose role it was to feed the people, and the Beasts, and Cattle, the people who were spiritually famished, having no pasture. Of these beasts, there were those who sighed, and cried unto Yahweh for all the abominations that were done in Jerusalem (Ezek 9:4). These were the faithful remnant, who hearkened to the voice of the prophets.

Jeremiah foresaw a time when "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock ... therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of Yahweh, for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd ... for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow" (Jer 31:10,12,13). This will be in the Kingdom Age, when there will be a complete restoration of Israel.

*"Yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate"*

Here, the word for "desolate" can also mean "guilty", (as in Lev 4:13,22,27, Num 5:6). The flock of Yahweh was guilty before him. Hosea prophesied: "though thou Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, nor swear, Yahweh liveth" (Hos 4:15). But Judah did follow the example of her treacherous sister, like sheep, and just as she "became desolate" (13:16), so did Judah.

### **Verse Nineteen**

*"O Yahweh, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness"*

Joel was one of those who "sighed for all the abominations" which were upon Jerusalem, and here he expresses his intention to "cry" unto Yahweh. The cause of his cry is said to be that the "pastures", or "habitations" of "the wilderness" were devoured by fire. The phrase "Pastures of the wilderness" is mentioned in three other places:

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it ... thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness: and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon ***the pastures of the wilderness***: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The Pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing" (Psa. 65:13).

This reference describes the exact opposite to the situation of Joels' day, when David sat upon the throne of Yahweh over Israel. Here, water is in abundance, as is fatness, goodness, but more importantly, rejoicing, and joy is present. Truly, this is a vision of the Kingdom. Contrast this with Jeremiah:

"for the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle. Both the fowl of the heavens and the beasts are fled; they are gone" (9:10).

And again:

"The land is full of adulterers: for because of swearing the land mourneth; the ***pleasant places of the wilderness*** are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right" (23:10).

It was truly a blessing indeed, that even in the wilderness, there were pastures. But, when Joy had ceased, those pastures were devoured under Yahweh's mighty judgements, and the land became just a "desolate wilderness" (Isa. 64:10, 27:10, Joel 2:3).

Whilst it is clear that during the invasion, literal fire was used (2 Chron. 36:19), in the Scriptures Fire is also symbolic of the Judgments of Yahweh (cp Eze. 21:31,32). And so the emphasis is made that the places in the wilderness, which Yahweh had blessed were now to become subject to His judgments.

*"the flame hath burned all the trees of the field"*

All the fruitless trees in verse 12 were "withered", having suffered under the Judgments of the Almighty. As Ezekiel testified:

"Hear the word of Yahweh; Thus saith the Lord Yahweh; Behold, I kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein. And all flesh shall

see that I, Yahweh have kindled it, it shall not be quenched" (Ezek 20:47-48).

The fire of Yahweh's wrath was to burn against Jacob, executing vengeance upon all them that knew not God, until all the fruitless trees were devoured.

### **Verse Twenty**

*"The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness".*

The word "Cry" is used in only one other place - Psalm 42:1: "As the hart panteth (Marg= brayeth) after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God: When shall I come and appear before God?"

"Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish", declared the Psalmist (49:12,20). The people "understood not", for they were not being fed and they had no pasture. They thirsted, for the rivers of waters had dried up. They had "lack of knowledge", for there was a famine of the Word, broken only by the sound of the prophets. Those who thirsted should have come to them, that having drunk of the living water, given by the Living God, it would flow a rivers of living waters from them (Jno 7:38). Yet even when the prophets were sent to speak the word, the people did not turn from their ways, and only a remnant were saved.

## Joel Chapter One - A Summary

The main purpose of the book of Joel was to emphasize the greatness of Yahweh. The meaning of "Joel", as we have seen, is "Yah is El", or, Yahweh is Power, as opposed to the Idols. Accordingly, Judgments as described in this book are designed to reflect the greatness of the God of Israel, rather than from the point of view of punishing the people for their sins. And so there is no mention given of any specific sin which the people had committed, but a powerful exhortation to humble themselves before the Almighty (cp. 8-14).

The prophecy begins by firstly calling upon the old men, or elders and the rest of the people to look at the present atrocities, and think back to their days, and even the days of their fathers, to see if such a thing had happened before. It had not. They were not able to "shew" the matter (Deut. 32:7), for "there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it" (2:2), and so something completely unheard of before was taking place.

Then, the Prophet begins to describe the present situation under the figure of a plague of locusts (v 4). As we have seen (see study on "The Locusts"), the plague represented the Babylonian invasion of Judah, emphasizing the aspect of desolation. This was one army (2:25), which had "come up upon my land" (v 6), said the Lord. But in His exceedingly great mercy, Yahweh allowed a "lull" in the attack, a short period of time during which his people were given the opportunity to repent (cp. 1:13, 2:12-14). This period was before the temple was destroyed (2 Chron. 36:18, cp. Joel 1:14), and we have identified it with the time of Zedekiahs' rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 25:20). As we continued our study, based upon this suggestion, we found the details given in Joel to fit exactly, and so have no reason to doubt that this period forms the background to the prophecy. Thus, we can place Joel as being one of the "mocked" and "despised" messengers of 2 Chron. 36:16.

Then Joel calls upon the drunkards to "awake", from their sleep, because of the coming "Day of Yahweh", when the Judgment would come. Thus, although the Judgments had begun (cp 17-20), the worst was yet to come. The unfruitful vine was about to be cut down, and burned with fire (Psa. 80:16). Similarly we, who are living in similar times must "awake out of sleep" (Rom. 13:13), and "Watch, and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1Thess. 5:6-8).

The invading nation, we are told, had stripped the Israelitish vine and fig tree bare, removing the bark, so that "the branches thereof are made white". So, the outward covering which she had adorned herself, not the wedding garments of white linen, i.e. Righteousness, (Mat. 22:12, Rev. 7:9), but with crimson, and ornaments of gold (Jer. 4:30). These were to be stripped from of her, as Yahweh had said through Ezekiel, "they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels and leave thee naked and bare" (Eze. 16:39).

After exhorting the harlot daughter of Jerusalem (Eze. 23:4,11) to "lament", and be as if she were a virgin (v8), the Husbandmen, and Vinedressers are called upon to "Be ashamed", and "howl", for the things under their care had with-ered. Likewise, the spiritual leaders of the people had neglected to feed the flock, and so the "pleasant pastures" became like a "desolate wilderness" (Jer. 12:10).

Firstly, the people were called upon to lament, then the husbandmen, and vinedressers were called upon to "be ashamed", and "howl", and finally, the priests are addressed, being called upon to gird themselves with sackcloth (v. 13), and lie all night in humbleness before God. Thus, the priesthood was to lie down in darkness, only to rise again when the Sun of Righteousness arises in the morning, when then it will be restored (Eze. 44:10-16).

The priests were told to "Sanctify a fast" and "call a solemn assembly" (v 14). That is, the people were to dedicate themselves wholly to Yahweh, abstaining from the works of the flesh, humbling themselves

before Yahweh, in recognition of His greatness.

The final part of this Chapter contains the Prophets' Lamentation for the atrocities which had come upon the people of God. The condition of the land as described in Joel 1 can be summarized as follows:

- 1 - A nation had invaded the land, as a plague of Locusts (v. 4, 7)
- 2 - The people were drunkards (v. 5)
- 3 - The harvest had failed, and the vineyards were desolate (v 10-14)
- 4 - Joy was cut off, there was mourning (v. 9, 12, 16)
- 5 - Storehouses were empty (v. 17)
- 6 - Rivers were dried up (v. 20)
- 7 - The day of Yahweh was to come as a destruction from the Almighty (v. 15), yet even when faced with extraordinary hardships, the people did not turn from their wicked ways, but remained deep in Idolatry.

There are many examples for us in the prophecy of Joel. The Day of Yahweh is near, when every man's Work shall be made manifest, when we shall be called upon to give account of ourselves. We must be diligent in the service of our Lord, not partaking of the false doctrine around us, which can only blind our senses, and lead us into sleep, but be separate, Holy unto the Lord. let us humble ourselves under the chastening of our Creator, seeking him in all our ways, that we might rejoice to see the Day of our Lord, when he may say to us "Well done, good and faithful servant, ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Mat. 25:21).

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Two,**

### **Verses One to Three**

# JOEL CHAPTER TWO

## Introduction

Whilst Joel Chapter one brought the peoples' attention to the present condition of the land, to form a reason for repentance, Chapter two deals largely with the Future Judgments which were soon to take place during the "Day of Yahweh".

This Chapter describes all the Judgments from the Beginning. They had already begun in Chapter one, as can be seen from v. 16-20. But 2:3 tells us that the land before the judgments was "as the garden of Eden", and then describes what it was to become like under the wrath of God.

As we shall see, this Chapter has Two applications. Firstly, to the Babylon-ians, secondly to the Gogian confederacy of Ezekiel 38. All four waves of Babylonian attack (1:4) are brought together as one, typical of the destruction by Gog (we will look at this in more detail in the next study).

The clouds of Locusts were to darken the Sun, Moon and Stars of the Israel-ite heavens (v. 10), making the day "a day of darkness, and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness" (v. 2), when they were to "grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness" (Deut. 28:29). They were to be a great and strong people, and the destruction so terrible that it had not happened before, nor would it again "even to the years of many generations". Thus, it was a day when all the inhabitants of the land would tremble (v. 1).

Before that great Day come, the trumpet was sounded (v. 1). This sound was the words of the prophets: the instruments of God (see study on "Blowing the Trumpet"). They continually exhorted the people to turn from their ways, but "they said, We will not hearken" (Jer. 6:17). They allowed apathy to set in, being "settled on their lees", saying in their hearts "Yahweh will do no good, neither will he do no evil" (Zeph. 1:12), turning to the "queen of heaven" for help (Jer. 44:16-19).

We must take heed to this example. The Lord is coming, and we must hearken to the warnings provided in the words of Scripture, to prepare for that great day. Moreover, we must "exhort one another", warning each other of the folly of the god of the world, strengthening each other in fellowship based upon hearing the Word, that we might stand prepared.

## Chapter Two

### Verse One

*"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion"*

See study on "Blowing the Trumpet". The purpose of sounding the trumpet was for 4 reasons: 1 - Gather the people together (Num. 10:3-4, Joel 1:14. 2 - Warn the people of impending destruction (Eze. 33:3, Joel 1:15), 3 - Warn the people to turn from their ways (Eze. 33:7-8, Joel 2:12,13) 4 - Exhort the people to call upon Yahweh for deliverance (Num. 10:9, cp 2 Chron. 13:12, Joel 1:14).

*"And sound an alarm in my holy mountain"*

The trumpet of warning had been sounded, and the people should have assembled themselves at the site of the trumpeter (cp Neh. 4:20), at Mount Zion, to call upon the Lord, and prepare for the great destruction. Mount Zion was to be the site of the battle (Isa. 29:8), and so it was here that the trumpet was sounded.

*"let all the inhabitants of the land tremble"*

This is the third occurrence of the phrase "Inhabitants of the Land" in Joel. In 1:1, they are exhorted to hear the words of Yahweh, 1:14 to abstain from the works of the flesh, dedicating themselves wholly to Yahweh, that their cry to him might be heard, and in 2:1, the prophecy is given that when that day comes, they shall fear, and tremble for the abominations which would come upon them.

Moses had long before prophesied: "Yahweh shall scatter thee among all people ... and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but Yahweh shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" (Deut. 28:65). Amos had also prophesied: "Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein?" (Amos 8:6).

*"for the day of Yahweh cometh, for it is nigh at hand".*

(See study on "The day of Yahweh"). This verse sets the scene for the rest of the chapter. The Trumpet had been sounded, warning the people to turn from their ways, to gather together, upon hearing the word of God proclaimed, in preparation for the coming destruction, when all the people would tremble with fear. The rest of the chapter then continues to describe that day, and the army which was coming.

### Verse Two

*"A day of darkness and of gloominess"*

Zephaniah had similarly prophesied: "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph. 1:15).

Moses prophesied in Deut. 28:29: "and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways". This was because the Sun, Moon and Stars would be darkened (Joel 2:10). That is, the Rulership and Religious systems would be suppressed under the Babylonian oppression.

*"a day of clouds"*

Likewise, Ezekiel prophesied, saying "the day is near, even the day of Yahweh is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen" (30:3), when speaking of the Judgments to come upon Egypt, where the remnant of the Jews fled to (Jer. 42:14). The invading army was to "come up as clouds" (Jer. 4:13), a

great cloud of locusts, causing the sun, moon and stars to be darkened (cp Eze. 32:7,8). Previously, Yahweh had been "a cloud and darkness" to their enemies, and a light to them, (Ex. 14:20), but now Joel speaks of when Yahweh will cause His army to be as clouds, and darkness upon the land, devouring it with fire (Joel 2:2,3).

*"And of thick darkness as the morning spread upon the mountains"*

There are 4 words used for darkness in this chapter, and their definitions according to Strong are as follows: **Darkness** - to be dark (as withholding light), **Gloominess** - Dusky, from unused root "to set", as the sun, **Thick darkness** - Gloom, as of a lowering sky, **Morning** - "Be black", Dawn (i.e. darkness of morning - Companion Bible).

From this, we can see that the day would be darkness, in that there would be no light. This darkness would be as that gloominess present at dusk, as the sun sets when it is cloudy, and that darkness which slowly vanishes as the sun rises, spreading its light over the earth.

This describes how the Israelitish Sun was to go down (cp Amos 8:9) and be suppressed, but replaced by that of the Babylonian Heavens (which itself would become darkened in Isa. 13:10). Zedekiah was taken captive into Babylon, and the Day star, as the "son of the morning" began to exalt himself over the Israelitish heavens, exalting himself above the stars of God, causing his "light", his authority to spread over the mountains, until his measure of iniquity was filled, and in the reign of Belshazzar, was cut down to the earth (Isa. 14:12-15). But it is also a type of when the "day of the Lord" shall come, when the rulership of the kingdoms of men shall be cast down, when this benighted world shall be illuminated by the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), who shall arise, and set his throne high in the "heavens" (Rev. 4:2).

*"a great people and a strong"*

(Cp 1:6). Moses had been commanded:

"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for Yahweh thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for Yahweh your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies to save you" (Deut. 20:1-4).

But this was dependant upon obedience. When the people corrupted themselves, they were helpless against such an attack. As we have seen, this "Day" is a type of the Day of the Lord to come. Then, once again, Israel will be faced with an "army, horses and horsemen, all to them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company", and many people with them (Eze. 38:4,6), but "then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech 14:3). For the people in Joel's day, however, they were to go into 70 years captivity.

*"there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations"*

(cp 3:20, Deut 32:7). The Word of Yahweh came through Ezekiel: "Behold, I, even I am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations" (Ezek 5:9). An event was to take place which had not happened before, even in the days of the Elders' fathers (Joel 1:1), a dramatic event, which would proclaim Yahweh's greatness, and punish His people for their iniquities.

### Verse Three

*"A fire devoureth before them; and behind them, a flame burneth"*

As the invaders moved forward, burning up the Land, they left nothing left, save flames and desolation (cp 1:18-20). The destruction of a fire is absolute. Any incandescent material placed therein will be destroyed. It is without limit, being never satisfied (Prov. 30:16). Thus, it is a fitting symbol of the judgments of Yahweh, as in Jeremiah 21:12: "O house of David, thus saith Yahweh; execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it" (cp Lam. 2:3,4).

That this was literal fire is confirmed by the description of Jerusalem in Nehemiah (1:3, 2:3,13,17), over 70 years later. This fire was brought about because of Zedekiah's refusal to obey the words of Yahweh, for Jeremiah told him: "Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of Yahweh which I speak unto thee, so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth (into captivity) ... so they shall bring out thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon, and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire" (Jer. 38:23). He refused to obey, and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and so the fire came.

*"The land is as the garden of Eden before them"*

(contrast Isa. 51:3 51:3, Eze. 36:35). Before the judgments had come, the land was like the garden of God planted in Eden. But Yahweh was to destroy Israel, and lay it waste, and "take away his hedge as if it were of a garden" (Lam. 2:6), that it would be trodden down, and the briars and thorns would come upon it (Is. 5:6). This indicates that some of the events described in Chapter 2 had already begun before Chapter 1. For far from being like the Garden of Eden, Chapter 1 describes the land as being laid waste, the crops and vine-yards dried up and burned.

*"And behind them a desolate wilderness"*

As the fire devoured upon the "garden of Eden" before them, they left behind destruction, and desolation. Once again, this reflects the spiritual condition of the people, for the pastors which were to feed the sheep, and keep the vineyard destroyed it by their wickedness: "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness" (Jer. 12:10).

*"Yea, and nothing shall escape them"*

(cp. 1 Thess 5:3). The destruction was as that of a fire - absolute. There was a remnant left, who did purpose to escape into Egypt, and Jeremiah warned them against this: "But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of Yahweh your God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell ... then it shall come to pass that the sword which ye feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die" (Jer. 42:14-16). The Jews did disregard the words of Yahweh, and sought unto Egypt for refuge, but "none of the remnant of Judah" which went into Egypt escaped (Jer. 44:14).

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Two,**

### **Verses Four to Seventeen**

## INTRODUCTION

After calling upon the people to repent, and turn to God, in verse 1 of this chapter, Joel continues his description of the invaders, being typical, as we shall see, of the great Russian confederacy of Ezekiel 38. The picture is of a formidable, invincible army, highly disciplined and impregnable. It ought to be, for it is Yahweh's "Great army" which he sent to punish His people for their sins. Like a great plague of locusts (1:4), they are not stopped by boundaries, and enter in everywhere. They climb up the wall, marching steadfastly forward, running to and fro in the city, executing the command of God to destroy. There is such a great cloud of them, that the Sun, Moon and Stars are darkened. But their commander is Yahweh Tzavaoth, who has strengthened them for that purpose. What a great and terrible scene this is.

And so following this scene of mass-destruction, Yahweh once again besought the people to turn to him, with "all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. After showing them that God will "by no means clear the guilty", the prophet then described that Yahweh is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil" which he had purposed to do (v13, cp Ex 34:6). If they turned to seek him, he would be found. Verse 15 then begins another section, repeating the previous call to "gather the people" to the house of God, that they might cry to the Lord, as one man. The house had become the centre of Idolatry, and so the prophet calls upon the priests to weep there for the abominations that were done therein.

We are the house of God (1Tim 3:15). The trumpet is being sounded to us throughout all the pages of Scripture for us to gather together as one, to be united by a strong bond of fellowship, based upon God's word, which is Truth. Let us hearken to that sound, despising every unclean thing which is in the house, that we might be spared in the Day of Destruction.

### THE PROPHECY OF JOEL COMPARED TO THE LATTER DAYS

When we looked at "the day of Yahweh" as described in Joel, we noted that as well as having a clear application to the Day of Visitation, the Final overthrow of Israel by Babylon, the term is also used of the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is to say, the Day when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness, referred to, for example, in 1Thess 5:2: "For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night". It will therefore come as no surprise that there are a number of parallels between the description of Joel 2, and the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ. These can be shown by a comparison with 2 chapters, well known for speaking of the latter days, Ezek. 38, and 1Thess. 5:

#### Joel 2

"A day of Clouds" (2:1)

"a great people" (2:2)

"the appearance of them shall be as horses, and as horsemen shall they run" (2:4).

"the earth shall quake before them" (2:10)

"The Northern Armu" (2:20)

#### Ezekiel 38

"thou shalt be like a cloud" (38:4,15)

"a great company" (2:20)

"all thine army, horses and horsemen (38:4)

"there shall be a great shaking in the land" (38:19)

"out of the North Parts" (38:15)

#### 1 Thessalonians

"The day of the Lord so cometh" (5:2)

"but ye, brethren are not in darkness (5:4)

"let us not sleep ... but let us watch and be sober" (5:6)

"they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (5:7,8)

"with the trump of God" (4:16)

"in clouds" (4:17)

"they shall not escape" (5:3)

"The Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief" (5:4)

So, Joel Chapter 2, whilst primarily describing the coming desolations of the Babylonians, also draws upon the present troubles to illustrate what the Day of the Lord will be like, which is at hand for us.

The invasion of Ezekiel 38, being led by Russia, will possess the same characteristics as that of Babylon. We noted in Chapter 1:4, the Babylonian invasion is spoken of as 4 waves of a locust attack. This answers to the 4 waves of Babylonian attack: 1- Jer 25:1, 2- 2Chron 36:5, 3- 2Kings 24:12, 4- 2Kings 25:11). Significantly, there were also 4 elements in Nebuchadnezzar's image - Gold, Brass, Silver, and Iron, represented by 4 beasts in Dan 7. These represent the 4 nations which had dominion over Israel. But the final invasion by Russia (Gog) will bear the characteristics of all 4 attacks. This can be seen from Zechariah 1, the second of the seven night visions: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, four horns". The explanation was given: "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem", and can be identified with the four nations which Daniel describes. Then the angel shows Zechariah four carpenters, representative of the saints. The question was asked, "what come these to do? And he spake, saying, these are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it. Note, "To cast out the horns" - Plural, "which lifted up their horn" - Singular. All four are spoken of as one, the final horn is the Russian Confederacy, which will be Nebuchadnezzar's image raised up again.

Joel 2 speaks of the appearance of the army: "the appearance of them is as the appearance of horses". Now, we have seen that this relates to how the horse was a predominant part of the Babylonian invasions, but, in considering the Latter Day application, this unusual description could perhaps provide the key for understanding descriptions such as Ezek 38:4. We are not told that they were horses, only that they had the appearance of horses. Similarly, we are not told that there were chariots, only that the noise was like chariots: "like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains shall they leap". Also, ordinary chariots did not go up mountains, so what could this mean? In this age of modern weaponry, it would seem unlikely that literal horses, and old-fashioned horse-drawn chariots will be used by Russia, as she invades Israel. Perhaps Joel is indicating to us that we must look for something else, which bears the characteristics of Horses and Chariots. Jeremiah 4:13 tells us: "Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles". The horses were swifter than the eagles, which fly in the air. A modern equivalent could be warplanes, which fly, swifter than eagles, bringing destruction. The nearest equivalent we might have to the Iron Chariots of old, might be Tanks, which are commonly used in warfare, bringing great destruction. Both of these are capable of transforming something like the Garden of Eden into a desolate wilderness.

But be that as it may, one thing is certain, when Russia descends from the north parts, it will be a time of trouble "which hath not been ever the like", or as Daniel expresses it: "There shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan 12:2). May it be, that by the Lord's Grace, we may be "hid in the day of Yahweh's anger", as that faithful remnant were (Zeph 2:3), that the Lord will say to us, "Come, my people, enter thou into they chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Is 25:20).

#### **Verse Four**

*"The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses"*

(See study: "A comparison of Joel and Rev 9") As we have seen, the invading army was spoken of as having "the teeth of a lion", being like a swarm of Locusts (1:6), both symbols speaking of the characteristics of the army. Chapter 2 continues this description, but also draws upon the characteristics of the present army to show those of the Gogian confederacy (See study of "the Dual Application of Joel"). The appearance of the army was as that of horses. Horses symbolise war (Prov. 21:31, Isa. 3:17). Horses played an important part in the Babylonian invasions: "They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy: their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion" (Jer. 6:23, cp 4:13). And again, "Behold, I will bring upon

Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses and with chariots, and with horsemen and companies and much people." (Eze. 26:7).

This army was Yahweh's army (v. 11), that is, he was in control, bringing them upon his people. They could only be victorious because Yahweh had temporarily forsaken his people, and was now fighting against them. As it is written: "The horse is prepared against the day of battle; but victory is of Yahweh" (Prov 21:31).

*"And as horsemen, so shall they run"*

Jeremiah spoke of this: "The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks; every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein" (Jer. 4:29). The invasion was of great speed, the army running like horsemen. Habakkuk prophesied: "their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle hasteth to eat" (1:8).

This emphasis on speed is brought out in the latter-day fulfillment: "the king of the north shall come against him as a whirlwind, with Chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over (Dan. 11:40). And again in Ezekiel 38: "thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee" (Verse 9).

### **Verse Five**

*"like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains shall they leap"*

The invading army was to "leap" on the tops of the mountains with a noise like that of chariots. "Leap" = "To stamp, spring about" (Strong), "Rattle along" (Companion Bible). This again places the emphasis upon speed, describing how the chariots bounce along the rough terrain as they race into battle. Jeremiah described these Chariots: "Behold, he shall come up a clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles" (Jer. 4:13). The Babylonians were described in similar terms as they came against Assyria: "The noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots" (Nah. 3:2).

*"Like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble"*

And so, they moved forward with destructive impact, with the sound of fire, transforming the land into a desolate wilderness (v. 3). "as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the Law of Yahweh of hosts, and despised the Word of the holy one of Israel", declared Isaiah (Isa. 5:24), describing the judgments of the Day of Yahweh. And again in 47:14: "Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame".

The coming day of the Lord will bring something similar. "for behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud yea, and all that do wickedly, **shall be as stubble**; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Yahweh of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1, cp Obad. 18). And speaking of the same "day", John the Baptist said of the Lord Jesus Christ: "He shall baptise you with the holy spirit and fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mat. 13:12).

*"as a strong people set in battle array"*

*"strong people"* - cp Verse 2. Again, emphasis is placed on strength. The army moves forward with the

teeth of a lion to devour the land (1:6). "set in battle array" - the army were set in order ready for battle (cp 2 Chron. 13:3), as Jeremiah described: "They shall lay hold on bow and spear: they are cruel, and have no mercy: their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses set in array as men for war against thee, o daughter of Zion" (Jer. 6:23)

### **Verse Six**

*"Before their face the people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blackness"*

"people" = "peoples", referring to the Israelites. Much suffering was to take place, the people being in pain before them, as they were "scattered with an east wind before the face of the army" (Jer. 18:17). "Blackness" = "Illum-inate, i.e. a glow, as a noun, a flush (of anxiety)". Thus, in worry and distress at the coming destruction, all faces would be flushed (cp Jer. 30:6). Likewise, it was said of the Assyrians as they faced destruction: "Much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness" (Nah. 2:10).

### **Verse Seven**

*"They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war"*

They would "come with speed swiftly: none shall be weary, nor stumble among them; none shall slumber, nor sleep ... whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind" (Isa. 5:28). Here, the Babylonians ran like mighty men. Yet when Babylon herself was to be judged, under the Medo-Persians, her strength would fail: "The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds; their might hath failed; they became as women" (Jer. 51:30). They were to climb up the wall of Jerusalem: "Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy: but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not Yahweh's" prophesied Jeremiah (5:10).

*"and they shall march everyone on his ways and they shall not break their ranks"*

(cp Prov. 30:27). Thus, the picture is of a formidable army marching forward into battle. "break" = "Borrow" (5670), "Ranks" = "Paths" (734). "They shall not borrow their paths". That is, each soldier has his own planned path to walk along. They are so disciplined, that their paths don't cross. They keep to their own path, not going on, or borrowing another's to walk upon, but marching steadfastly forward in the way that they have been commanded.

### **Verse Eight**

*"Neither shall thrust one another; they shall walk everyone in his path"*

"Thrust" = "To press" (Strong), "Path" = "highway", implying space. The soldiers are spaced out with precision. They have enough space to walk in, without jostling, or pressing against each other, as they walk along their paths.

*"and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded"*.

"Wounded" = "to finish, or stop". Thus, when those in the front line fell, those behind stepped in to their pace, ensuring the army was not stopped. Truly this was a formidable, unstoppable army (cp Isa. 5:28).

### **Verse Nine**

*"they shall run to and fro in the city"*

Having entered by climbing the walls, the army ran to and fro through the city as the running to and fro of locusts (1:6). The city itself was the target: "Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited (Jer. 6:6, Isa. 24:12).

*"they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb upon the houses, they shall enter in the windows like a thief".*

The people said "it is not near", let us build houses" (Eze. 11:3). And so they built those houses, and burned incense upon the rooftops (Jer. 19:13). But the Day was near, and when it came, the invaders climbed up the houses unexpectedly, like a thief. Likewise, "the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1Thess. 5:1) for those in darkness. Let us watch, and be vigilant, that our House is always a house of prayer, and that no abominable thing be found therein. Their houses were burned (Jer. 39:8), and the occup-ants slain (Eze. 23:47). And so, a cry was heard in the houses, as Yahweh brought the troop suddenly upon them (Jer. 18:22), and they lamented: "For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the young children from without, and the young men from the streets" (Jer. 2:21).

### **Verse Ten**

*"The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining".*

(See study on "The Sun, Moon and Stars", Cp Isa. 13:10, 13). These are terms that describe an earthquake. There had already been a great earthquake in the days of Uzziah, which Amos refers to (Am. 1:1). This was but a type of the political earthquake - convulsions of the political heavens and earth, when Yahweh would roar against his people, when the Sun (Rulership), Moon and stars (Religious systems) would be darkened. The Lord Jesus Christ draws upon this description, as he spoke to the disciples concerning the events of the Day of the Lord. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Mat. 24:29). We are witnessing the beginning of this "time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:2), as in our day, the Political powers in "heaven" are being shaken, with the collapse of world governments. Yet, this shall develop into something far worse, such as there hath never been the like (Joel 2:2, cp Mat. 24:21). But at the time of the end, these convulsions of the political earth will be reflected by the physical, as Zech 14 describes: "The mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east, and toward the west ... and ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the mountains shall reach unto Azal: Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah" (Zech. 14:5).

### **Verse Eleven**

*"And Yahweh shall utter his voice before his army"*

(Cp 3:16). The invading army, saith Yahweh, is "my great army which I sent among you" (2:25), being led by "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant" (Jer. 25:9, 27:6). That is, the Babylonian army was guided by the Hand of Providence to come down upon the land of Israel. In a similar vein, Yahweh styled the Medo-Persians, "My sanctified ones", when He brought them upon Babylon. That is not to say that they were righteous, but that Yahweh had "sanctified", or set them apart for His purpose, that through the unseen Angelic Guidance, they would overthrow Babylon. Jeremiah describes this utterance of Yahweh: "Yahweh shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation (heaven - 4583 Deut. 26:15, 2 Chron. 30:27); he shall mightily roar upon his habitation (Zion - 5116 Isa. 33:20, Jer. 50:19). And so, the Lord was to roar against his people, the utterance being a command to his army to destroy.

*"For his camp is very great"*

The siege of Jerusalem was enacted by Ezekiel about the time of Joel, as he was instructed: "Lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about (Eze. 4:2). This was for a "sign to the house of Israel". They disregarded the sign, and so the great camp came and destroyed them.

*"for he is strong that executeth his word"*

In Chapter 1 we read: "for a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number", being led by Nebuchadnezzar, Yahweh's Servant. This nation came according to the Word of Yahweh, to carry out his command. They were "very great", and Nebuchadnezzar was strong, being guaranteed the victory.

*"for the Day of Yahweh is great, and very terrible, and who can abide it?"*

(See study on "the Day of Yahweh", cp Rev. 6:17). Likewise, when the Lord returns, it will be a great and terrible day for those who choose not to accept him. As Malachi prophesied: "but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (Mal. 3:2).

## **Verse Twelve**

*"Therefore also now, saith Yahweh, turn ye even to me with all your heart"*

The pattern is the same as that of Chapter 1. First, a description of the Judgments is given, then a call to turn back to Yahweh. The people said in their hearts, "Yahweh will not do good neither will he do evil (Zeph. 1:12). But Joel, after showing them the evil that He was about to bring, exhorted them to repent, and turn to God. Moses told the people that when they were brought into captivity, "If from thence thou seek Yahweh thy God thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to Yahweh thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for Yahweh is a merciful God), he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee" (Deut 4:30-31 cp 1Kings 8:47-49). At Joel's time, some, like Daniel and his friends had already been taken captive, and the Day of the Yahweh was imminent, as the prophets exhorted them to turn back to God. But they had assurance that even during the 70 years captivity, Yahweh could still be found (Jer. 29:12-14). "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith Yahweh, return unto me, and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove" (Jer. 4:1, Is. 55:6,7).

*"And with fasting, and with mourning"*

"fasting" - this repeats the call of 1:14: "Sanctify ye a fast". When faced with a multitude of invaders, we read of Jehoshaphat: "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek Yahweh, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask of Yahweh; even out of all the cities of Judah, they came to seek Yahweh" (1 Chron. 20:3, 4). It was not the case the Jehoshaphat feared through lack of faith. He feared because the people who were coming against him were the Moabites, and Ammonites, 2 races which the Israelites were forbidden to war against (Deut. 2:9,19). Faced with the invaders, Jehoshaphat was not allowed to fight against them. What was he to do? He sought Yahweh, and proclaimed a fast. The result was that Yahweh answered: "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle - set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of Yahweh with you, O Judah and Jerusalem; fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them; for Yahweh will be with you" (2 Chron. 20:17).

And so, implicitly trusting in the Yahweh, Jehoshaphat "sent the singers out before the army" to the front line to sing, and praise the beauty of holiness (v. 21), and they stood, and saw the victory as Yahweh fought for them. What a contrast this is to the people in Joel's day! A similar cry was made for the

people to gather together to sanctify a fast, to seek Yahweh, but they hearkened not. Only when the nations come down into the valley of Jehoshaphat will the people in desperation seek their Redeemer (Joel 3:12). Only in that day will they turn to Yahweh, in weeping, as Jeremiah spake "they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born" (Jer. 31:9) and Ephraim shall bemoan himself, saying, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastened, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art Yahweh my God" (v. 18). And "in that day shall there be great mourning in Jerusalem ... and the land shall mourn, every family apart" (Zech. 12:11). But yet, the people refused to hear the call to weep and mourn. Speaking of this, Isaiah said "in that day did Adonai Yahweh of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold; joy and gladness (Isa. 22:12). And so the people rather rejoiced in vanities until the desolation came.

### **Verse Thirteen**

*"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Yahweh your God"*

Later, after the 70 years in Babylon, Zechariah condemned the fastings of those in Joel's day: "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?" (Zech. 7:5). Thus, they were fasting, not out of genuine grief for the atrocities which had come upon Yahweh's people, and in repentance for their sins, but for themselves (Cp. Mat. 6:16, 17). They saw fasting as a form of righteousness in itself, rather than what it signified. Likewise, as an outward show, they rent their garments (Cp Mat. 26:65 with Lev. 21:10). Here, Joel shows the significance, "Rent your heart," and "turn unto Yahweh". "Yahweh is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psa. 34:18, 51:17, Isa. 66:2), declare the Holy Oracles of Truth. There is no room in His Presence for pride and arrogance. And so, when we look at Joel's prophecy, out of all the pleas he gives, the main theme running through them all is humility – (1:8) "lament like a virgin", 1:11 "be ye ashamed," 1:13 "gird yourselves and lament ... come, lie all night in sackcloth, 1:14 cry unto Yahweh, 2:12 "turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning".

Of Josiah, Yahweh declared "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before Yahweh, when thou heardest what I speak against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes and wept before me ... I have also heard thee." (2 Kings 22:19). Notice, that Yahweh heard Josiah firstly because his heart was tender. It was as a token to show this that Josiah rent his clothes. We must take note. There are only 2 symbolic things that the Lord requires of us - Baptism, and Breaking Bread. Yet of themselves, neither of these have any intrinsic value whatsoever. In order for them to be accepted, we must do them in sincere recognition of what they are tokens of, with our hearts rent before the Lord.

*"For he is gracious, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness".*

(Cp Jon. 4:2). When Yahweh declared His complete Character to Moses, He declared "Yahweh, Yahweh God, Merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty - visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation (Ex. 34:7). This was picked up by the Spirit through David, who wrote "Yahweh is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy" (Psa. 145:8, cp Psa. 86:15). Without these wonderful aspects of the Lord's Character, we would have no hope, for there would be no forgiveness. Yet despite this, the people "refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them: but hardened their necks ... but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and forsookest them not" (Neh. 9:17, cp Psa. 103:8,9)

*"And repenteth him of the evil"*

The word of Yahweh through Jeremiah said: "at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jer. 18:8, cp Psa. 106:45, Amos 7:2-6, Jon. 4:2). Yet the people did not repent, and so the evil came.

### **Verse Fourteen**

*"Who knoweth if he will return and repent?"*

(Cp Jon. 3:9). All should have known, as this was constantly being preached by the prophets. As Zechariah later told the people of the Restoration: "Turn ye unto me, saith Yahweh of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith Yahweh of hosts" (1:3). This phrase, or equivalent phrases occur many times in the Scriptures, and illustrate the Divine principle, that wherever there is repentance, Yahweh may be found. Yet, "My people doth not know, my people doth not consider", said the Lord (Isa. 1:3), and vainly turned to the "queen of heaven" for help.

*"and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat offering, and a drink offering"*

At the time of Joel, as we saw in Chapter 1, the Drink offering had ceased because the vine had dried up, and the Meat offering could not be made because the harvest had failed. Hence for there to be a Meat offering and Drink offering, there had to be a new harvest. This would have taken place if the people had repented, as it did later, during the ministry of Haggai (Hag. 2:19). But yet, a blessing was left, for "thus saith Yahweh, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do unto my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all" (Isa. 65:8). Thus, although the Israelitish Vine was to be cut down (Is 5:5), for the few who bore fruit to the Glory of God, they would be blessed by being hid in the day of indignation (Zeph. 2:3).

### **Verse Fifteen**

*"Blow the trumpet in Zion, Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly"*

And so begins a new section of the prophecy. This appears to have been given a little later. It repeats 1:14 "Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly", and 2:1 "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion", suggesting that the previous call went unheeded, and needed to be repeated. This is confirmed by 2 Chron. 30:16 "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of Yahweh rose against his people".

### **Verse Sixteen**

*"Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children"*

And so, once again, the call goes out for the entire congregation to be gathered together, both young and old, to be sanctified, that is, to be made holy to God. In Exodus 19, following their deliverance from Egypt, the people were to be assembled together at Sinai. There, "Yahweh said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes" (Exod. 19:10, cp 15:22). This was so that Moses could bring "the people out of the camp to meet their God (v 17). The people greatly feared what they had seen and heard at Sinai (Heb. 12:18-21), and they were now to experience that God is a consuming fire, and were to meet him in indignation, as Amos said "Prepare to meet they God, O Israel" (Am. 4:12).

*"And those that suck the breasts"*

(Cp Mat. 24:19). All were to suffer, both young and old, and therefore, all were called upon to gather themselves together to the house of God. Jeremiah speaks of how even the young would suffer: "Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from among you man and woman, child and suckling out of Judah, to leave you none to remain, in that ye provoke me to wrath" (Jer. 44:7-8). And so, the inhabitants of the land, in deliberately doing abominable things before Yahweh, were provoking him to anger - and so their terrible atrocities were to be recompensed with terrible judgments. Yet, the time will come when such great and dreadful things shall be no more, when the whole earth will be at peace. Then, "the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall no hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain" (Isa. 11:8,9). Then, Israel, the child of God will no longer be despised by the nations, but will be nourished by them as she receives blessings from them, for it is written: "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings: and thou shalt know that I am Yahweh thy Saviour and thy redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob" (Isa. 60:16).

*"Let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet"*

Just as in our day, the Master tells us the world is engrossed with "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage", so the people in Joel's day continued in these things in exclusion to God. Neither the bride, nor the bridegroom had so far heeded Joel's call to repentance, for rather than being at the temple, they were in their chambers.

In Deuteronomy, Moses told the people: "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (24:25). This was one of the gracious blessings of the law, while the people were obedient. But now Joel calls upon all to come out, none were excluded.

### **Verse Seventeen**

*"Let the priests, the ministers of Yahweh weep between the porch and the altar"*

And so again, the priests are addressed. When, in a vision, Ezekiel was shown the abominations of Jerusalem, he said: "And he brought me into the inner court of Yahweh's house, and, behold, at the door of the Temple of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Yahweh, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east". Thus, this area rather than being the centre of Holiness, as it should have been, became the epitome of Idolatry. The Lord Jesus Christ also refers to this area of the Temple: "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Mat. 23:35). Thus, this was the place of Idolatry in Joel's day, and the site of Murder later, during the time of the Restoration. Truly there was great cause for weeping.

*"and let them say, Spare thy people, O Yahweh,"*

And so the Priests, the representatives of the people before God were exhorted to turn to him, and beseech him to spare his people. But they did not repent, and so they were not spared. As Ezekiel prophesied: "the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city is full of perverseness; for they say, Yahweh hath forsaken the earth, and Yahweh seeth me not. And as for me, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their own head" (Eze. 9:10).

*"and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them"*

Israel were Yahweh's Heritage (cp Deut. 32:9, Isa. 19:25), and was about to be given to the heathen. His heritage had been made an abomination, (Jer. 2:7), and therefore, Yahweh declared through Jeremiah, "I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly-beloved of my soul into the hand of mine enemies (Jer 12:7, cp v8-10). The heathen were to rule over them (cp Neh. 9:37) for their sins. In speaking of Babylon's overthrow, Isaiah described what these rulers were like: "Yahweh hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a stroke without removing (Marg.), he that ruled the nations in anger is persecuted and none hindereth" (Isa. 13:5,6). They were to suffer much under the Babylonian rod, hence the call to repent.

*"Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God"*

(Cp. Isa. 36:18-20). The heathen would say "Where is your God". Speaking of the time when Israel were to be overthrown, the Psalmist beseeches the Lord: "help us, O God of our Salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy names' sake. Wherefore should the heathen say Where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by the revenging of they servants blood which is shed" (Psa. 79:10, cp 115:2, Mic. 7:10). But yet Yahweh will not allow his Holy Name to blasphemed, and declared his greatness to the kings of Babylon, as the record of Daniel shows (Dan. 4).

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Verses Eighteen to Twenty Two**

## INTRODUCTION

In our studies in Joel so far, we have been looking at what we might call the "negative" aspect of the prophecy. That is, we have been considering some of the terrible judgements which were to come upon Israel for their terrible iniquities, designed to declare that "Yah" alone is "El". Now, however, we begin to consider a glorious vision of the Kingdom. That this section is speaking of the establishment of the Kingdom is apparent from the description in verse 19: "I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen". To this day, the Jews are a reproach throughout the world. This has not yet been fulfilled. Also, Verse 27: "And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am Yahweh your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed". These words can only be applicable to the final restoration at the establishment of the Kingdom.

When we considered Chapter 1, we saw described to us the destruction of the land by the Babylonians, being typical of that which will be brought about by Gog. Again, when we looked at the beginning of Chapter 2, at the description of the Babylonian army, we saw how the details parallel with the Latter Days, and the invasion by Gog. Likewise, this next section, whilst having a preliminary application to the destruction of Babylon, and the restoration which followed, ultimately points to the destruction of the Russian Confederacy of Ezekiel 38.

We ended our last section with the call to the Jews to repent: "Let the Priests, the ministers of Yahweh, weep between the porch and the altar". This next section begins with the words: "Then will Yahweh be jealous for his land". When? When Israel repents. Firstly, the Gogian confederacy will come down upon Israel, bringing the destruction described in Joel, (Zech 14:2), and through the work of Elijah (Mal 4:5), the people will cry to Yahweh for deliverance. "Then shall Yahweh go forth and fight against those nations" (Zech 14:3). "Then will Yahweh be jealous for his land", and shall remove the northern army from off them.

The day is at hand. With events in the former Yugoslavia as they are, Russia may be given the opportunity to enter Turkey, to defend her allies. Then, the second leg of Nebuchadnezzars' Image will be complete, and the situation ripe for the great invasion. But be that as it may, as world events in the last few years has shown us, things can move at a dramatic pace. Let us be ready, that that day does not come upon us unawares. Let us prepare, that when the Lord comes, we may be redeemed from the troubles of this benighted world.

## **Verse Eighteen**

*"Then will Yahweh be jealous for his land"*

In Exodus 34:14, it is written, "For thou shalt worship no other god, for Yahweh, whose Name is Jealous, is a jealous God. How is Yahweh a Jealous God? Let us firstly consider the Scriptural use of the word here rendered, "Jealous". The way in which we use the word in common speech is linked to the idea of envy. We are jealous of someone, for they have a particular item, or ability which we want to possess. Therefore, we are envious of them. The Hebrew word can have a similar meaning to this, as is apparent from Rachel's words in Genesis 30:1: "and when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, "Give me children or else I die". Here, jealousy is clearly linked with envy. In this context, the word has one meaning, but in another, its meaning can be slightly different. Hence, in Numbers 25:11, we read, "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them ...". Here, the word is used in a good sense, to describe an action which was just, and commendable. This is what the word means - to have a Zeal, in either a good or a bad sense. Hence, we can have a zeal for the lord, or be Jealous of our Neighbour.

Yahweh, then, is a Zealous God. And following His judgements upon the Land, He was to be Zealous for His Land, in bringing about a restoration. In that Day, Isaiah tells us, Yahweh shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up Jealousy (Zeal) like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, Roar; he shall prevail against his enemies" (Is 42:13), and Zechariah: "I am Jealous (Zealous) for Zion and Jerusalem with great Jealousy" (1:14, cp 8:2).

*"and pity his people"*

"Pity" = "Spare", and so the time will come when Yahweh shall spare his people, and bring about a national restoration. Although a great Northern Army is to be brought down upon Israel once again, the destruction shall not be absolute, for Yahweh shall fight for his people as in the day of battle, and "remove far off" the Northern army, that the remnant will be saved.

## **Verse Nineteen**

*"Yea, Yahweh will answer, and say unto his people"*

Yahweh will hear his people's cry, and answer them. He will say "to them which were not my people, Thou art my people: and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Hos 2:23).

*"Behold, I will send you corn and wine and oil,"*

During the siege of Jerusalem, these things were dried up: "the land mourneth; for the corn is waste: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth" (1:10). But in that day, the land shall once again be "a land of corn and wine", (Deut 33:28), for it shall be said, "Yahweh hath redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he, therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of Yahweh for wheat and for wine and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all".

*"And ye shall be satisfied therewith; and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen"*

There will be no more food shortages (cp 1:17) among the people, for they shall be satisfied with an abundance of blessings. As Jeremiah prophesied: "And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith Yahweh". And as a consequence of the Restoration, God's Chosen people will no longer be a reproach among the heathen, as it was said to the Moun-

tains of Israel: "Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more" (Ezek 36:15,30, Cp Is 54:4).

### **Verse Twenty**

*"But I will remove far from you the northern army"*

The "Northern army" spoken of here, whilst having a preliminary application to the destruction of the Babylonian army, ultimately speaks of the Latter-day Northern Confederacy, headed by Gog, of Ezekiel 38:15. This mighty army is to be defeated by Yahweh's Sanctified Ones, and once again, the "sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining", as Yahweh roars, this time for his people (Joel 3:15-16).

*"And will drive him into a land barren and desolate"*

Thus, after being confronted by Yahweh Tzvaoth, the northern invader will be driven into a "barren", or "dry" and "desolate" land. Ezekiel speaks of the final destruction of the Gogian Confederacy. Yahweh will "Bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: and I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the Mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands with thee (Ezek 39:4). The confrontation of the Nations and the Lord Jesus Christ shall take place at Bozrah (Is 34:6, 63:1 see study on "the March of Christ and the Saints to Jerusalem"), where there will be great destruction. Then, from there, Gog is driven back to the mountains of Israel, the Land which he has made dry and desolate (Joel 1:10-12, 2:3), where he shall meet his end. We may ask, How is it that the army will be removed "Far" from Israel by being driven back to Israel? That the land described is Israel we can have no doubt, from Ezekiel's testimony. It is here that he shall be removed, for here, he shall come to his end, and descend into the grave, far away from the living. Yahweh will "give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it the valley of Hamon-Gog" (Ezek 39:11). And so the Army shall be no more, having been removed from Israel.

*"With his face toward the East sea, and his hinder part towards the utmost sea"*

(See map 2 in study, "The March of Christ and the Saints to Jerusalem"). The "East sea" is again referred to in Ezekiel 47. Here, we read of the "Living Waters" which Zechariah tells us will "go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the Eastern sea (Marg) and half of them toward the hinder sea (14:8). Ezekiel describes the waters going toward the east: "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the plain (Marg), and go down into the sea" (47:8). Thus, the sea is in a plain. Deut 3:17 tells us this is the Salt, or Dead sea. Ezekiel continues: "which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed" - an apt description of the healing of the bitter waters of the Dead Sea. The "Utmost sea" is the "Great sea", or Mediterranean, as can be shown by comparing Deut 11:24, 34:2 on a map.

This describes to us then, how the front part of the army will be turned to face the Dead Sea, being driven back to the mountains of Israel, with its' rear parts facing the Great sea, as shown on the map. "and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up".

Isaiah speaks of the stink of the destroyed confederacy thus: "Their slain also shall be cast our, and their stink also shall come up out of their carcasses" (Is 34:2,3). But this is speaking of the initial confrontation at Edom: "for Yahweh hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (v6). Yet, the army will be forced back to Israel, where Ezekiel describes a similar "sacrifice" - "Assemble yourselves, and come, gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the Mountains of Israel (Ezek 39:17). It will take 7 months to bury the bodies of the slain, verse 12 tells us, and so Joel describes the putrid smell shall emanate from a scene of utter carnage.

*"Because he hath done great things"*

The Hebrew reads, "Because he hath magnified to do great things (Cp Lam 1:9). Of this same power, Daniel tells us, "his power shall be mighty, but not by his won power, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper ... and he shall magnify himself in his heart ... he shall also stand up against the Prince of Princes" (Dan 8:24,25). And so, reflecting the spirit of the Babylonian King of old (Is 14:12-14), Gog shall magnify himself, and do great things, presuming even to stand against the Chief Prince, the Lord Jesus Christ. But yet, he shall be "broken without hand", being smitten with the conglomerate stone of Daniel 2.

### **Verse Twenty One**

*"Fear not, O land; be glad, and rejoice, for Yahweh will do great things"*

(Cp Is 35:1). "Land" = "Earth". The prophet speaks to the earth, in an abstract sense (Cp Ezek 36:8). Previously, it had been desolate and dry, causing the crop to fail (1:11), having been burnt by the invading army (2:3). But now, Yahweh will do great things - far greater than the work of destruction by the Northerners, making the Land "like Eden", and "like the Garden of Yahweh". But the word "land" also refers to the inhabitants of the land, who will rejoice at the blessings of the kingdom. Zephaniah speaks in similar terms: "Sing, O daughter of Zion, Shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. Yahweh hath taken away thy judgements, he hath cast out thine enemy" (Zeph 3:14,15). Then, "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Is 35:1), and "they shall say among the heathen, Yahweh hath done great things for them. Yahweh hath done great things for us: we are glad" (Ps 126:2,3).

### **Verse Twenty Two**

*"Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness shall spring"*

The "beasts of the field" which cry in 1:20, because the pastures of the wilderness are dried and the "rivers of waters are dried up" are also told to be no longer afraid, for now "thy paths drop fatness, they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered with corn; they shout for Joy, they shall also sing" (Ps 65:12-13). But the People also, who wee like sheep not being fed by the shepherds shall be nourished, for Yahweh has decreed: "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer 3:15).

*"For the tree beareth her fruit"*

The trees which had been laid waste (1:12) and dried up will once again grow, and bear fruit, as Ezekiel testifies, "The tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase" (34:27). But the People, Yahweh's Plant will also revive, and flourish, for Hosea prophesied: "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall be spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon" (Hos 14:4-5).

*"The fig tree and the vine do yield their strength"*

"Strength" = "Abundance". Yahweh's vine and fig tree (1:7) will revive, and bear fruit to the Glory of God, once more being planted in the land: "And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith Yahweh thy Elohim".

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Verses Twenty Three to Twenty Seven**

## INTRODUCTION

In this next section of Joel, we continue to look at some of the wonderful blessings which shall abound throughout the whole Earth in the Kingdom Age. In Prov 29:18, we read of the importance of clothing ourselves with a Vision of the Kingdom, "Where there is not vision, the people are made naked", and Rev 16:15 tells us that if we walk naked, they shall see our shame. It is necessary, then for each of us to clothe ourselves with such a vision, forming a strong impression in our minds of what the Kingdom of God will be like. Consider the following blessings:

Universal Peace and Security - Psa 72:7, Isa 9:6, Zech 9:10, Mic 4:4  
National Harmony - Isa 61:11  
War Abolished - Isa 2:4, 66:12, Mic 4:3, Psa 46:6-10  
Universal Justice and Truth - Isa 11:1-9, 16:5, Jer 23:5, Zech 14:14-16  
Environment Cleansed - Isa 35:1-10  
Produce Increased - Psa 67:6, 72:16, Amos 9:13-15, Eze 36:29-30  
Family Promoted - Psa 128:1-6  
Harmony amongst Creation - Isa 11:6-9, 65:25  
Enforced Divine Laws - Isa 30:21  
No Housing Problems - Isa 65:21-22  
Poverty Removed - Psa 72:1-4, Isa 29:19-20, 32:1-7  
Medical and Health Benefits - Isa 33:24, 35:5-6, Zech 8:3-5  
Life Extended - Isa 65:20, 25:8  
Renewed Strength - Isa 40:31  
No Violence - Isa 60:18, Zeph 3:12-13  
Work Enjoyed - No Unemployment - Isa 65:22  
No Theft - Isa 65:22-23  
No "Good Old Days" sayings - Isa 65:17, Jer 3:16-17

*(Taken from "Good Company" supplement to "Logos", March 1995)*

What a glorious vision this picture is! A useful exercise is to look at each of the references, and try to picture in our minds what is being referred to, in this way we will build up our own vision in our minds. This section of Joel deals solely with such a vision, giving a picture of great plenty, which shall abound. No longer will Joy be "Withered away from the Sons of Men" (1:12), but all shall glory, and rejoice in the Lord (2:21, 23), as the land which has been turned into a wilderness by the Gogian Invasion (2:3) shall be transformed by the Power of God to be like the Garden of Eden (Ezek 36:35).

Let us, with joy, focus our minds upon this vision which is set before us, that we might be strengthened to overcome the trials that lie ahead of us. Let us earnestly look to "The city which hath foundations", to the great Day when the Lord shall establish Righteousness and Peace upon the earth, when the whole Earth shall abound with His Glory.

### **Verse Twenty Three**

*"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in Yahweh your God"*

(Cp. v21) Again, the call is made, no longer to "weeping" and "mourning" (v 12), but to "be glad" and "rejoice". They are to rejoice in Yahweh for the great abundance of blessings that shall be upon the land. Notice, here the people are no longer mere "inhabitants of the land" (v 1:2, 2:1), mere sojourners in the land, about to be spued out (Lev 18:28), but "Children of Zion", those who are born of the land, those who belong to the land. This call to rejoice is again made in Psalm 149: "let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their king" (v 2), for in the Kingdom age, the precious sons of Zion shall once again be "comparable to fine gold", (Lam 4:2), being "raised up" (Zech 9:13), as Yahweh Tzavaoth shall "defend them", removing the yoke of the northern aggressor, causing them to prosper.

*"For he hath given you the former rain moderately"*

The Hebrew for "Former Rain" can have the meaning of "Teacher", and the word rendered "Moderately" is the usual word for "righteousness", hence the marginal suggestion of "teacher of righteousness". This principle is shown in Deut 32:2, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass". Thus, the words which proceed out of the Mouth of God provides nourishment like that which rain provides for otherwise dry soil.

But, who is the teacher of these words, the teacher of righteousness? Evidently, it is the Lord Jesus Christ, he who sanctifies, and cleanses his ecclesia, with the "washing of water by the Word" (Eph 5:26), the "teacher come from God". Luke testifies of "all that Jesus began both to do and teach" in his inspired Gospel record (Acts 1:2). But this was the beginning. The former rain precipitated from the gracious lips of our Lord, but after his departure, he promised "another comforter", even the Holy Spirit, "which shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). This was the latter rain, of which we shall say more in our next study, if the Lord will. Thus, just as the autumnal and spring rains were needed to cause the earth to bring forth fruit bountifully, so, when the seed of the kingdom was sown, it received the former and latter rain, that it might yield fruit an hundredfold.

*"And he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month"*

Note: It is the Lord Yahweh that causes the rain to descend, he will send, or withhold rain according to His Will. Here, both the former and latter rain is said to come in the first month. Yet, as can be seen from the chart below, these rains do not come in the same month, but in Autumn, and Spring. In the A.V., the word "month" is in italics indicating that the word is not in the original. Hence, some translations render it "as at the first". At the first, Moses said to the Israelites, "I will give you the rain of the land in his due season, the first rain, and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil" (Deut 11:14). Yet, because of the disobedience of the people, the rain was withheld, causing the crops to fail as Jeremiah testified, "Thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness; therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain" (Jer 3:3). Joel spoke during a time when there was a famine in the land (2 Kings 25:3, Joel 1:9-12, 17-20), due to the failure of rain. Yet, he spoke of a glorious age to come, when the rain would once again be provided, as at the first, causing "the floors" to be "full of wheat", and "the fats" to overflow with "wine and oil" (v 24), for Yahweh "Shall come unto us, as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos 6:3).

#### **Verse Twenty Four**

*"And the floors shall be full of wheat"*

The rain being once more provided in due season, there will be a bountiful harvest. No longer shall the garners be laid desolate, and the barns broken down (1:17), but every threshing floor will be filled with wheat. Then shall "the little hills rejoice on every side; the pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered with corn, they shout for joy, they also sing" (Ps 65:12), and there shall be a "handful of corn in the earth upon the top, of the mountains" (Ps 72:16). It is also in that epoch that the Lord will purge His threshing floor and "gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mat 3:12).

*"and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil"*

Previously it was said, "The field is wasted, the land mourneth" (1:10), but in the coming age, Joy and gladness shall be restored, for the Land shall "be glad and rejoice", and yield her increase, causing Wine and Oil to be in plentiful supply. These things shall take place after the repentance of Israel, as it is written, "Honour Yahweh with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov 3:9-10).

In this context, the "fats" spoken of refers to the vats used to collect the grape juice after they had been pressed (Cp 3:13), not the vat in which the grapes are pressed (see note in "The Companion Bible"). Thus, in the Kingdom age, following the treading of the winepress (Is 63:2, Rev 19:15), Joy and gladness shall flow in abundance, and "they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of Yahweh, for wheat and for wine and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jer 31:12).

### **Verse Twenty Five**

*"and I will restore to you the years that the Locust hath eaten, the Canker-worm, and the Caterpillar, and the Palmerworm"*

This repeats the description of Chapter 1:4, "That which the Palmerworm hath left, hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the Cankerworm eaten; and that which the Cankerworm hath left hath the Caterpillar eaten". When we examined this passage in the first study, we established that these four names refer to the four stages of the Babylonian invasion. However, as we have seen in the last study, this section is speaking not of Babylon, but Gog, the great Northern confederacy of Ezekiel 38. That this is a different invasion can be seen from the different order of names in the list. The meaning of each word is descriptive of each stage of the invasion. Thus, 1:6 is:

**Palmerworm (Gnawer):** During the first invasion (Dan 1:2), Nebuchad-nezzar did not destroy the land, but gnawed at it, taking a bite, as it were, taking "part of the vessels of the house of God" into Babylon.

**Locust (Swarmers):** During this stage (2 Chron 36:5), Judah was overrun by many armies, which swarmed against the land - "bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon (2 Kings 24:2).

**Cankerworm (Licker):** no teeth were used for this attack. The Babylon-ians were able to lick up with ease the spoil - more goods from the temple, for Jehoiachin surrendered to them (2 Kings 24:12).

**Caterpillar (Consumer):** The land was totally destroyed, as described in the first part of Joel 2, totally consumed (2Kings 25:1-11).

However, when Gog invades southward, although there will be 4 elements to his attack (Cp Zech 1:21), the sequence will be different, as described in Joel 2:25:

**Locust (Swarmers):** First, the Northern confederacy shall swarm over the land towards Israel - "thou shalt ... be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands" (Ezek 38:9, Dan 11:40).

**Cankerworm (Licker):** No teeth are used at this stage, with the sudden-ness of its invasion, the northern army will easily subdue nations, some possibly surrendering? (Dan 11:40).

**Caterpillar (Consumer):** The destruction of Jerusalem, prosperity turned into a desolate wilderness, total destruction (Joel 2:3, Zech 14:2).

**Palmerworm (Gnawer):** After the land is destroyed, the spoils are taken, and divided amongst the associate nations at Jerusalem (Zech 14:2).

*"My great army which I sent among you"*

The invading army is Yahweh's army, for He is their commander (v 11), and their king is His Servant (Cp Jer 25:9). It is the Lord who will bring them down upon his people (Ezek 38:4), and it is He who will remove them (Joel 2:20).

## Verse Twenty Six

*"And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied"*

In the Kingdom Age, there will be no shortage of food, no famines, for those who fear Yahweh, all shall be satisfied. The Lord had promised that if the people remained obedient, that "I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the First rain and the Latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine and thine oil, and I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full" (Deut 11:14,15). Yet, the people turned away from the Lord, and so he decreed, "I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough" (Hos 4:10). Yet, in the coming Age, they will once more fear him, and in meekness, they shall "eat and be satisfied" (Ps 22:26).

*"and praise the Name of Yahweh thy Elohim*

In the A.V. rendering, this verse reads, "the name of the LORD thy God". This, however, is an unsatisfactory rendering, for the Name of God, is not "the Lord" but "Yahweh", as God has decreed, "I am Yahweh, that is my Name, and my glory will I not give to another" (Is 42:8). Even the translators recognise that something other than "Lord", or "God" is meant, for whenever these words are used in the place of the Lords' Name, they are given in Block Capitals.

But what does the Name "Yahweh" mean? To answer this question, we shall not look to the variable opinions of mortal men, and their conjecture of Linguistics, but upon the Holy Oracles of God. The abbreviated form of the Lord's Name (Yah) is to be found in the Name of the Lord Jesus - "Yah-oshua". This Name is divinely translated in Mat 1:21 as "HE SHALL SAVE". Thus, according to the Spirit, "Yah" = "He Shall". Only those who reject the Inspiration of the Scriptures will be unable to accept this Divine Translation. As the Lord revealed himself to Moses at the Bush, "eyeh asher eyeh" - "I will be who I will be" (Ex 3:14), and refers to that time when the Lord will manifest himself in a "multitude which no man can number".

We have mentioned that "the LORD" is an unsatisfactory rendering. This is because the word does not express the sense of what the Almighty in His Infinite Wisdom caused to be written. When the word "Yahweh" is used, God is not emphasising His Lordship, rather he is referring to himself by the Name which He has bestowed upon Himself, expressive of His Future Purpose. "Lord" does not in any way express the sense of "He will be". Mortal man has no authority to change, or mask over the Great Name of Yahweh, and so it will have been noticed that throughout this study, we have used the Name wherever the Lord has placed it.

However, by doing this, we do not in any sense deny that Yahweh is the Lord. The scriptures are emphatic - "Yahweh your God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward" (Deut 10:17). Rather, we feel that because Yahweh is the Lord, we must humbly accept His Word, as He caused it to be written, and when the Almighty declares that He is Yahweh, we dare not say otherwise.

Thus, in the Kingdom Age, God's people will praise the Name which they currently despise, in recognition of the bountiful blessings which He will supply. Likewise, we should "extol him by His Name Yah" (Ps 68:4), singing our praises to He Who has redeemed us by the blood of His Son.

*"That hath dealt wonderously with you"*

The Lord shall deal wonderously with His People both through His Judgements, declaring His Greatness, and also through the many wonderful blessings which shall abound in the land. For then, He "Will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work, and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid" (Is 29:14).

*"And my people shall never be ashamed"*

Israel shall no more be made a reproach among the heathen (v 19), but shall be planted in the land, never to be plucked up. As Isaiah prophesied, "thus saith Yahweh, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel"

And Zepheniah, "In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain" (Zeph 3:11).

### **Verse Twenty Seven**

*"And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel"*

(Cp Is 12:6, Ps 68:18). Truly, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom 11:2). Despite the claim of some denominations around us, that time shall soon come when it shall be known that Yahweh is He who shall dwell in the midst of His people. "Moreover", saith the Lord, "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore" (Eze 37:26), for when God is "in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early" (Ps 46:5).

*"and that I am Yahweh your God and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed"*

This principle is repeated for emphasis. The time will come when Israel will worship Yahweh in Spirit and Truth, recognising that He is the Lord Yahweh, and that there is none else beside Him (Is 45:5).

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Verses Twenty Eight to Thirty Two**

## INTRODUCTION

After presenting us with a picture of the abundance of blessings that the Lord shall provide in the Age to come, Joel continues, in the section we are about to consider, to describe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in those days: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh".

The consequence of this, we are told, is that God shall reveal himself through Prophets, Dreams, and Visions to His people. What a great witness this will be to the Nations who fought against Gods' People, to show that Christ is in the Land! Once more, the Gospel shall be preached, and it shall come to pass, that "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of Yahweh shall be delivered", whether they be Jew, or Gentile (Rom 10:13).

Chapter 2 of Acts describes to us how these words had a fulfilment during Pentecost, when all the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. In that day, various gifts were given to men, to be used for the furtherance of the Gospel, as "signs and wonders" testifying to the truth of the things they preached, that the glory of God might be revealed.

We are living in the days in between the two outpourings, in which we do not possess the Holy Spirit in any sense (1 Cor 13:8, Eph 4:11-14). However, we have the completed word of God, which is "Spirit and life" (Jno. 6:63). This is the pool of water which was formed by the "Former Rain" (Joel 2:23), which we must wash ourselves with (Eph 5:26), constantly removing the filth of the flesh. For in so doing, we shall develop a Spiritual, Christ-like way of thinking (The Spirit of Christ - Rom 8:9), within us, which shall yield fruits to the Glory of God (Phil 1:11). Let us then diligently study the Word, that we shall be found "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Tim 2:15), when the Lord comes.

### Verse Twenty Eight

*"And it shall come to pass afterward"*

Although this verse is the beginning of Chapter 3 in the Hebrew Bible, it continues the theme of our previous study. As we have established, the time-period being spoken of in this section of Joel, is the Kingdom Age, when Israel "Shall know that I am Yahweh your God, and none else", and they shall "never be ashamed". Now, "afterward", after their hearts have been turned back to their Father, they shall experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

*"that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sins and your daughters shall prophesy"*

Note, in this context, the phrase, "*all flesh*", does not refer to all the inhabitants of the earth. Those who shall receive the Spirit are defined as "your sons, and your daughters ... your old men ... your young men". Thus, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will be limited to the house of Israel, the Children of Zion, (v 23) (See Ezek 21:4,5, where the phrase "All flesh" is again used in a limited sense, clearly referring to all the inhabitants of Israel only. This outpouring is again referred to in Ezekiel 39, following the overthrow of the Northern Confederacy (Ezek 38:15, Cp Joel 2:20): "Then shall they know that I am Yahweh their God ... Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord Yahweh" (v 28,29, See also Is 32:15, 44:3).

The Phrase "*all flesh*" here, is used to indicate that the Spirit will be poured out, not only upon one class in Israel, but upon everyone, whether Male or Female, Young or Old (v 28), Whether Bond or free (v 29). All, regardless of their class, or social standing shall be the recipients of the Spirit.

*"your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions"*

The result of this outpouring will be that "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy", the elders will be given dreams, and the young men visions. In other words, the Purpose of the Bestowal is purely revelatory, that the recipients might see, and speak the word of God (Perfectly in harmony with the use of the Spirit Gifts in the First Century). In Numbers 12:6, the Lord declared: "If there be a prophet among you, I Yahweh will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream". And so, in the Kingdom Age, the Lord shall manifest Himself as in the days of old. As a witness to the nations who fought against Jerusalem, and shall later flow to the House of God to learn of His Ways (Mic 4:2), the Gifts will once again be given to God's People.

### **Verse Twenty Nine**

*"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit"*

There is no respect of persons with God, for "There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:2). And so, all, whether bond or free, all shall receive the same spirit (Cp 1Cor 12:13).

### **Verse Thirty**

*"And I will shew wonders in the heaven and in the earth".*

Now, after giving us a vision of the Coming Age, and a description of the Outpouring of Gods' Holy Spirit in that Age, Joel brings us back to the time before the establishment of the Kingdom, when there shall be great times of trouble upon the earth, before the Day of Christ's Return. The word rendered "Wonders" can also mean "Sign", and is alluded to by the Lord himself in Luke 21: "And there shall be signs in the Sun and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the earth; distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring" (Note revised punctuation, Cp v 25, see also v 11). These things, Joel tells us occur before the "great and terrible Day of Yahweh" (Joel 2:31), and the Lord speaks of these things occurring before His Return (Luke 21:27) to the World. Thus, before that day, there is to be a great shaking of the Political Universe, when there shall be a "time of trouble such as there never was" (Dan 12:1). However, for the saints, who "lift up their heads", when they see the beginning of those signs, (v 28), there shall be deliverance, as they are taken away for Judgement, and to unite with their Lord, "until the indignation be overpast" (Is 26:20).

*"Blood and Fire, and Pillars of Smoke"*

The Kingdom of God cannot be established peaceably, for the flesh will not willingly submit to a power which is contrary to all its ways. Blood shall be shed, "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven ... the sword of Yahweh is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, ... for Yahweh hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (Is 34:6). And as Ezekiel testified: "I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood" (Ezek 38:32). There shall be great destruction, for "Yahweh will come with fire" (Is 66:15 Cp. Jer 4:4), and the invading Nations shall be destroyed with the fire of his wrath (Ezek 38:19,22).

As a result of this great destruction of fire, there shall be pillars, or columns of smoke ascending to heaven. Speaking of this destructive aspect of the Multitudinous Christ, Solomon asks, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?" (Song 3:6). And so, to an onlooker watching the March of the Rainbow Angel to Jerusalem, they will see the destroying Pillar of Smoke, as a sign of the destruction of God, to be followed by a restoration, when the Land shall be like the garden of Eden.

### **Verse Thirty One**

*"The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of Yahweh come"*

(See notes on v 10, Cp Rev 6:12). Before the Day of Yahweh comes, the powers of the political heavens shall be shaken, and the religious systems shall suffer. As the Lord said: "The Sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Mat 24:29). The word translated "Before" = "Face". It is before the face of that great day when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise (Mal 4:2, Num 24:17), that the luminaries of the Kingdoms of Men shall fade, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory".

So it is, that, before the Lord returns in His Glory, there shall be great scenes of destruction upon the earth. This is the commencement of the 7<sup>th</sup> Vial of Rev 16:17, which Daniel describes as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan 12:1), at the commencement of which, the Saints will be taken for Judgement (Rev 16:15), and hidden "until the indignation be overpast" (Is 26:20). Then shall they march forward as Yahweh Tzavaoth to avenge His People, and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

### **Verse Thirty Two**

*"And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of Yahweh shall be delivered".*

"Deliver" = "Escape". These words are quoted in Romans 10, to describe the universal preaching of the Gospel: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom 10:12,13). The thrust of Pauls' inspired argument here, is that the Jews who sought for righteousness by obedience of the Law rejected the righteousness which is of faith in Christ Jesus, and so the way was opened to the Gentiles. But yet, a remnant did respond, "even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (11:5). likewise, in the age to come, there shall be a "remnant whom Yahweh shall call", which shall be saved (Joel 2:32).

Israel shall be brought to repentance by the work of Elijah (Mal 4:5), and the declaration of Yahweh's greatness through His Judgements. In that day, He has declared that the remnant "Shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, Yahweh is my God" (Zech 13:9). But in that day, the Gentile nations also will be given the opportunity to escape the judgements to come, for as the Gospel is preached (Is 52:7), all nations will be given opportunity to accept the Rulership of the Lord (Such as Tarshish, for example (Ps 72:10), and so escape.

*"For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Yahweh hath said, and in the remnant whom Yahweh shall call"*

"Deliverance" = "Escaping". Rotherham translates this, "*A delivered remnant*". This is in marked contrast to the Babylonian invasion of 2:3, of which it was said, "nothing shall escape them". Obadiah also speaks of this: "But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (Ob 17). This deliverance from Jacobs time of trouble shall be effected by the Lord Jesus Christ and the Saints, as Zechariah describes: " Then shall Yahweh go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle". In that day, the oppressor shall be destroyed, and there shall be deliverance upon Mount Zion and in Jerusalem for God's People (Zech 14:3).

## Joel 2:28-32 as Cited in Acts 2

In Acts 2, we have the account of how at the feast of Pentecost, when all the disciples were together in the same place, there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "And suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting ... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2-4). The consequence of this was that they all "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance", and "every man heard them speak in his own language" (v 4,6). This caused great amazement amongst those standing by. Some in confusion said, "What meaneth this?" But "Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine" (V 12,13). Then Peter arose, to give an explanation of this phenomena, and said, " ... these are not drunken, as ye suppose ... but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ... " (v 15, 16), and then he proceeds to give the quotation from the passage under consideration.

Thus, we know for a surety that these words in Joel, as well of speaking of an event which shall take place in the Kingdom Age, has a fulfilment during the time of the 1st Century brethren. In order to ascertain its' significance in those days, we shall examine the quotation as presented by the Spirit through Peter, observing any changes that are made.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams".

Here, as we have seen, the words of Joel are quoted, and applied to the current outpouring at Pentecost. As this occurred before the establishment of the Kingdom, the word "Afterward" is divinely altered to "in the last days", and the words "Saith God" are inserted, to emphasise the fact that Joel was not speaking his own words, making his own predictions, but was being moved by the Holy Spirit to speak. The "last days" spoken of here, are what bro. Thomas styles, "the Last days of Judahs' commonwealth", (Cp Heb 1:2), the final days before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Before that great day, the Spirit was poured out as a sign for the Jews to repent.

*"And on my servants and on my handmaids, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy".*

This time, it is the Lords' servants, and the Lords' handmaids who should receive the Spirit, that is, those who hearkened to the preaching of the Gospel. These were no longer servants of Sin, but were servants of God, having given themselves over to him (Rom 6:16-18). Note also, the purpose of the gifts were again purely revelatory, so that the Lord could reveal His word to all flesh.

"And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable Day of the Lord come."

The great and notable day of the Lord, was the day when the lord was to Judge his people at the hands of the Roman army. In that day, Jesus said, "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world' to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Mat 24:21, Cp Dan 12:1, Joel 2:2), as the political heavens and earth were to suffer under the judgements of God.

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved".

Joel continues, "For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance". The apostle does not quote this, for in AD 70, there was no "deliverance", or "escaping" in Jerusalem, Yahweh was not to fight for His people, all were to be destroyed. However, there was a hope of salvation, for whoever hearkened to the preaching of the Gospel (Rom 10:13), and who hearkened to the words of Jesus would be saved eter-

nally, being given the hope of Life everlasting, and also the opportunity to "Flee to the mountains" (Mat 24:10), and escape the coming destruction.

So then, we have seen that there was two outpourings of God's Holy Spirit, Firstly during the First century, secondly in the Coming age, to as many as the Lord called (Acts 2:39, Joel 2:32). We are living in the intervening period in between. That is to say, we are not the recipients of the Holy Spirit today, rather, we have the privilege of possessing the completed Word of God (1Cor 12:10). The First Century believers were given a taste of the powers of the World to come (Heb 6:5), but for our part, we must meditate upon the Spirit Word of God, that we might have the Mind of Christ, the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9) created in us, that so calling upon the Name of the Lord, when that great Day comes, we shall find deliverance.

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Three**

### **Verses One to Eight**

## INTRODUCTION

In our Studies of Joel so far, we have been considering things both Past and Future. We have looked at the Day of Yahweh which was to come upon the Children of Judah at the hands of the Babylonian, we have seen a description of the destruction of Gog, and we have considered the Glorious Blessings of the Age to come. Now, in the beginning of this Chapter of Joel, we consider things present.

It is not necessary for us to speak in terms of Bible Prophecy being fulfilled in the last Century, or even in our own life times. No longer is it necessary for us to even speak in terms of the last Decade, but in the last few years, and the very days in which we live.

The first few verses of Joel 3 are being fulfilled in our own day. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Jews have been pouring back into their land, and this is still on-going. One only has to read the pages of "Elpis Israel" to see how Bro. Thomas yearned to see the days in which we live, for he recognised that the Restoration of Israel would Herald the Return of our Lord. But Joel tells us that the Lord promised He would also "bring again the captivity of Jerusalem". These words have not yet been fulfilled, for Jerusalem is still partially being trodden down of the Gentiles. Thus, it would appear that in the near future, Jerusalem shall be liberated, and be wholly placed under Jewish dominion.

Verse 2 describes how God will Gather all nations together, for judgement. Revelation 16 also describes this gathering, telling us that the frog-like spirit of Democracy should "Gather them to the battle of that great Day of God Almighty". In our own day, we can see the beginning of this process, as nations across the globe are seeking peace, and to unite together upon the basis of Democracy. The next event in Rev 16 is the Return of Christ: "Behold, I come as a thief". The Signs are in abundance, and we are greatly blessed indeed to be living in these last days. Let us therefore, "lift up our heads", and watch, that we might be awake during the darkness of this Gentile night, that when the "thief" comes to take those things which are valuable to him, we might be ready to go. Let us prepare, that when He comes, we might be found waiting.

## JOEL CHAPTER THREE

### Verse One

*"For behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem"*

The whole prophecy was originally given to the Children of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, after the destruction of Israel, but immediately before Judah's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. After speaking of the terrible destruction which was immanent, and then the blessings of the Kingdom in Chapter 2, this verse gave a ray of hope to the faithful remnant, that there would be a restoration. The Lord Jesus Christ prophesied, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Joel speaks of that time when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem shall be "brought again". That is, when Jerusalem shall no longer be under Gentile dominion, but in Jewish hands. This is a constant theme running throughout the Scriptures, that the Jews would be re-gathered.

These words are being fulfilled before our very eyes. From the time when the State of Israel was established in 1948, Jews from all over the world have been pouring back into the land. But Jerusalem at present is still partly trodden down of the Gentiles". We only have to think of the great idolatrous abomination of the "Dome of the Rock" sited in the very place of the Temple of Yahweh, where He had placed His Name, to see that not all Jerusalem is in Jewish hands. Yet, both the Lord Jesus Christ, and Joel tells us that it will be so, and that Jerusalem will once more fall to the Jews before the great invasion.

### Verse Two

*"I will also gather all nations"*

This speaks of that great day, when Yahweh has declared, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished", as the Gogian confederacy is drawn by the divinely placed "hooks" (Ezek 38:4), to judge His rebellious people. Gog "is a proud man ... who enlargeth his desire as hell, and as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all nations", as he develops his great confederacy, ignorant that the gathering is not of his own will, but that of God's (Hab 2:5). It is His "determination to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation" (Zeph 3:8), to shew them the power of his glory (Is 66:18). This is the ultimate purpose of the gathering, that all flesh might see His Glory.

Revelation 16 speaks of this. Referring to the unclean Spirits like frogs coming from "the mouth of the dragon (Russia), and out of the mouth of the beast (Western Europe) and out of the mouth of the false prophet (the Papacy)", the record tells us, "They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty". The next verse describe Christ's Return, and the events which follow: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew Tongue Armageddon".

What these verses tell us, then, is that the Lord Jesus Christ shall return before the gathering of all nations to Armageddon, which Joel describes as "the Valley of Jehoshaphat". But, before the Lord Jesus Christ returns, there shall be a preliminary gathering, caused by the Spirit of Democracy being spoken by Russia, Europe, and the Pope. If we really are living in the days before Christ's Return, we should see this gathering, throughout "the whole world". As the Lord has spoken, so has it come to pass. In our own day, we see great calls for nations to join, and gather together as one. Particularly in Europe, with recent talks of "the United States of Europe", but also amongst other countries, over the last decade or so, alliances have been made everywhere. Truly, there is a uniting of nations, a gathering of which there has

never been the like. Let us, then, "lift up our heads", and ensure that we are clothed with the garments of salvation, that we may be ready when our Lord comes.

*"And will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat"*

(Cp verse 12). We shall look at this in more detail in the next study, if the Lord will, but suffice it to say for the time being, that the word "Jeho-shaphat" literally means, "The Judgement of Yahweh", and so is descriptive of the purpose for which the nations are to be drawn to this place.

*"And will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel"*

"Plead" = "Shaphat", meaning "to Judge", and is a play on the word "Jeho-shaphat" quoted above. This is the Day when Yahweh Tzavaoth shall "judge the world in righteousness (Ps 9:8, Cp Acts 17:3), by the One who has been "given authority to execute judgement", even the Lord Jesus Christ (Jno 5:27). Here, Israel is styled, "My heritage" (Cp 2:19), which he abhorred (Ps 106:40), and Polluted (Is 47:6), because of their transgressions. But yet, in the Kingdom Age, Israel shall be restored, and the Heathen shall be Christ's Heritage, given to him upon his request (Ps 2:8).

This "pleading", or "Judging" of the invading forces is described in Ezek 38:22, "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood. And I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, and overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone". In that day, "By fire and by the sword will Yahweh plead with all flesh: and the slain of Yahweh shall be many (Is 66:16), for "they shall be as though they had not been", as every trace is destroyed, and buried in the valley of Hamon-Gog (Ezek 39:11).

*"whom they have scattered among the nations"*

This is the first charge held against the Gogian confederacy. They have scattered Yahweh's people among the nations. This is not speaking about the Babylonian, or Roman scattering, for this charge is specifically brought against Gog. The Lord shall hold Gog responsible only for his own atrocities, as many though they be. This is in harmony with Zechariah's testimony that "half the city shall go forth into captivity", (Zech 14:2). There will be another scattering when the captives shall be carried away by the Gogian army, when the Final Restoration shall be effected by the Lord Jesus Christ.

*"And parted my land"*

Such shall be the arrogance of the invaders, that having taken control of the land of Israel, the participating nations shall seek to part, or "divide" God's Land amongst themselves. Yet, they shall be "broken without hand" (Dan 8:25), as they are defeated by the Rainbow Angel.

### **Verse Three**

*"And they have cast lots for my people"*

The Babylonians treated the people of Assyria in this way, for Nahum testifies: "her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honourable men" (Nah 3:10). And so, the casting of lots for the desirable members of God's people, (Possibly for use for Slave Labour?) shall be one of Gog's atrocities.

*"and have given a boy for an harlot, and have sold a girl for wine, that they might drink."*

Having cast lots, and divided the people amongst themselves, the soldiers shall trade them with each other. Those who desire a prostitute shall give a young lad in exchange. Also, young girls shall be traded for wine. What terrible atrocities shall be committed against the People of Yahweh. Yet, when they turn

to Him, He shall go forth as a Man of War, and totally "remove afar off" (2:20) the abomination, never to rise again. In that day, Zechariah tells us, "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

*"that they might drink"*

Habakkuk describes Gog as one who "transgresseth by wine" (Hab 2:5). So just as Belshazzar held a drunken feast to the Pagan gods (Dan 5), so drunkenness shall be in the Russian camp before it's destruction. It would appear from these verses that there shall be time after the invasion for the soldiers to indulge themselves in such abominable acts, exalting themselves against the Lord. Yet the Lord shall not tarry, and shall avenge His people, and cause all nations to drink out of the cup of His fury (Ps 75:8).

#### **Verse Four**

*"Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?"*

Coasts = Borders. Palestine = "the land of the Philistines". The Philistines were one of the main aggressors of Israel in days gone by, and the area that they occupied included the plain between Gaza and Joppa, east of the Mediterranean. The modern-day Philistines, we believe are the Palestinians, who inhabit modern-day Gaza, which is on the coast of Israel. Tyre and Zidon refer to areas in what is now known as Lebanon. Thus the Palestinians, and the inhabitants of Lebanon shall join in the destruction. Psalm 83 also speaks of this: "they have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation ... for they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishamaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes, Gebel and Ammon, and Amalek: the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them" (v 5-8). So, the Philistines, or Palestinians and the inhabitants of Tyre, or Lebanon shall join in the Arab confederacy of Israel. That these words apply to days yet future is evident from verse 18: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Yahweh, art the most high over all the earth". This can surely only apply to the Kingdom Age.

It would appear that when the Russian Invasion takes place, the Arabs shall cash in in Israel's weakness, as Edom did when Babylon overthrew Israel previously (Obad 11-13).

*"Will ye render me a recompense? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head."*

The Palestinians shall recompense Yahweh for His work in "bringing again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem" by committing great atrocities against his people. Rather than recognising the greater might of the Lord Almighty, they shall show the arrogance of Tyre of old (Ezek 28), and recompense, or "reward" Him with the atrocities listed in the next few verses. Notice here, how these acts against God's people are considered as acts against God Himself.

Yet, the Lord shall avenge His People speedily, and "according to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies" (Is 59:18). Gog, and the 10 Arab nations listed in Psalm 83 shall have the wicked device which they devised against the Jews returned upon their own head, as did Haman the Agagite, and his 10 sons (Est 9:7-10,25).

#### **Verse Five**

*"Because ye have taken my silver and my gold"*

Now, Yahweh lists the atrocities which Tyre, Sidon and the Coasts of Palestine are guilty of. The taking of Silver and Gold which belongs to God is a trait common to the invaders of Israel. Ben-hadad, the King of Assyria, (1Kings 20:5), Hazael, King of Syria (2Kings 12:18), Shalmaneser, King of Assyria

(2Kings 18:14,15), and Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:13) were all guilty of this crime. And the latter-day Assyrian (Mic 5:5) shall be equally guilty. They shall descend on Israel to "take a spoil" (Ezek 38:12), and the Arabs shall lay hands on their substance as did Edom in the days of old (Ob 13).

*"And have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things"*

And so, the plunderers shall carry away into their temples those things that are "pleasant", or "desirable" to God. But what things are desirable to God? Does the Almighty desire Silver and Gold? Surely not. The Lord desires people, people who serve Him in Spirit and Truth, to the Glory of His Name. And so, in carrying away His people, the invaders remove Yahweh's Silver and Gold, His "Special treasure" (Mal 3:17). Yet, when the Lord restores the Kingdom to Israel, the Lord shall "shake all nations", and his desirable things out "of all nations" (Rev 7:9), shall return, and God's House shall be filled with glory (Hag 2:7). In that day, Yahweh shall say, "the Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine", and it shall never be removed (Hag 2:8).

### **Verse Six**

*"The children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem"*

As we have seen, the prophecy was originally given to Judah, during the time of Zedekiah's rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, to warn them of the coming destruction. But in this Chapter, Joel also describes events beyond the Babylonian desolation, when Yahweh would "bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem". This told the Jews that the restoration was not to be centred around Samaria, and the kingdom of Israel, but Judah, and Jerusalem, where the Lord has declared that He will place His Name.

Samaria was established as the Centre of Israel in rebellion to Yahweh, but Jerusalem is where the Lord made a covenant with His servant David, (2 Sam 7:5-17), that his throne would be established for ever, being occupied by his son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32). And so, this was to be the Centre of the restoration, as we see today.

*"have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border"*

*Grecians = "Sons of Javan"*. The Greeks, or Sons of Javan are listed in Ezekiel 27 as trading in Slaves with Tyre: "Javan, Tubal and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market" . This trade shall once again be established in the time of Jacob's trouble. But when the Lord comes, it shall be said to Lebanon, "open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars", and those that sell Gods people and say, "blessed be Yahweh, for I am rich" shall suffer under the judgements of God (Zech 11:1,5).

The Purpose of removing the Jews far away has been the Palestinian objective since before the formation of the P.L.O. Let us not be beguiled by the current talks of Peace, for when shall cry "Peace and safety" it shall be in the face of "Sudden destruction", (1Thess 5:2,3).

### **Verse Seven**

*"Behold, I will raise them out of the place wether ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head"*.

In this time of great trouble, the Jews shall once more turn to God, and he shall regather them again, "For Yahweh will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land". In that day, the Grecians who purchased them shall be judged, "When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece". Those that devoured Jacob shall be devoured (Jer 30:16), and Jerusalem "which hast drunk at the hand of Yahweh the cup of

His fury" shall "Awake", and the Cup shall be given into "the hand of them that afflict thee" (Is 51:17).

### **Verse Eight**

*"And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the Children of Judah"*

Lebanon and the Palestinians shall be judged according to their deeds, as they did against the Lord's people, so it shall be done unto them. Then, "the sons of them that afflicted" Judah shall bow before them (Is 60:14), "and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Yahweh for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors" (Is 14:2).

*"and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people afar off, for Yahweh hath spoken it"*

And so, those who sought to remove the children of Judah afar off (v 16) shall themselves be removed afar off. "Sabeans" = descendants of "Sheba". The Sabeans, we are told are "Afar off". The Lord Jesus Christ calls the Queen of Sheba, the Queen of the South (Mat 12:42). If we go "afar off" south from Israel, we get to Saudi-arabia, which is usually identified as Sheba. Sheba is mentioned again in Ezekiel 38 with Britain (Tarshish) as those that oppose the Northern confederacy, "Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil?" (Ezek 38:13). And Psalm 72 tells us that they will accept the Lord Jesus Christ, when he Returns: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all Kings shall fall down before Him" (Ps 72:11). The thing shall surely come to pass, for "Yahweh hath spoken it", and those who will fight against God's people shall have their recompense brought upon their own head.

# **AN EXPOSITION OF JOEL**

## **Chapter Three**

### **Verses Nine to Fifteen**

## INTRODUCTION

In the last study, we looked at the gathering of the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and some of the atrocities which shall be committed by the Northern Power. Although the Invader is said to do "great things" (2:20), Yahweh shall do even greater things (2:21), and bring about the total destruction of the United Confederacy of Nations. This is what we are to consider in this study, how Yahweh shall bring all nations together into the Valley of Threshing for Judgement.

What we have described for us in these verses, is how, at a time when the armies of the nations are asleep (3:9), having been lulled into a state of complacency by the "Peace and Safety" cry of 1 Thes 5, they shall be awakened by a cry to "Prepare war", for sudden destruction is immanent. They shall assemble themselves round Jerusalem, where the Lord shall sit (v 12), to Judge them by the Man He has Appointed. Their fruits of iniquity shall be har-vested, and destroyed, as the Kingdom of God shall be established, and the blessing of the Kingdom Age will be spread abroad the whole earth.

But whilst these words speak of the days immediately prior to the establish-ment of the Kingdom of God, we must not lose sight of the relevance of this prophecy to the Jews to whom Joel was speaking. Judah and Jerusalem were faced with a great invasion by the Babylonian Army, and the day of destruction was immanent. Yet, to those who chose to hear the words of Yahweh through His Prophets, these words contained great hope. They speak of how, although there was a destruction immanent, and there will be one yet future, following a period of restoration, the time would surely come when the enemy will be destroyed, and Yahweh shall go forth as a Great Multitude to redeem His people.

The same points of exhortation apply to us. We are living in the last days, when the Lord has decreed there shall be "sudden destruction" (1Thes 5:3). Yet, when that day comes, if we are found faithful, we shall escape the coming indignation of the Lord upon the whole earth, (Is 26:20). Therefore, we must not be found as part of the world, when Christ comes, lest we be destroyed with it. We must be separate, and prepare, lest that day come upon us unawares.

## Verse Nine

*"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war"*

The word "Prepare" = Sanctify, as the margin indicates. However, the claims of some that this refers to a "holy war", proclaimed by the Arabs upon Israel, is unfounded. Verse 11 speaks of the proclamation to all nations to "assemble yourselves, and come ... and gather yourselves round about". These words are clearly not directed to the Arab nations who are already round about Israel, but to those who need to "gather themselves together" to encamp against it. These are the "all nations" of Joel 3:2, and Zech 14:2. Moreover, both Zech 14:1, and Ezek 38:12,13 both show that the purpose of the war, is not so much a religious conflict, but to "take a spoil". (See also enclosed study on the events surrounding Armageddon. The phrase, "Sanctify war", is nevertheless important. This verse tells us that the war is not any war between two parties over internal disputes, but it is a Special war, directed by God (2:11, 25), for His Purpose. The same phrase is used in Jeremiah 6: "Prepare ye war against her: arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out. Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces" (v 4-5). This primarily speaks of the Babylonian desolation of Judah, an invasion which was not brought about as a "holy war", or religious conflict by the Babylonians, but was a war waged by God, through the unseen Angelic intervention, to judge His people.

*"Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up"*

And so, the call is made to the nations to arouse their armies, and prepare for war. The phrase, "Wake up", implying that the armies were previously asleep is appropriate to our day. During this age when "peace and safety" is being proclaimed, there are great cut-backs in the armed forces, and the nations are beginning to sink into complacency. But when the call comes to "awake", there will need to be a massive re-armament campaign (rather like that at the beginning of the 2nd World War), as described in Verse 10, involving a rapid expansion of the armed forces, possibly through conscription, that they might draw near to Judgement.

## Verse Ten

*"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears"*

Contrasting words are to be found in Is 2:4, and Mic 4:3, speaking of life in the Kingdom Age: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". These words have been taken by the UN as their objective. Supposing that it can achieve this without God, the UN has dismally failed. One only has to consider the dramatic events in the former Yugoslavia to see this. Yet, there shall be a short-lived "peace", which shall bring the whole world into a state of sleep. And so, when the "sudden destruction" comes, there shall be a massive re-armament campaign on a world wide scale. Interestingly, following the end of the "cold war", with cut backs in arms, some of the factories in Russia which were used to manufacture arms are now being used to make hi-tech agricultural machinery. We can easily see how, when the proclamation for war comes, the situation shall be reversed, and weapons made on a large scale, as the world prepares for war.

*"Let the weak say, I am strong"*

Strong = "mighty", as in Verse 9. And so, there shall be found weak nations claiming strength in arrogance. The arrival of Nuclear Weapons to increasing numbers of countries is making this possible. Nations, such as France, who were considered weak possess newly found strength. This was the arrogance of Moab, for they said, "We are mighty and strong men for the war" (Jer 48:14), as they went to the slaughter. Likewise, these nations claim strength, as they march toward the valley of Jehoshaphat, to the "valley of threshing".

## Verse Eleven

*"Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about".*

(Cp verse 2). Again, this describes the great evil which shall come from the north, as they come and "pitch their tents against her round about" (Jer 6:3, cp 25:11). Ezekiel describes this: "thou shalt ascend, and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee" (38:9).

*"thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Yahweh"*

The invading army is said to "come up" (Ezek 38:9,16, Joel 3:9), as they come against Jerusalem. Yet Yahweh's Mighty Ones shall "come down" with destructive impact, as the conglomerate stone strikes the image on it's feet (Dan 2:34), to destroy the kingdoms of men. When the invading armies have gathered against God's people, they shall call to Him for deliverance, then shall he "go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech 14:2).

## Verse Twelve

*"Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat".*

This repeats the call of verse 9, for the slumbering nations to wake up, to be judged in Israel. The "valley of Jehoshaphat" is referred to in verse 2 also, being descriptive of the place where the Russian Confederacy is to be judged. As we have seen, the name "Jehoshaphat" literally means, "The Judgement of Yahweh". Thus, this place is called, "the valley of the Judgement of Yahweh", being expressive of the purpose which shall be accomplished there. But the use of the name, "Jehoshaphat" provides us with a link to 2Chronicles 20, where the children of Israel witnesses the Judgement of Yahweh, (As we saw when we considered Joel 2).

Verse 1 of 2 Chron 20 tells us the "the Children of Moab, and the Children of Ammon, and with them other besides the Ammonites came against Jehoshaphat to battle". Being forbidden by the Law (Deut 2:19,9) to fight against them, Jehoshaphat feared, and "proc-laimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together" to the House of Yahweh (exactly as Joel exhorted the people to do (Joel 1:14, 2:15)) to cry to their God. Then, the Spirit came upon one of the sons of Asaph, who prophesied: "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of Yahweh with you, O Judah, and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them; Yahweh will be with you" (v 17). And so, early in the morning, the people went out, being led by the singers, saying "praise Yahweh; for his mercy endureth for ever". And when they began to sing and to praise, Yahweh set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten (v 21-22). Here, the people were helpless, as they were faced with a great confederacy, but when they turned to God, praising the beauty of Holiness, Yahweh fought for His people, without them even having to lift a sword. This will be reflected in the Day of Judgement which is to come, for the Jews, being faced with a great army which they can't fight against shall turn to their God, and he shall fight for them, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Saints.

*"For there will I sit to judge the heathen round about"*

"The heathen", here, are those who have gathered themselves "round about", as described in Verse 11. Once all nations have been gathered together as the Lord's footstool (Ps 110:1), He shall sit to Judge them in Righteousness, as it is written, the Lord shall prepare "his throne for judgement, and he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness" (Ps 9:7-8). Then, when the Lord has "executed judgements upon all those that despise them round about them", they shall "dwell safely ... and shall build houses, and plant vineyards" (Ezek 28:26).

## Verse Thirteen

*"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe"*

The word for "Sickle" appears in only one other place, Jer 50:16: "Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword, they shall turn everyone to his people, and they shall flee everyone to his own land". Babylon had sown the seed of wickedness (Cp Job 4:8), but the Lord was to prevent any more wickedness to be sown, and deprive her from the fruits of iniquity. Similarly, in the latter part of this verse, Joel tells us that the "wickedness" of the nations "is great", but the time will come when they will no longer be able to reap the fruits thereof, for the wicked shall be cut down.

The "harvest" here, is speaking of Corn, or Barley, whereas the last part of this verse speaks in terms of a vintage of wine, from grapes. The same word is used in 1:11, "Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen, ... for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished". So then, in this verse which we are considering, the heathen are likened to sheaves of wheat, or barley, which, as we have seen, are to be gathered together (v 2,11). This theme is also picked out in Micah 4: "now also many nations are gathered against thee, ... but they know not the thoughts of Yahweh, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor" (v 11-12). Joel calls this floor, "the Valley of Jehoshaphat", and in verse 14, "the Valley of Threshing". So, they are gathered there to be threshed in Judgement (See study on "The events surrounding Armageddon").

Revelation 14 also speaks of this harvest, echoing the language of Joel: "and I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud, one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand, a sharp sickle. And another Angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Rev 14:14-16). Here, John sees a symbolic description of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Saints, (a cloud (Heb 12:1), of saints, distilled from the sea of nations, shining with the whiteness of Righteousness), reaping the harvest of the earth, that it might be threshed in Judgement, becoming like "the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away", to be removed without trace (Dan 2:35).

*"Come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great"*

This abundance of wheat and wine, the fruits of unrighteousness contrasts with the abundance of blessings which shall abound in the Kingdom Age, "the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil" (2:24).

So, following the harvest, there is another stage in the process, the vintage. But why is the Judgement spoken of in two stages? The answer is, that after Armageddon, which is the harvest, there will be a rebellion, led by the Catholic Harlot against the Lord Jesus Christ (see the study, "The Events Surrounding the Battle of Armageddon"). Psalm 2 speaks of this: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (v 3). This rebellion is spoken of in Revelation 17:14, and 19:19 in its various stages, and the overthrow of these nations is described in terms of "the winepress of the fierceness of Almighty God" (19:15).

Again, Rev 14 speaks of this: "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress ... " (verses 18-20).

So then, the Harvest of the world is speaking of the gathering, and subsequent destruction of nations at Armageddon, and the Vintage refers to the Judgement of the rest of the nations, "without the city", including those who lead the rebellion against Christ.

### **Verse Fourteen**

*"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the Day of Yahweh is near in the valley of decision."*

The word "decision" is "threshing" in the Hebrew, "the Valley of Threshing", here referring to the place in the Hebrew Tongue, Armageddon (a heap of sheaves in a valley for judgement), the threshingfloor of God, where the nations shall be judged. The word for "multitudes", is the Hebrew, "Hamonim". This is again used in Ezekiel 39, speaking of the destruction of Gog: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it the valley of Hamon-gog" (marg. The multitude of Gog v 11). The multitudes which shall be gathered into the valley of threshing, then, are the multitudes of Gog, which shall meet their end there.

### **Verse Fifteen**

*"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining"*

(see note on 2:10). The Lord Jesus Christ alludes to this verse in Mat 24:29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken". This describes how the "light" of the political heavens shall be darkened, the Rulership and Ecclesiastical systems of the world shall fall, and the whole earth shall be plunged into darkness, which shall only be broken with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, whose beams shall fill the whole earth with glory.

### **Verse Sixteen**

*"Yahweh also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem: and the heavens and the earth shall shake"*

Similar words are to be found in the opening Chapter of Amos: "And he said, Yahweh will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither" (Am 1:2). Here, these words describe the judgements which Yahweh was to bring upon Israel, as He uttered His Voice from before His Army (Joel 2:11), from His Holy Mount, to the Babylonians. But Joel speaks of how the Lord shall roar out of Zion against those who seek its destruction. Jeremiah 25:30 also describes the roaring of Yahweh: "Yahweh shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation (i.e. Heaven - Deut 26:15, 2Chron. 30:27); he shall mightily roar upon his habitation (i.e. Jerusalem - Is 33:20, Jer 50:19). Thus, the Lord shall firstly roar from heaven in his anger against His rebellious people, in bringing the Gogian host against them. Then, Jeremiah continues: "he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for Yahweh hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith Yahweh" (v 30-31). So, the Lord shall roar firstly upon His people, and then upon all flesh, causing great convulsions within the political heavens and earth of the whole world. In that day, when the heathen shall rage, Yahweh shall utter "his voice", and the earth shall melt (Ps 46:6), that is, peoples shall be subdued under him (see Psalm 29:1-11). But in that great Age of Glory that shall follow the Judgements, the voice of Yahweh shall still be heard out of His Holy Place, for "out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem" (Is 2:3), and all shall hear the Word of God.

*"But Yahweh will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the Children of Israel".*

The word for "hope", literally means, "refuge". Being faced with an oncoming storm, (Ezek 38:9), Yahweh shall be a refuge (Is 25:4) to his people, for in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, there shall be deliverance to all those that call upon the Name of Yahweh (Joel 2:32). In that day, when God is in the midst of her (Joel 2:27, 3:17, Ps 46:5), Jerusalem shall declare, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Ps 46:1,2), and the Lord shall be exalted in all the earth.

### **Verse Seventeen**

*"So shall ye know that I am Yahweh your God".*

Thus, the judgements which shall be carried out upon the Gogian host, with the subsequent deliverance and strengthening of God's people will be the means by which He shall make himself known to the Jews in the land (Cp 2:27). But it will not only be the Jews who will know Yahweh, for the knowledge of His glory shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea (Flab 2:14) Ezekiel tells us, that through the judgements, "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself: and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Yahweh" (38:23).

*"Dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain"*

In addition to knowing their God both by Name, and the more intimate sense of understanding, and being obedient to His Ways (John 17:3), the Jews shall know that Yahweh shall dwell in the midst of them (2:27), in Zion, the mountain of His Holiness. In the Kingdom Age, Zion shall be "the joy of the whole earth" (Ps 48:2), where Yahweh's anointed shall be enthroned (Ps 2:6, Mic 4:7), and the Lord shall once more dwell amongst His people (Ezek 43:7). In that day, "Jerusalem shall be called a city of Truth; and the mountain of Yahweh of hosts, the holy mountain" (Zech 8:3). In that day, far from being a rallying point in time of war (Joel 2:1), this mountain shall be a mountain of peace, for Yahweh has decreed, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain", but rather, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat" (Is 65:25).

*"Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more"*

The "city of truth" shall be known as "Yahweh Shammah", or, "Yahweh is there", and shall once again be a city of holiness, where the Lord has chosen to place His Name. No longer shall Jerusalem be a place which strangers pass through on their journeyings to somewhere else, but it shall be the centre of holiness. It will be the capital of the whole world, with many people, not merely passing through, but going there with a clear purpose: "At that time, they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Yahweh, and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem" (Jer 3:17). Those nations will surrender obedience to the Lord as they pass through the Land of Holiness, as Nahum declared, "the wicked shall no longer pass through thee" (Na 1:15), and Isaiah "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised, and the unclean" (Is 52:1).

### **Verse Eighteen**

*"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine"*

"That day" referred to, is of course, "the day of Yahweh", following the darkness of the Gentile night, when the Judgements have been performed. "In that day" is a phrase used 14 times in Zech 12-14, and the reader is directed to those passages to behold the wondrous things which shall take place then. Joel tells us that the "mountains shall drop down new wine". Amos also describes this: "Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt" (9:13). This describes

the abundance of blessings which shall be bestowed upon the mountains of Israel in the Kingdom Age. Ezekiel 36 tells us how the mountains shall "shoot forth branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel (v 8). Thus, there shall be a great abundance of wine produced, so much, that mountains are said to flow with it. Compare this picture of prosperity with 1:10.

*"and the hills shall flow with milk"*

Not only shall there be a great abundance of wine, but there shall be a great abundance of milk, so much so, that in a figure, the hills are said to flow with it (cp Ex 3:8,17, 13:5). Milk itself is an appropriate symbol of prosperity, for in order for milk to be produced, the "pastures of the wilderness" need to "spring" (2:22), that the cattle might be able to feed. And in order for the grass to grow, there is need of rain - the former and latter rain of 2:23.

But milk and wine are also symbolic of the Word of God. Milk represents the nourishment provided to babes in Christ (Heb 5:12-14, Is 28:9), and wine (Mat 9:17), speaks of the gladness and joy which comes from the word (Ps 104:15). Thus, in the Kingdom Age, there shall be an abundance of God's Word upon the mountains, as it is written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth" (Is 52:7).

*"And all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters"*

This contrasts with 1:20, "the beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness". There shall be a great abundance of water flowing through the land, providing nourishment both to man and beast. But, water also speaks of the Word of God (Eph 5:26), and its cleansing effects, as it washes away the filthiness of the fleshly way of thinking. Thus, in that day, the uncleanness of the land shall be cleansed (Zech 13:1).

*"and a fountain shall come forth of the house of Yahweh, and shall water the valley of Shittim".*

Ezekiel also describes the source of this water: "afterward, he brought me again unto the door of the house; and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar" (Ezek 47:1). These waters then split to form the rivers of Judah, described above: "Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea, which, being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed". Thus, these waters shall heal the dead sea.

Zechariah 14 describes this: "And it shall be that in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the hinder sea, in summer, and in winter shall it be" (Zech 14:8).

"Shittim" is first referred to in Numbers 25:1, when Israel defiled them-selves: "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods". This took place at the instigation of Balsam (Rev 2:14), who followed them from Shittim to Gilgal (Mic 6:5), in the lust for the reward of men. But in the age to come, the fountain of waters from within the House of God shall be a fountain of living waters, giving life to the dead sea, and healing the land of Yahweh's people, for "in that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for uncleanness" (Zech 13:1). (See also Rev 22:1).

## Verse Nineteen

*"Egypt shall be a desolation".*

After considering the glorious blessings and prosperity which shall be in the Kingdom Age, the Prophet once again turns to the destruction of Judah's enemies. There is a contrast between this verse and verse 20; Egypt and Edom shall become desolate, "But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation".

Although we have been emphasising the latter-day fulfilment of this chapter, which is of particular relevance to us, as we saw from our studies of chapters 1 & 2, the prophecy does have a preliminary application in the Babylonian destruction, and subsequent restoration. Being written at the time of Zedekiah's rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, the destruction which was imminent (v 15), was that which was to be brought by the King of Babylon. At that time, Egypt, and Edom were to be judged according to their deeds. Of Egypt, Ezekiel prophesied, "the land of Egypt shall be desolate, and waste: ... I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years" (Ezek. 29:10,11, cp 32:15). Following this period of forty years, there would be a restoration of Egypt, yet it would be a base kingdom, as it is in our day (14-15).

The atrocity of Egypt against God's people is described in 2 Chron 36: "Jehoahaz ... reigned three months in Jerusalem, And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And then the King of Egypt made Eliakim his brother, King over Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt (2 Chron 36:4).

But in the latter-day fulfilment, Egypt shall again suffer. Daniel 11 describes the historical conflict between the two powers north and south of Israel. The king of the South under Ptolemy, included Egypt, Libya, Coele Syria, and Palestine. Thus, it would seem that the latter day king of the South shall also include Egypt, headed by Britain (Tarshish - Ezek. 38:13), which Ezekiel 38, and Dan 11:40-45 shows will oppose the Russian Confederacy. But Daniel 11:42 tells us that the land of Egypt "shall not escape" the Russian advances, and shall be overthrown. And Isaiah 19 describes how Egypt shall be captured and oppressed by the "cruel lord" heading this army. They will then cry out to the Lord, (the Gospel having been preached by the Saints), "and Yahweh shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day" (v21). And so, just as Egypt was made desolate by the Babylonians, so Egypt shall be oppressed by the Russian army. But interestingly, the Roman power is styled "Egypt", in Rev 11:8, bearing the characteristics of ancient Egypt. Thus, it could be that the latter-day Egypt which Joel speaks of is the Roman Catholic power which is to be defeated by Christ, as we have seen.

## Verses Twenty and Twenty One

*"But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for Yahweh dwelleth in Zion"*

In this verse, the perpetuation of Judah and Jerusalem is as a consequence of blood being cleansed (or Purged, as the word can mean). Isaiah likewise foresaw the day "when Yahweh shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. 4:4). The Jews were guilty of slaying the prophets who Yahweh sent to them, and the blood thereof was particularly imputed in the day of Christ (Luke 11:50). But in the day to come, there will be a great cleansing as the Messenger of the Covenant comes "like a refiner's fire, and like fullers soap" (Mal. 3:1-4). Being forgiven, no longer being punished for the innocent blood poured out in their midst Jerusalem will, at the last, be the dwelling place of Yahweh, with His House being constructed there (Isa. 2:2), to be the centre of world rule and worship.

## **THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

As we have seen, this section of Joel deals mainly with the gathering together of all nations against Jerusalem, under the hand of God, and their subsequent judgement. As we are aware that there are a number of different views on the matter, we have considered it appropriate therefore, to include a detailed exposition of the subject. The Purpose of this study is not to oppose the false views which are promulgated on this subject, nor to uphold the so-called "traditional interpretation", but by "comparing Spiritual things with Spirit-ual" (1 Cor 2:14), we shall endeavour to discern what the Lord shall have us know. However, it is in the process of doing this, that we shall find that the view expressed Bro. Thomas in Eureka, and Elpis Israel is endorsed by Scripture, and the other views put forward are inconsistent with clear Bible teaching.

The importance of ascertaining the true interpretation is expressed in Rev. 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame". Here, the Lord Jesus Christ informs us that he shall come as a thief. A thief will usually come at night (cp. 1Thes 5:2), when the occupants of the house are sleeping. Then, swiftly and silently, he takes those things which he considers to be of any value, and leaves as discreetly as he came. In the morning, the occupants awaken to chaos, and only then they realise what is missing. Even so, the Lord Jesus shall come amid the darkness of the Gentile night, to take his Special Treasure (Mal 3:7), as the world is asleep (1 Thes 5:7). Then, in the morning, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise to burn up the wicked as stubble (Mal 4:1), they shall awaken (Joel 3:9,12), to sudden destruction (1 Thes 5:3), and the sudden disappearance of Christ's Brethren (Mat 24:40,41).

But, we are "not of the night, nor of darkness", but "the children of light and the children of the day". Therefore, we must not sleep, as do others (1 Thes 5:5,6), but as the Lord tells us, we must "watch, and be sober", and keep our garments, lest we walk naked. But what must we watch? Surely, the things that are going on around us! In order to prepare for Christ's Return, we must watch the unfolding of Bible Prophecy in the World's affairs, and with a correct interpretation of what lies ahead, we shall be able to discern at what point the Lord shall come, and so prepare. However, if we are not watching, and do not discern the signs of the times, we shall not be ready, and shall be found naked and shamed at his coming. As we have shown, the world shall be at sleep when the Lord comes. Joel elaborates on this, and tells us that the mighty men of war shall also be asleep (3:9), and there shall be a shortage of weapons to deal with the coming destruction (3:10). This describes a state of peace. Armies are at rest, and disarmament agreements have been made, reducing the amount of weapons possessed by each country, (which con-cords with the cry of "peace and safety" of 1 Thes 5:3). So then, just before the battle of Armageddon, it is as a result of peace, that the world has been lulled into a false sense of security, resulting in a state of complacency, and sleep.

But there cannot be peace amongst the nations, and war in Israel. The Middle East must be at peace also. This is what we have described in Ezekiel 38, which speaks of the Jews who are "brought out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them" (v8). And again, the words of the Lord to Gog, "in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?" (v 14). And so, Israel shall dwell safely, and therefore, at peace, immediately before the Gogian invasion. However, is this before, or after Christ has established himself as King in Israel? Undoubtedly before, for the Lord alludes back to this period of peace, in the description of the Kingdom Age in Ezek 39:26: "After that they shall have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid". During this time of peace, then, the Jews are still in their trespasses. This is clearly before they repent and mourn for the Lord Jesus Christ "as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech 12:10). Therefore, in our day, the Jews have returned back to their land in unbelief, as Bro. Thomas envisaged (Elpis Israel, p 441). There are those who suggest that Israel shall only have peace after Christ Returns. This is true, of course, but then what we see in Ezekiel 38 is not true peace, for it is soon broken by the Gogian aggression! As Ezek 28:25,26 shows, true peace shall only be in the land after Christ Returns, but also after all Israel's enemies are destroyed. In our day,

we see the fulfilment of these verses. The word for peace in 1 Thes 5, literally means "to join together", as a basis of peace. In the world today, particularly in Europe, we see precisely that, nations seeking to join together, as a basis of lasting peace. Israel also has made peace treaties with all its bordering nations, (except Syria, where talks are under way), and with all its borders secure, then it will be in safety.

Following this state of peace, the apostle tells us there shall be "sudden destruction". Joel informs us that the sleep shall be disturbed by a cry to the mighty men of war, and a great rearmament campaign (Joel 3:9,10), as all nations awaken to prepare for war. These nations shall then be gathered together against Jerusalem to battle, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle", declared the Lord (Zech 14:2), and in Joel: "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel 3:1). This must refer to the same battle, for both Joel and Zechariah describe this confederacy as being brought by God, and destroyed by God (Joel 3:12,13, Zech 14:3). The description is so similar as to exclude the possibility of two separate conflicts.

Revelation 16 also describes such a gathering together. Firstly, verse 14 describes a gathering together of kings under the influence of the frog-like democratic spirits, or teachings spoken by the dragon (Russia), the beast (Europe), and the false prophet (The Pope). They "go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty". Verse 15 describes the Return of Christ: "Behold, I come as a thief". And verse 16 describes another gathering: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon".

What this tells us, therefore, is that there are to be 2 gatherings; one before Christ's Return, and one after. However, there are important differences between the two. The first is caused by Democracy, and the second by God. The first is a gathering together generally, but the second is a gathering "into a place".

The first gathering is said to be "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty". Bro Thomas renders this, " ... for the war of the great day ... ", and is therefore descriptive of the purpose of the gathering, not the place. Therefore, before the Return of the Lord, there shall be a kind of gathering of the Kings of the Earth (a phrase which, as we shall see is associated with Europe), and of the whole World. We are living in the last days, and we see these words being fulfilled exactly. As we have said, the word rendered "peace" in 2Thes 5 literally means, "to join together". We are currently witnessing the gathering, or joining together of many nations to form a basis of peace. This is not to a specific place, for it is not a literal gathering, but figurative, of how the nations are seeking to unite, and gather themselves as one. That this gathering is upon the basis of Democracy, as described in Revelation, is amply illustrated by the collapse of the Berlin wall, which resulted in the joining together of Germany.

So then, this is the situation in the world described in Bible Prophecy, just before the Return of Christ. As we have demonstrated, this description fits the situation in our day exactly. It behoves us, therefore, to be diligent in the Truth, and prepare for him, that we be not found naked when he comes.

The next event in this sequence is the Return of Christ. Then, there will be the second gathering, into a particular place, styled, Armageddon in Revelation, but by Joel, "the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Jehoshaphat = The Judgement of Yahweh, being descriptive of the purpose). But who are those peoples who shall lead the confederacy?

This brings us back again to Ezekiel 38, but before we examine any of the names, let us first establish that it is speaking of the same invasion as Zech 14, (and therefore Joel 3 and Rev 16).

Ezekiel 38 describes a great confederacy of nations being brought by God (v 4, "I will bring thee forth" cp v 16) against His people. Not recognising the Hand of God in bringing them down, (Mic 4:12), they shall have a natural motive, "to take a spoil, and to take a prey" (v 12, 13). Chapter 39:10 tells us that this purpose is achieved, for the Jews "shall spoil those that spoiled them". When the confederacy has thus taken the spoil, the Lord shall fight against them (v 18-23), and during the Judgements, there shall

be a great earthquake in the land of Israel: "Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel (v 19, the word "shaking" is the same Hebrew as "Earthquake" in Zech 14:5, and Amos 1:1), and the end result is that all the invading nations shall know God, "And they shall know that I am Yahweh" (v 23, Cp Is 66:18).

If we are correct in claiming that this is the same event as described in Zech 14, then all the details must match exactly. When we compare the prophecies, we see an exact match. Verse 2 of Zech 14 describes how it is God who shall gather all nations against Jerusalem. Verse 1 describes the spoil they shall take. Verse 3 describes how Yahweh shall fight against them, and verses 4 & 5 describe the earthquake. And verse 9 describes how Yahweh shall be king over all the earth. As we have said, the details are identical, and we therefore have no reason to doubt that this is the same invasion.

So then, who is it who shall lead this confederacy of "all nations"? Ezekiel 38 provides the answer. There are those who claim that we can't be dogmatic about what the names refer to, as there are a number of ideas. It is for their benefit that we shall prove who this nation is first, and then look at the names later.

Even if we don't understand any of the names, we can show from the description which the Lord has provided us with which country is being referred to. Three times we are told that those who lead the attack on Jerusalem are from "the north parts" (Ezek 38:6,15, 39:12). Now, if we consult any map of the world, and draw a line from Jerusalem due North, surprisingly, we only go through 2 countries before we reach the North Pole - Turkey and Russia (notice, the line does not pass through the Arab countries). The Hebrew has it, "The uttermost parts of the north", indicating the northern extremities. Now consult the map - who is it likely to be? Obviously Russia, which in any case, shall possess Turkey, as it establishes itself as the Kingdom of the North.

Now let us examine the names of verse 2. "Gog, the Land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal". As is indicated by some translations, the phrase "chief prince" should be rendered, "The prince of Rosh", or Ros. So, the man symbolically named Gog is of the Land of Magog, and is the Prince, or Ruler of Ros. According to Bochart in 1640, "Ros is the most ancient form under which history makes mention of Russia". We can see linguistically how this is so.

"Magog", (Literally, "the Land of Gog") is identified by Josephus with the Sythians, whose land, according to Herodotus, stretched from the Carpathians, to the Don. Thus, they inhabited the area we know as Russia. Although they later migrated to other places, such as Germany, Ezekiel is not concerned with the people themselves, but the geographical location of the land, and this appears to be where they were located at the time when the prophecy was given. The land of Gog, then, is the land of Russia. Gog = High, a name also suggesting the location of the land of Gog, upon the top of the earth, but also descriptive of the high-minded arrogance of the man (Cp Flab 2:5). Zenaide A Rogozin, in his book on Assyria gives evidence to suggest that Gog was actually the name of a Sythian Chief, during the reign of Assurbanipal, the king of Assyria (as quoted by Bro. P. Whale in The Testimony, September 1985).

"Meshech and Tubal" are identified by Herodotus as the "Moschi and Taberani". The Moschi originally inhabited the area by the Caucasus mountains, now known as Georgia, and Armenia, and migrated further north, to a land which was named after themselves, Moskva, the capital of which is Moscow. The Taberani lived in the land east of the river Thermodon, in the mountainous district east of the Black Sea, part of the area of land Russia shall inhabit, as "the king of the north" (Dan 11:40) expands his territory. Bro. Thomas identifies Tubal with the river Tobolsk in Siberia, and it's surrounding area, Tobolski. Either way, our attention is directed to Russia.

From the abundance of evidence which the Lord has provided us with, it should be clear that Russia is the leading force of the confederacy, which shall include the nations specifically named in verses 5 and 6, and "many people" with him, which shall make up the "all nations" of Zechariah 14, and Joel 3.

These then, are the nations which shall be gathered together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. Micah also speaks of this gathering: "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of Yahweh, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor. Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion ... " (Mic 4:11-13). So then, these nations are to be cut down, as in the time of harvest, (Joel 3:13, Rev 14:15,16), and gathered together into a threshing-floor where they shall be judged. This is what is meant by the word "Armaged-don".

Bro Thomas shows in Eureka, how the Hebrew word "Armageddon", is made up of 3 words, "aremah" (A heap of sheaves, cp Ruth 3:7), "gai" (valley) and "don" (Judgement). Thus, the word means, "a heap of sheaves in a valley for Judgement", speaking of the threshing floor which Joel refers to as "the valley of threshing" (Joel 3:14), where all the multitudes of Gog's host shall be gathered. When the Lord Jesus Christ and his saints come against the united confederacy with the destructive impact of the Divinely slung stone, the whole confederacy shall be broken in pieces, and threshed under the Judgements of Yahweh. Then, they shall be as "the chaff of the summer threshingfloors: and the wind shall carry them away", that they be no more. (Dan 2:35, cp Is 17:13, 41:15,16).

But Israel shall also have a part to play in the destruction of the Northern Invader, for Is 41 speaks of this, "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains; and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in Yahweh, and shalt glory in the holy one of Israel" (v 15:16). Ezekiel 39 also describes how the Jews shall fight against the enemy: "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons ... and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord Yahweh" (v 9,10).

And so, as a consequence of the work of Elijah, (Mal 4:5), and the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews shall turn to God once more, and he shall strengthen them to be his "battle axe" (Jer 51:20), to overcome the enemy. It is only after the oppressor has ceased that Israel shall have true peace, as it is written "They shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence when I have executed judge-ments upon all those that despise them round about, and they shall know that I am Yahweh their God" (Ezek 28:26).

After the conglomerate Image has been destroyed, then shall the Throne of David be established in Zion, occupied by the Lord Jesus Christ, (Luke 1:32), surrounded by his great company of holy ones, (Rev 4:2-4), and the whole earth shall be called upon to surrender in obedience to the Son of the Most High. However, they shall not obey.

Psalm 2 describes how, after the Lord is seated upon His Throne, there shall be a rebellion against His Rule: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps 2:2,3, but read the whole Psalm for the context). Thus, following the destruction of the Gogian confederacy, there shall be another gathering against Christ, led by those styled, "The kings of the earth" (Cp Rev 16:14).

Rev. 17 describes the Catholic Harlot sitting upon her European Sea Beast, (made up of many nations, cp v 1 with v 15) that is, guiding and directing it's movements, "with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (v 2). The kings of the earth, then, are not part of the European Beast, but are rather other nations which have joined themselves to it, following the overthrow of nations at the battle of Armageddon.

In addition to the kings of the earth, we read in verse 12 that the beast shall receive strength and support from 10 other kings: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast". These 10 kings are represented by 10

horns which are featured on the beast throughout its history. These answer to the 10 divisions of the Roman Empire, following its destruction by the barbarians (Dan 7:24). These were: Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, Burgundians, Gepidae, Lombards, Franks, Suevi, Alans, Bavarians. In the situation pertaining to the time of the end, powers after a similar pattern shall exist. The United Roman Catholic Empire of Europe, shall be supported by 10 king-powers, which shall only be given power for "1 hour", or 30 years (See Eureka for an explanation of this), with the beast (v 12). These powers, then, are not the same powers as spoken of in Daniel 7 but ten which shall exist after the same pattern of things. These 10 kings are said to "have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast". In surrendering their power to the Beast they therefore, place themselves under the control of its rider, the Harlot.

So then, after the destruction at Armageddon, rather than submitting to the Rule of Christ, those nations which have already seen the Glory of Yahweh Tzavaoth manifested through His Judgements, shall unite together under the Catholic Banner to war against him. Firstly, the Harlot shall send out the 10 kings which have pledged allegiance to her, to do battle with the Son of God: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and they that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful" (v 14). Being defeated by the Multitudinous Body of Christ, these 10 nations shall then turn, and fight against the Harlot herself: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (v 16).

And so, after continuing for "1 hour", in submission to the Harlot, strengthening her beast, having been defeated by her Enemy, the kings rebel, and turn against her, beginning the process of destruction which shall be completed by the Body of Christ. Chapter 18 describes this destruction: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird ... therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for great is the Lord God which judgeth her" (v 2,8). In this chapter, we also read of the response of her kingly paramours: "and the kings of the earth who have committed fornication with her, shall bewail her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgement come" (v 9,10). And so, the Kings of the Earth, of Psalm 2, those who united themselves with the Catholic Harlot shall be in great distress, and mourn over her destruction. Yet, despite these repeated displays of the power and glory of the Lord God of Hosts, they shall not repent, but turn themselves against the Army of Stone.

These shall then unite themselves once more, in a final, desperate attempt to throw off the yoke of their destroyer. Rev 19 describes this: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army". This is the stage as described in Psalm 2. We note that under the rebellion commanded by the Harlot, it was not the Kings of the Earth, which actually fought, but the 10 kings which shall pledge allegiance to her. After the rider has been removed, her beast, and the Kings which committed fornication with her shall unite together to avenge her destruction, under the leadership of the Pope, apocalyptically styled, "the false prophet", who has lost his religious empire, but still retains his position of authority over the beast.

However, "he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision". As mighty an army it will be that will be mustered in this last rebellion before peace is established, the rebels shall be coming against the Power of the Almighty. It truly is laughable how mortal man shall presume he is capable of overthrowing the armies of God! Rev 19 continues: "and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him ... these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.", as the Saints shall come like birds of prey to take a spoil.

And so, the body of the beast shall finally be burnt, (Dan 7:11), all rebellion shall cease, and the Kingdom of God shall extend over the whole globe. It is after the Cherubic Chariots have returned from go-

ing to and fro through-out the earth carrying out the Judgements of God, the earth shall be at rest (Zech 1:11), as a sea of glass, without even a ripple of violence. Then, those who have been crowned with victory shall stand with the nations subdued under their feet, as kings and priests, and they shall "sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgements are made manifest" (Rev 15:4).

Such would appear to be the order of things at the establishment of the Kingdom of God. But why do we need to know this? The Lord does not provide us with the riches of His word simply so that we might accumulate a wealth of knowledge, but so that we might be filled with wisdom, and understanding of His ways. The purpose of any Bible study is to become "wise unto salvation", that we might be "perfect, throughly furnished with good works" (2Tim 3:15-17). And so, having learned of these things, we must seek to enrich our lives with an application of them.

What we have seen, is that the Establishment of the Kingdom of God is not an instantaneous event, but a process. It is a process, which may take some time to complete. As we have seen, the nations shall not surrender to Christ at his appearing, but shall do all they can to resist Him. This is what the World is like - totally opposed to the things of God. We have seen the Roman Catholic System exposed for what she really is. The most disgusting of all women is used to symbolise the "Mother Church", which shall close her eyes to the glory of God, and to the end shall sit in pride and arrogance, saying in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow". Yet she shall be cut down, and all nations shall submit.

Let us not be of the world, for "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life", shall "pass away" (1Jno 2:16-17), taking with it every abominable thing. Let us separate ourselves, and do the will of God, that we might "abide for ever". Let us not sleep, as do others, but let us be separate, knowing what the end shall be. We are not the night, nor of the darkness, therefore, let us "watch and be sober", that when our Lord comes, we shall be taken from the destruction which is to come (Is 26:20), and rejoice for evermore in the coming Age of Glory.

*Chris Maddocks*

## The Locusts

In Joel 1:4, it is written: "that which the palmerworm hath left hath the Locust eaten; and that which the Locust hath left hath the Cankerworm hath left hath the Caterpillar eaten". Thus, it would appear that 4 types of plagues were to ravage the land of Judah - the Palmerworm, Locust, Cankerworm, and Caterpillar. However, this is not so. Chapter 2, verse 25 clearly describes them all as one - "my great army which I sent among you". It was one army. In actual fact, all four names all refer to one insect, the Locust, being descriptive of its' different characteristics and stages of growth. "Palmerworm" or "gâzâm" = Gnawer, "Locust" or "arbeh" = Swarmer, "Cankerworm" or "yeleq" = Licker, or Devourer and "Caterpillar" or "chaciyl" = Consumer. Thus, according to "The Companion Bible", the Hebrew reads thus: "Gnawers' remnant, Swarmer eats, Swarmers' remnant, Devourer eats, Devourers' remnant, consumer eats" - a picture of total desolation.

Whilst there were undoubtedly literal plagues of Locusts (cp Deut 28:42, Amos 4:9), the plague in Joel is clearly figurative, for verse 6 tells us that the Locust invasion is "A nation" which has "come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion". The literal plague was but a shadow of what was to come (compare Amos 4:9 with Joel 1:7).

The first reference to a plague of Locusts is in Exodus 10, where we read of Yahwehs' judgments upon Egypt. Interestingly, there are parallels with this plague and Joel, some of which can be listed as follows:

Plague upon Egypt	Plague described by Joel
"that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son" (Ex. 10:21)	"tell ye your children of it (1:3)
"that ye may know how that I am Yahweh" (Ex. 10:2)	"Ye shall know that I ... am Yahweh" (2:27)
"they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped" (Exo. 10:5)	"that which the Palmerworm hath left hath the Locust eaten" (1:4)
"he smote their vines also and their fig trees" (Psa 105:33)	"he hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree" (1:7)
The locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number (Psa 105:34)	Plague of locusts
"before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such (Ex 10:14)	"strong and without number" (1:6)

The Israelites which had seen the Judgments of Yahweh coming upon Pharaoh, which had witnesses the great declaration of His Power and Might should have told it to each succeeding generation. However, by the time of Joel, the lessons had been forgotten. Now, the Lord was to repeat these judgments, this time upon His people, that they might be reminded that "Yah" alone is "El".

But what do the Locusts represent in Joel's description? In Scripture, Locusts represent armies (cp Judges 6:5, 7:12), and so we need to look for an army which had invaded and made the land desolate, having plundered the temple immediately before the total destruction - the "Day of Yahweh". The only army to match this description is that of the Babylonians (symbolized by a lion elsewhere cp. Jer. 50: Joel 1:6). Interestingly, Jeremiah, speaking at the same time as Joel wrote of the Babylonians: "they will cut down her forest, saith Yahweh, though it cannot be searched: because they are more than grasshoppers (same word as "Locust") and are innumerable" (46:23).

The four stages of locusts which Joel describes, then speak of the four stages of the Babylonian destruction (2Kings 25) which were to come upon Israel. It is that Babylonians who "have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate" (Jer 10:25, cp 51:34), which Joel speaks of.

However, as we have said, the prophecy is not restricted to one particular time. The Locusts seem to have another application also. Speaking of the restoration which would follow the destruction of the "Northern army" (verse 20), which we can apply to Gog, and his confederacy, the Lord spoke to His people in verse 25: "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". Thus, the desolation which was caused by Gog is described in similar terms as that caused by the Babylonians. Thus, the prophecy has another fulfillment. Just as there were 4 stages of Locusts, so there was to be 4 nations to devour Israel - Babylon, Greece, Rome, and Gog. The desolation caused by these invasions will be restored by Yahweh, when the kingdom is established. Only then will Israel be restored to her former glory. The symbology used in Joel is also employed in Revelation 9, something which will be the topic of a future study.

## **THE DAY OF YAHWEH**

Speaking at the time when the Babylonian Army had invaded the land of Judah, immediately before the Total Destruction, when the Temple was to be destroyed under the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, (2Kings 25:9), Joel warned the people "the day of Yahweh is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1:15). After describing Yahweh's judgements which had already come upon the land in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 continues to describe the coming desolation. He warns the people, "the day of Yahweh is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Therefore also now, saith Yahweh, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping and with mourning" (Joel 2:11,12).

Thus, the "Day of Yahweh", which Joel refers to was the day when Yahweh was to "utter his voice before his army", under Nebuchadnezzar, His servant (Jer 25:9), and carry His people away into captivity, to declare to them his greatness, and to punish them for their sins. This is what Isaiah styles "The day of visitation", when desolation came from far, (10:3), and Ezekiel, "the day of the wrath of Yahweh" (7:19, cp 13:5). This was the day of which it was prophesied, "Yahweh shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation" (i.e. Heaven - Deut 25:15), roaring mightily "upon his habitation" (i.e. Israel - Is 33:20, Jer 50:19) (Jer 25:30).

Amos speaks of The Day as being "Darkness, and not light", and so he gives the exhortation to "seek good, and not evil, that ye may live", for "wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas! and they shall call the husbandmen to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing, and in all vineyards shall be wailing" (Am 5:14-20).

But this day of Judgement upon Israel was not the only "Day of Yahweh" to take place. Babylon also was later to experience such a day, which Isaiah spoke of, as he prophesied of "the burden of Babylon": "Howl ye: for the day of Yahweh is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty (Is 13:6, Cp Joel 1:15). And again, "The day of Yahweh cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (v9). There are a number of parallels to be made between these two "Days", some of which are listed below:

### **Joel**

The Day of Yahweh is at hand (1:15)

As a destruction from the Almighty shall it come (1:15)

The sun and moon shall be dark and the stars shall withdraw their shining (2:10, 3:15)

The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble (2:10)

### **Isaiah 13**

The day of Yahweh is at hand (v 6)

As a destruction from the Almighty (v 6)

The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine (v10)

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place (v13)

Both "Days" typify the greater Day of the Lord which is yet to come. The pattern that we have is that Yahweh first judged His people through the Babylonians, and then the Babylonians themselves were judged. That is, Yahweh first roared upon His people, and then "against all the inhabitants of the (Babylonian) earth" (Jer 25:30). Firstly upon His People, then upon the Heathen. This situation will exist during the future day of the Yahweh, for He will first judge his people by the Gogian confederacy, putting a hook in his jaw, and bringing him forth (Ezek 38:4) And then upon the nations themselves.

The "Day of Yahweh", is the day when "He will be". That is, when the Name will be fulfilled in a great multitude of immortal saints, manifesting the Glory of the Lord. We see this in Zechariah 14, speaking of the future Day:

"Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh ... for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Firstly upon His People, then upon the Nations:

"Then shall Yahweh go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives ... and Yahweh my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech 14:1-5).

Who will "Go forth"? Whose "Feet shall stand"? Who "Shall come" with all the saints? The answer is Yahweh - He who will be. This is the language of God manifestation. "He will be" manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the saints.

This is the ultimate purpose of God, to Manifest Himself in an innumerable multitude upon earth. Although we tend to think of the "day of Yahweh" as being associated with His Judgements, these are but a means to an end - the end being that "I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Yahweh" (Ezek 38:23).

In the Old Testament, this day is referred to as being "The day of Yahweh". As we have said, this expresses the Purpose of God - "He will be" manifested in that day. But the New Testament styles this same day, "The day of the Lord" (cp 1Thes 5:2). This is because the Lord being referred to is Jesus, who manifests God. The Divine Name, Yahweh, meaning "He will be", was fulfilled in Jesus, who was "God manifest in the flesh". In that Day, Jesus will once again be manifesting God on earth, it is the day when "the son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:30), the Day of Jesus Christ (1Cor 1:8, 5:5). This is the great day, which we must look to.

Great and wonderful things will happen in that day, including the final restoration of the Kingdom to Israel (Is 11:11, 27:11), as the Kingdom of God is established, but it will begin with the Judgement of the Household of faith. For "in that day of wrath and revelation, (cp Luke 17:30) of the righteous judgement of God", the Lord "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom 2:6-8).

The Day of Jesus Christ, the Lord is at hand. We are witnessing the nations being "gathered together to the battle of that great day" (Rev 2:6-8, cp Joel 3:2, one of the many signs which show us that the morning is near. For we know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh" (1Thes 5:2,3). This cry has been made, heralding the appearance of our Lord, and we must prepare ourselves. We must "awake out of sleep, watch and be sober", for "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom 11:11,12). Let us therefore walk decently, as in that day, that when our Lord comes, we might find mercy.

## **BLOWING THE TRUMPET**

Ezekiel 33 describes the responsibilities of a watchman:

"If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But He that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." (Verses 3-6, Cp Neh 4:18,20).

So in this context, a trumpet was blown to warn the people of impending war. If they took heed to the sound, they had opportunity to prepare, but if the trumpet was not sounded, and the people fell by the sword, his blood would be required at the watchman's hand.

The chapter continues: "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (7-9). Thus the Words of Yahweh at the mouth of Ezekiel were as the sound of the trumpet at the mouth of the watchman.

Israel as a nation were wicked. We have seen how Yahweh "sent to them by his messengers", exhorting them to turn from their evil ways, but the warning went unheeded, for they despised His words. Those prophets who Yahweh sent to warn the people of the coming day of destruction had the role of Watchmen, for Isaiah was told "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins (Is 58:1). Jeremiah also prophesied; "O ye children of Benjamin, gather your-selves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa (Cp Amos 1:1), and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction" (Jer 6:1), and in verse 17: "also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken".

And so the call to preparation for the northern invasion went unheeded. Truly it was said "They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle" (Ezek 7:14). As Zephaniah had said, the men "are settled on their lees" they "say in their heart, Yahweh will not do good, neither will he do evil" (1:12). Apathy had set in. The people, dwelling in prosperity had forgotten Yahweh their God, and disregarded any warnings that He might bring destruction upon them.

As we have seen, the prophecy of Joel was like the sound of the trumpet, for Joel exhorts the people to humble themselves before the Lord, warning them of the Day of Yahweh. In Chapter 2, Yahweh gives the direction: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the Day of Yahweh cometh, for it is nigh at hand." (Joel 2:1). This verse finds a parallel with Zephaniah:

"The great day of Yahweh is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Yahweh ... a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers" (Zeph 1:14:15).

Sounding an Alarm is again spoken of in Numbers Chapter 10: "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before Yahweh your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies" (v 9). Therefore, after warn-

ing the people of the coming destruction, an alarm was to be sounded that Yahweh would deliver the people from the invading army. And so the prophet, after blowing the trumpet in warning, sounded an alarm, exhorting the people to prepare themselves, to call upon the Lord, for "Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" (Joel 2:15).

Numbers 10 also speaks of another use of the Trumpet:

"Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall gather themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but one trumpet, then the princes which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee" (vv 2-4).

This is brought out during the Day of Assembly, in Exodus 19, where Yahweh commanded Moses "When the trumpet sounded long, they shall come up to the mount", "and it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with Elohim" (vv 13-17). Here, the people assembled together, and met with the manifestation of God, upon hearing the sound of the Trumpet.

Therefore, as well as being a warning of impending invasion, and a call for a Divine Blessing, the trumpet was also used to gather the people together. This aspect is also brought out in Joel, as the Lord commands "Gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of Yahweh your God, and cry unto Yahweh" (1:14).

We are living in the days when "the day of the Lord is at hand". That is "that day" when "the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the Land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Yahweh, in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Is 27:13), when the scattered people of God will have a final restoration. This is when "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air". The day is at hand, when all the saints, both dead and living shall be gathered together, at the sound of the trumpet to be with the Lord. We, ourselves, also bear the responsibility of Watchmen. We know perfectly that the day of the Lord is near, and so we must sound the Trumpet to those around us, that they might turn from their ways. We must shine forth as lights in a dark world, preaching the word with a "certain sound" (1Cor 4:8). But we ourselves must take heed to the Trumpet being sounded through the pages of Scripture, that we might assemble together in fellowship around the Word, to "meet the Lord" when he comes that he might remember us in that day, and grant us deliverance.

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## **THE VINE AND THE FIG TREE**

In Joel 1, referring to the invading army, the Spirit through Joel tells us that "He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare". As we have seen, this is clearly referring to Gods' people, using the Vine and Fig trees as symbols. The object of this study is to look at these symbols in relation to Gods' people, with the aim of determining what we are being taught by their use.

As is well known, both the Vine and Fig tree are both symbols of Israel. This can easily be shown by the following two scriptures: "Israel is an empty vine" - Hos 10:1, and Jer 24:1: "like these good figs so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah ...".

The question is, therefore, Why does Yahweh use two different symbols to represent the same thing? We have already seen a similar principle in our studies of Joel. The Babylonians are likened both to a

locust in Joel 1:4, and a lion in verse 6, and Jer 50:17. The reason for this, is that both symbols are emphasising different aspects of the same attack: Locusts emphasise the desolation which would be caused, but the Lion speaks of the ferocity of the attack. This is so with the symbols before us. As we shall see, the two symbols reflect two aspects of God's people, Spiritual, and National.

## The Vine

In Psalm 80, It is written, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river" (verses 8-11).

This describes how God "called his son out of Egypt". He delivered His people from bondage, cast out the Heathen from the Land of Promise and caused them to prosper in the Land.

This is also described in Isaiah 5:

"Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes ...".

Thus, we see that after delivering His people from Egypt, Yahweh cleared the land through the Angel which went before them (Ex 23:3), and planted them in it for a particular purpose - to bring forth grapes, fruit to the Glory of Yahweh.

But the Israelitish vine did not bring forth these good fruits, but "rotten", or "corrupt" grapes (Is 5:2, "Wild" from Heb "To stink"), not to Gods' glory, but "to himself" (Hos 10:9). And so those unfruitful branches were "broken off", and "set on fire" (Is 27:11). Indeed, the whole vine was then fruit-less, and so it was prophesied by Ezekiel: "therefore, thus saith the Lord Yahweh, As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am Yahweh, when I set my face against them".

In John 15, the Lord Jesus expounds Psalm 80, and applies the figure of the Vine to Himself: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit ... now ye abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned".

Here, the word "true" is used in the sense of Substance as opposed to Type, rather than something which is not False. In Psalm 80, we have the Type of a vine, in John 15, the "True vine", the reality, or substance. Israel was an unfruitful vine, but the Lord Jesus was perfect, and bare perfect fruits to the Glory of the Father. The fruit was the Grape, from which Wine is made, which "cheereth God and man" (Judges 9:13). Here, we have a type of the Sacrifice of our Lord, for in order for wine to be made, the grape must be bruised, that the blood runs out. So, the Lord Jesus was bruised in the heel (Gen 3:15), that man might have gladness, and love which is better than wine.

But if we are branches "In" the True Vine, we also must bear fruit, lest we be removed. What is this fruit? A tree is identified by its fruits. "Ye shall know them by their fruits", said the Lord. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree

bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Mat 7:16-19).

"Good fruit" is the fruit of the Spirit, which "Is love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance" and is "in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Gal 5:22, Eph 5:9). Thus, the fruits which we must bear are the characteristics needed to show what tree we are of, that we are part of the "true vine", being branches which derive their nourishment from Christ.

The symbol of a vine then, is used to show the spiritual aspect of Israel, How she should have been, bringing joy to her Lord. Yet it is also a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the branches which are in him, bringing forth the fruits of the spirit, bringing forth Joy by the bruising of the Perfect one, who rose up "The firstfruits" from the dead (1Cor 15:23).

## **The Fig Tree**

In the parable of Luke 13:6-9, The Lord Jesus spake: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none". Thus, the Fig tree again was something which was to bear fruit, and was planted in the vineyard. We have seen from Isaiah 5 that the vineyard is the land following the removal of the Gentile stones. Thus, the fig tree represents the people which were planted in the land.

It is this national aspect which is again emphasised by Jeremiah, in his vision of two baskets of figs: "One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very naughty figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad" (24:2). The interpretation is given: "like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive out of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." "And as the evil figs which cannot be eaten, they are so evil, surely thus saith Yahweh, so will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt, and I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt" (v 5,8).

Thus, the figs represent the people, good figs, those who submitted to the word of God and went into captivity, and bad figs, those like Zedekiah, who rebelled, and who were to be delivered into all kingdoms of the earth for their hurt.

Whilst the vine speaks of what the Spiritual condition of Israel should have been like, the figs represent the individuals who made up the nation, (indicated perhaps, by the multitude of seeds contained in the fruit). The tree itself, represents the Nation as a whole.

Yet there is something else being taught by the use of this symbol. Figs were grown to be eaten, and so were a source of strength and nourishment, as it is written: "Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof (Prov 27:18). Also, figs are associated with healing, as in the case of Hezekiah: "And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered" (2Kings 20:7).

Thus, upon the Israelitish fig tree, there should have been good figs, people who fed many with their lips (Prov 10:21), healing the spiritual sore of the people, which reached from "the sole of the foot even unto the head" (Is 1:6). But as we have seen, the people were spiritually famished, and there was no healing (2Chron 36:16). This was also the state of affairs when the Lord Jesus Christ came to the Fig Tree, for it bare no fruit (Mat 21:19), and so it was to be cut down by the Roman army.

We must take heed to the lessons of the Vine and Fig tree. The times are coming when every mans' work shall be made manifest. We must be found to be good figs, bearing the fruits of the Spirit, being a source of spiritual strength and nourishment to each other, that we might be made part of the "wood of life" which will "bare twelve manner of fruits," and yield "her fruit every month:", the leaves of which will be "for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2).

## REVELATION CHAPTER 9

As we shall see, the book of Joel is one of the passages which Revelation 9 is based upon, as the symbols used in this place are taken from Joel. However, before we compare these passages, it is essential that we understand the principle of interpreting the book of Revelation. It is imperative that we hold the key to unlock the meaning of the symbols.

The first point to note is that the book of Revelation began to be fulfilled soon after it was written: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev 1:1). The last point of time that the Book speaks of is the Kingdom (Rev 21,22). Thus, the book either speaks of the period of John's day, then the kingdom yet future, with a gap in between, or it is a continuous prophecy, beginning at John's day, describing events up until the Day of the Lord.

In order to determine which "view is correct", it is worth noting that the book was given as a fulfillment of Amos 3:7: "Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets" (Cp Rev 1:1, The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to shew his servants things which must shortly come to pass, cp also Rev 10:7). God will do nothing which he has not revealed to his servants the prophets. That is the Divine promise. There is approximately 2,000 years between the days when the Lord was upon the earth, and the establishing of the Kingdom. Since the Lord Rules in the kingdom of Men, (Dan 4:32), we must have a prophecy which describes these things. This is the Book of Revelation.

To quote Bro Graeham Pearce:

"The phrase 'shortly come to pass' means that God's servants would be warned of what lay immediately ahead. So it is certain that God's servants in the centuries that were to come, would be able to see the outline of events immediately in front of them, from a study of the Revelation. They would not understand the distant future, but they would discern their own times in the appropriate part of the Apocalyptic record. For this to be so, the Revelation must cover the whole of the time period to the coming of the Lord" (The Revelation - Which Interpretation? p 18).

Therefore, it is a continuous prophecy from John's day to the day of Christ's Return. This is like Nebuchadnezzar's Image. It was a prophecy of world empires from the time of Babylon, until the time of Christ's Return. There were no gaps in the image, therefore, it was continuous. But we are living towards the end of the prophecy. This means that from our view point, much of it is history. Thus, it is a continuous-historic prophecy. The book of Revelation is similar. It is a continuous prophecy, and much of it is history, from our viewpoint. It is a continuous-historic prophecy. Thus, to understand the parts of the prophecy which apply before our time, we need to go to history, after using the Word of God to interpret the symbols.

This brings us to the second point. How do we use Scripture to interpret the Symbols? An important principle to grasp is that Revelation "borrows" figures and symbols from the Old Testament to illustrate the Characteristics of what was to come. For example, in Rev 9, we read "and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace". One of the places this is based on is Gen 19, describing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace". Now, we are not to suppose, therefore, that Rev 9 is to do with Sodom and Gomorrah, but that the characteristics of that destruction was like the destruction of Rev 9. Some of the "parallels" between Joel and Rev 9 are as follows:

## Revelation Chapter 9

The Sun and the Air were darkened (v 2)

“There came up out of the smoke Locusts” (v 3)

“Like horses prepared unto battle” (v 7)

“their teeth were as the teeth of lions” (v 8)

“as the sound of chariots” (v 9)

## The prophecy of Joel

“the sun ... shall be dark” (2:10)

“that which the Palmerworm hath left, hath the Locust eaten” (1:4)

“as the appearance of horses” (2:5)

“whose teeth are as the teeth of lions” (1:6)

“like the noise of chariots (2:5)

As we have seen, these terms in Joel are primarily references to the Babylonian Army, which was to come up upon the land of Israel. However, we must not assume that Rev 9 speaks either of the Babylonians, or a nation to come upon Israel, for neither were in existence at that time.

Revelation 9 describes the judgments upon Rome, following the sounding of the 5th trumpet. The first 4 trumpets can be summarised as follows: 1 - Alaric and the Goths, 2 - Genseric and the Vandals, 3 - Attila and the Huns, 4-Eclipse of Rome, the Gothic kingdom in Italy. In Rev 9, Just as the Israelit-ish Sun was darkened by the Babylonians, so the Roman Sun was darkened by the Arabians. There was a multitude of invaders, like a plague of Locusts, with the ferocity of Lions. Again, horses and chariots were both used as predominant features of the invasions.

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## SUN, MOON AND STARS IN SCRIPTURE

In Joel 2:10, describing the Day of Yahweh, it is written:

"The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the Sun and the Moon and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (2:10).

The purpose of this study is to look at what is represented by the Sun, Moon and Stars in Scripture, to see what is being spoken of in Joel.

The first occasion in Scripture where the Sun, Moon and Stars come together is in Genesis 27:9, where we read of Joseph's second dream: "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me". Then we read of Jacob's reaction: "his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream, that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and the mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

The interpretation of the dream is clear. The Sun, Moon and Stars represented the different elements which existed within the family of Israel. Israel himself, who "observed the saying" recognised this, perceiving that he was represented by the Sun, his dead wife, Joseph's mother, the Moon, and Joseph's brethren by the Stars. These were portrayed as making "obeisance" to Joseph, typifying the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sun, we are told, was created to "rule the day" (Gen 1:16, Ps 136:8). In 2 Samuel 23:3, David as he was being "moved" by the Spirit said: "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (contrast Joel 2:2).

Ultimately, Yahweh is the Supreme Ruler, who is Just, and so we are told in Psalm 84:11: "Yahweh Elohim is a sun and a shield: Yahweh will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly". But, the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect manifestation of Yahweh, is just, and will

rule the earth in righteousness during the Millennium. Thus in Revelation 1:16, his "countenance" is described as "the sun" which "shineth in his strength", and he is spoken of in Malachi 4:2 as being the "sun of righteous-ness", who shall arise "with healing in his beams" to those who fear the Name of Yahweh. And so, Jacob, the Father and Husband, the Sun, stood for ruler-ship, "One who ruleth well his own house" (1Tim 3:4).

In the dream, Jacob's Wife, Joseph's mother is symbolised by the Moon, which is said to have been created to "rule the night" (Gen 1:16) in the absence of the Sun. In the natural order of things, the Moon does this by reflecting the glory, the light of the Sun. This is so with the spiritual. The ecclesia of Christ, the future wife of the Sun of Righteousness, should reflect the glory of God manifested in his son. They are to preach the Gospel, and reflect the glory of the sun during the night, allowing their borrowed light to shine forth, until the morning, when the Sun shall arise.

It is then that the faithful will be "healed", and be made partakers of divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). Having been given immortality, the bride, which is "fair as the moon" shall be "clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (Song 6:10). Also, "the Light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Yahweh bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound" (Is 30:26).

The Lord Jesus Christ tells us that "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mat 13:43). Notice here there is a plurality of righteous, (indicated by "*their* Father") but only one sun. Those individuals who have been given "the morning star", being united with the "star of Jacob" (Num 24:17) which will then go forth and fight, being "terrible as an army", as Yahweh Tzvaoth goes forth and avenges His people Israel.

In the natural order of things, the Sun is a star. In Joseph's dream, Joseph, who typifies the Lord Jesus, sees his brethren as stars. In Daniel 12, we are told that the brethren in Christ who "turn many to righteousness" shall shine "as the stars for ever and ever". Thus, in the spiritual order of things, the "Sun" being referred to by the Lord Jesus is not one star, but an conglomeration of "stars" who will shine in unity "for ever and ever".

These symbols, as used in Genesis 37 are applied to Jacob's family. And when this family had grown into a nation, the "Sun", "Moon", and "Stars" remained. Yahweh had promised Abraham that He would "multiply his "seed as the stars of the heaven" (Gen 22:17, 26:4). Thus each individual Israelite was a "star", as Moses told the people (Deut 10:22, 26:4). But yet it is only "Israelites indeed", "they which are of faith", the spiritual seed of Abraham who will shine as the stars for ever in the kingdom. Those Israelites who have forsaken the Truth are but "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

Jeremiah tells us of Jerusalem: "She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the spirit; her sun has gone down while it is yet day ... " (Jer 15:9). Joel also speaks of the elements within the Israelitish Heavens: "The sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 2:10). Thus, the Rulership, and Religious system were to be darkened under the wrath of Yahweh.

Babylon was destroyed because its king said in his heart "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Is 14:13-4). But yet Cyrus, of whom Yahweh said "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure", was to say to Jerusalem; "thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Is 44:28, 2Chron 36:23), and so his rulership was allowed to prosper, as he allowed the Moon and Stars of the Israelitish heavens to shine.

But yet the Lord Jesus Christ also spoke of a time when "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken" (Mk 13:24-25). Thus, not only would the Sun be affected, but also the Moon and Stars of the

Israelitish heavens, the religious system which by now had become corrupted, would also suffer under the judgements of Yahweh through the Roman army who were to destroy the temple that "there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mat 24:2). During this time the Jewish political heavens were to "pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet 3:10), as the Mosaic system of worship was ended, being replaced by what it typified - the New Covenant through Christ Jesus.

But it is not only the Israelitish heavens which are said to contain a Sun, Moon, and Stars. Empires which had dominion over Israel are also said to possess them. Speaking of Yahweh's overthrow of Babylon, Isaiah wrote: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine" (Is 13:10). Hence, the Babylonian political heavens were to suffer under the judgements of Yahweh. Babylon was ruling over Israel, and attempted to suppress the worship of Yahweh, forcing the Jews to worship Idols (Dan 3:6), thus exalting itself over the stars of God.

The Roman heavens are also portrayed as having a Sun, Moon and Stars: "and there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev 12:1). This power, we are told, "waxed great against the host of the (Israelitish) heaven and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them ... by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (Dan 8:10-11). Thus the Mosaic system of worship in Israel was abolished. The Israelitish heavens were replaced by the Roman heavens, and a false system of worship was established, based upon the Babylonian superstitions of old.

In Joel 3:15, we are told that at the time of the end, the Jewish heavens will again suffer: "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining". What we are currently witnessing in Israel is the revival of the political heavens. Once again they have a Sun, Moon and Stars, a system of rulership and religion, but yet they are in disobedience to Yahweh. They do not accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah, and trust in their own military might, rather than the power of God. And so Yahweh will once again punish Israel, by "bringing forth" the Gogian army against them, taking half the city captive (Zech 14:2).

But Joel tells us that "Yahweh will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel". Israel, through the work of Elijah (Mal 4:5), will come to repentance, and look upon the Lord Jesus, whom they pierced, and mourn (Zech 12:10). They will recognise Jesus as the Messiah, and turn to Yahweh, who shall "go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle", and restore the Kingdom to Israel: "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for Yahweh shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Is 60:20). Then, the Sun, Moon and Stars of all Israel, including the family circle of Genesis 37 will worship the Greater Joseph, as the World is brought under subjection under his feet.

## **The March of Christ and the Saints to Jerusalem**

It is the purpose of this study to examine the events which will take place following the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ, after the Judgement of the Household of Faith, when the Body of Christ will go into the earth to carry out the judgements upon the Gogian confederacy.

That the Saints will be involved in the execution of Yahweh's righteous Judgements, we can have no doubt, for the Psalmist wrote:

"let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth; and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ... to execute upon them the judgement written: This honour have all his saints. Praise ye Yahweh" (Ps 149:5-9).

The first thing to establish is, Where is the starting point? But before we establish this, it must be stated that we do not know the precise details of the order of attack. John saw these in the form of "a little scroll", which he was to "seal up", and "Write not" (Rev 10:2-4). The full details will only ever be known upon their execution. But the Lord has not left us in total ignorance, for in the Old Testament, there are places named as being places of Judgement, such as Bozrah (Is 63:1). Using this information, we are able to piece together the general order of things, and the following is offered as a suggestion of these events.

The Judgement of the Household of Faith, we are told, will take place first (1Pet 4:17). The Lord Jesus Christ shall return before the commencement of the 7th Vial of Rev 16 (v15), and therefore before the "time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation" (Rev 16:18, Dan 12:1). The saints shall be taken to a place of refuge to be hid from this trouble "until the indignation be overpast" (Is 26:20-21), where they shall be judged, and the Bride given opportunity to rejoice and unite with her Husband (Deut 20:7). Then, the Multitudinous Body shall move forward as Yahweh Tzvaoth to "fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech 14:3).

This place, we would suggest, is Sinai, for as we shall see, this is what the Oracles of God indicate. It is hardly likely to be Jerusalem, for as Ezek 38 and Zech 14 shows us, far from being a place of Refuge, it will be the very centre of the worlds' troubles!

As "a threefold cord is not quickly broken", we present 3 passages to show that the beginning of the March to establish the Throne of David at Jerusalem is Sinai:

Deut 33:2 - "Yahweh came up from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them".

This is a reversal of what happened when Israel were delivered from Egypt. Then, Israel went to Sinai to meet with God; but here Yahweh comes from Sinai unto them. He is also accompanied with "ten thousands of saints" (Jude 14). This verse clearly speaks of the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness from Sinai to redeem his people in Jerusalem.

Psalm 68:17 - "The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Changed Ones. The Lord is among them, - Sinai, in the Holy".

Here, the word rendered "Angels" in the A.V. is never used of Angels elsewhere, and means "Changed Ones". How appropriate for the Immortalised Saints! Here, the Lord is amongst a multitude of Changed Ones, as Sinai, in the Holy. This also suggests that the Lord Jesus Christ will commence his journey with his Chariots (Zech 2:2-5) at Sinai.

Hab 3 - "God shall come in (J.T.) from Teman (the south), and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise ... before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet".

Again, this is another prophecy yet unfulfilled, speaking of the judgements coming from the South.

The March to Jerusalem, then, begins at Sinai, which would also appear to be the site of the Judgement of the Saints, and the Marriage of the Lamb.

Habakkuk also makes mention of "Mount Paran". So, from Sinai, the Army advances to Paran, as shown in Map 1. But Habakkuk also makes mention of Cush and Midian: "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Thus, Ethiopian and Midian are to be Judged. Isaiah also speaks of the Arabs before Israel is saved: "Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the Rock (Arabian Petra) sing ... let them give glory unto Yahweh" (Is 42:11-129. Then Israel's deliverance - "Yahweh shall go forth as a mighty man ... he shall cry, yea, roar, he shall prevail against his enemies" (v 13 Cp Joel 3:16).

This prophecy has not been fulfilled, for the Arabs to this day do not worship Yahweh. So Midian is to be visited and converted by the Multitudinous Body, as shown on the map.

Egypt also is due to be subdued, as Isaiah 19 shows us. That this chapter has a latter-day application is evident from verses 17 to the end: "The Land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, in that day shall there be an altar to Yahweh in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to Yahweh. And it shall be a sign and for a witness unto Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt ... and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto Yahweh, and perform it ... ". These words have never yet been fulfilled, and can only apply to a national repentance brought about by the Lord Himself.

Verse 1 describes the entry into Egypt: "Behold, Yahweh rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt". Compare this description with Rev 14:14: "And I looked, and behold, a white cloud and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle" - Clearly a description of the Multitudinous Christ in Judicial Manifestation.

Thus, from Midian, the Divine Army moves into Egypt, when Cush also will be visited (Hab 3:7). Egypt at this stage is in the hands of the Northern Army (Dan 11:42), and so this marks the beginning of the confrontation with Gog.

The next place referred to is Bozrah, which will be the confrontation with all nations, where there will be a great slaughter. Isaiah speaks of this: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel ... I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel ... ? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people, there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments" (Is 63:1-3). That this speaks of the Body of Christ we can be of no doubt, for in Rev 19:13-15, these words are alluded to in order to describe the Army and its Commander.

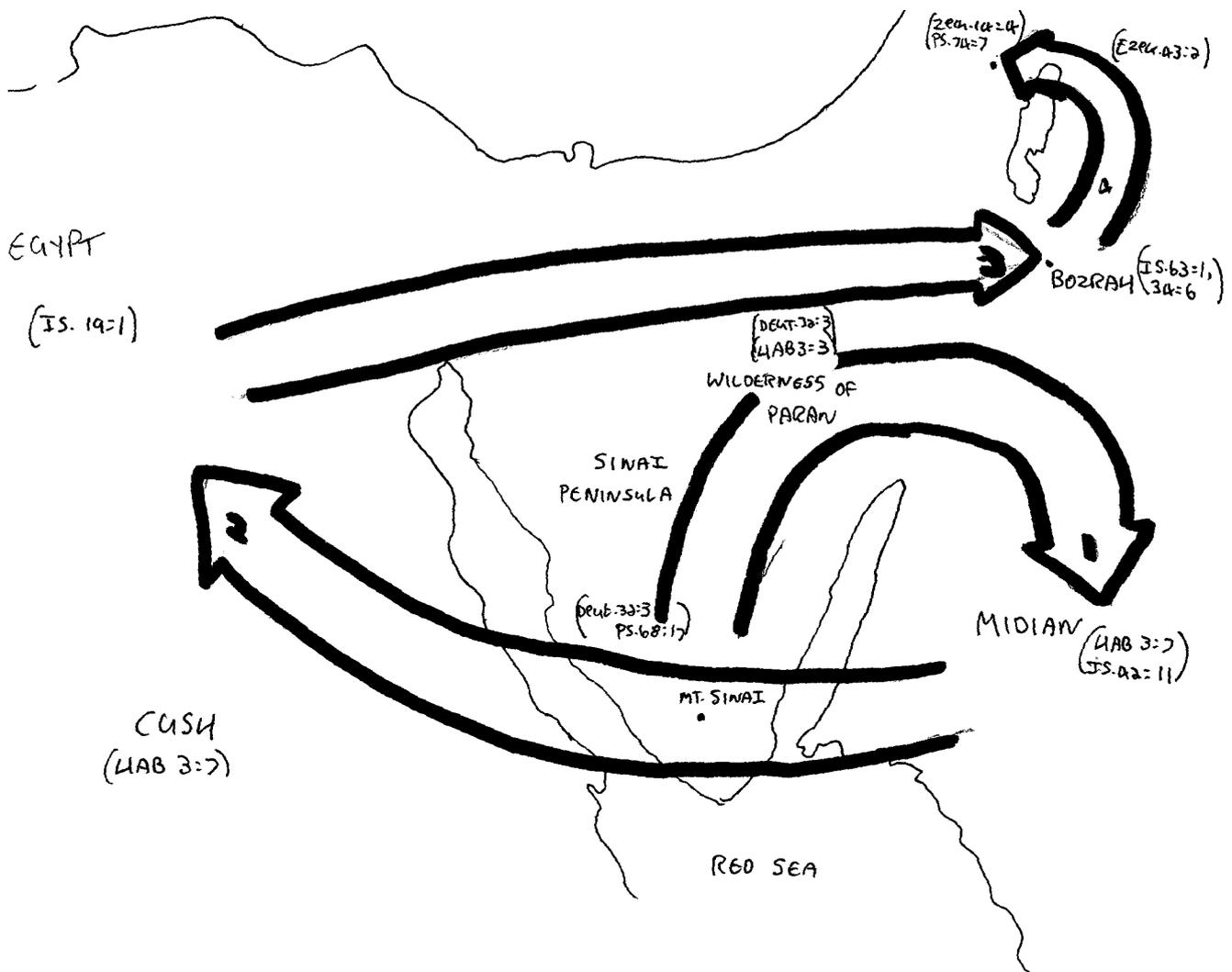
Again, this destruction is spoken of in Is 34: "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to Judgement. The sword of Yahweh is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness ... for Yahweh hath a great sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (34:5-6).

And so, the advancing Gogian confederacy is confronted at Bozrah by Yahweh's great army. But Joel tells us that Gog will be driven back (see map 2): "But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the East Sea (The Dead Sea), and his hinder part toward the utmost sea (Great sea). So, the northern army, no longer facing south-

wards, will be turned to face the Dead Sea, with those at the rear towards the great sea, as shown on Map 2. That is to say, the army will be driven back into the Barren and Desolate land - the land which he has made Barren and Desolate (Joel 1:10,12,2:3). Being driven back from Bozrah to Israel, the army comes to its end upon the mountains of Israel, as Ezekiel tells us, "Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands; and the people that is with thee" (Ezek 39:4). And so the confederacy shall be removed from Israel, far away to the grave: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel ... and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it the valley of Hamon-Gog" (v 11).

Such would appear to be the general order of things when the Lord comes. As current events in the world show, the Day of Gog's great invasion cannot be far off, and thus the Return of our Lord is Imminent. Let us prepare for that great day, adorning ourselves with works of righteousness, that when it comes, we may be ready to be part of the Bride.

**Map One**



MAP 2 - THE GOLIATH ARMY FORCED BACK

