

THE
PROPHECY
OF
JOEL
By
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Introductory

“The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel”—Joel 1:1. Joel is the second of the minor Old Testament prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are termed the major prophets, because their messages are much larger than the other twelve—Hosea to Malachi. However, their size does not determine their value. Each one has an important and distinct place. Some claim that Joel gave his message about 800 years before Christ, probably half a century before Isaiah. But it is said that the Hebrew canon places it between Hosea and Amos, as our Bible has it, which is a little later. Israel were already losing out; for less than a hundred years later, they were carried captive into Assyria by Shalmaneser—¹2 Kings 18:9-11. The name Joel means, “Jehovah is God, or might.” Pethuel means, “Be persuaded, be enlarged of God.” These names inspire reverence, faith, courage and hope. They express the attitude which Israel should have held toward the Lord God.

A Three-Fold Outline

The following birds-eye scheme will simplify our study of the book, which tells of the devastation and restoration of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

1. Devastation Declared—Due To Backsliding... Chap. 1.
2. Devastation Described—Chapter 2:1-11.
3. Devastation Reversed—Followed By Prosperity—Chaps. 2:12-32 and 3.

¹ 2 Kings 18:9-11 “And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, *that is* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:”

Joel KJV

Chapter 1

1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

1:2 Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

1:3 Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation.

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.

Joel Commentary

First Portion

Devastation Declared

Chapter One

ATTENTION! “Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?”—V. 2. Today, the custom is to address the young men, but Joel spoke to the elders. If the Jewish fathers had obeyed the voice of God, Israel would not have fared illy as they did. Had the elders and rulers received Christ as the Messiah, the present blindness would never have come, neither would the advertised calamities of the future. A proverb promises, saying, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” God holds the fathers responsible for giving their offspring the light, and then holds the children responsible to walk in it.

What the prophet was about to say, had not yet come. It was still future and indeed extended into the far distant future. The background of the dark picture was already painted by the unbelief and rebellion of these to whom he spoke. His sudden and exclamatory utterance, “Hear this,” indicates terrible forebodings.

PROCLAMATION. “Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation”—V. 3. These words express the importance of spreading the news. All Israel should hear of what was coming. They also show that the serious message of the prophet would cover many generations. Oh, how much is couched in a few words which God speaks. It is exceedingly profitable to us, therefore, to read slowly, and read the same portion again and again, lest we miss much of His thought.

ALARM! “That which the palmer worm 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”—Verse 4. There is scarcely a more comprehensive verse, or more prolific picture in the Bible than this. It is simply unique. Be not misled. These four insects, in their devouring raid, do not represent the pentecostal movement, as one foolishly wrote some years ago. They picture the four world empires in their successive devastations of Israel’s land. In verse 6, God says, “A nation is come upon my land, strong and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a Iron etc.” Note too that in chap. 2:25, He calls those insects, “My great Army, which I sent among you.” Observe their exact photograph in chap. 2:2-11, and compare it with the horde of locusts in

1:5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

1:6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

1:7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast *it* away; the branches thereof are made white.

¹Rev. 9:3-11. The final onslaught of that destructive host is still future. God will use them to chastise the Jews during the indescribable tribulation (²Matt. 24:21), and then severely punish them for it, as stated in chap. 3. The “lion and great lion” (V. 6) figure Babylon—³Dan. 7:4.

The following from Fausset’s Bible Cyclopaedia is both interesting and instructive. Each of the four species of locusts in Hebrew letters represents the exact number of years that each empire oppressed, until they had deprived the Jews of all their glory—(J. C. Reichart). Gazan, the palmerworm, represents the 50 years of Babylon’s oppression, from the temple’s destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (588 B. C.) to Babylon’s overthrow by Cyrus (538 B. C.). Arbeh, the locust, represents Persia’s 208 year’s sway over the Jews, from 538 to 330 B. C., when Persia fell before Alexander the Great. Yelequ, the cankerworm, represents 140 years of the Greco-Macedonian oppression, from 330 to 190 B. C., when Antiochus, the Jews’ great enemy, was defeated by the Roman, Lucius Scipio. Chasil, the caterpillar, represents the 108 years of the Roman oppression, beginning with their minion, Herod the Great, an Idumean stranger (38 B. C.) and ending A. D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The whole period thus comprises that between the destruction of the first and the second temple; and the calamities which befell the Jews by the four world empires in that period are those precisely which produced the ruin under which they are still groaning, and form the theme of their Kinoth, or songs of lamentation.

EXTENT of devastation. “He hath laid my vine waste and barked my fig tree. He hath made it clean bare and cast it away. The branches thereof are

¹ Revelation 9:3-11 “And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.”

² Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

³ Daniel 7:4 “The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.”

made white”—V. 7. The “vine” speaks of the ten tribes and the “fig tree” of the Jews. See ¹Isa. 5:1-8 and ²Luke 13:6, 7. God here speaks of the carrying away at the Ten Tribes (B. C. 720, 2 Kings 18) and of the 70 years captivity of the Jews (B. C. 606 to 536, 2 Kings 24), as if already accomplished, because He knew that they would come to pass. Verses 17 to 20 describe in detail the widespread desolation wrought by the treading-down, the unproductiveness of the land and the sad results. How dreadful are the consequences of unbelief and disobedience toward the Lord. Deserved and unavoidable chastisement is sure to ensue. Let us profit by Israel’s folly.

Devastation Due to Backsliding

Chap. 1:8-20

1:8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

EXHORTATION. Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth”—V. 8. Verse 5 calls the drinkers of wine to awake from their intoxication, and “weep and howl” because of their worldliness. The people became engrossed with business and intoxicated with pleasure, which wine drinking figures. Paul wrote, “Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit”—Eph. 5:18. Joel here in four verses, portrays the deplorable condition in Palestine. Verse 12 is a summing up, and with verse 16, gives the cause thereof.

“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; because joy is withered away from the sons of men... Is not the meat cut off from before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?”—V. 12, 16. The land lost its productiveness, the commodities of corn, wine and oil failed, and the trees ceased to bear fruit—all because “joy withered” from the

¹ Isaiah 5:1-8 “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, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!”

² Luke 13:6, 7 “He spake also this parable; **A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?”**

inhabitants. Do you marvel that John wrote centuries afterward, saying, “Beloved, I wish (or pray) above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth”?—3 John 1:2. In Joel’s day, that sad withering began. It rapidly increased till Jesus came when there were but a few who looked for the Messiah. Individuals received Him, and the Gift of the Holy Spirit; but the Jews, as a nation, rejected both.

APPLICATION. Has not Joel painted a picture of Christendom? What confronts us today? What means the fight between Modernism and Fundamentalism? Why are some ministers crying for an old time revival? Ah! joy is withered from Christendom. Joy and gladness are cut off from the churches. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10), cried Nehemiah. Jesus said, “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full” (*“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”—John 15:11 KJV*)—John 15:11 and 17:13. Over forty years ago, the Holy Spirit visited the Church, restoring the former power and joy of the Lord; but she refused Him. When the Spirit of joy sought entrance into pulpits and pews, the preachers and people said, “No. we do not want fanaticism and wildfire.” They rejected the Joy-bringer and the Joy-sustainer. No Baptist congregation today would allow Spurgeon to leap two feet high with the joy of the Lord; neither do they have a constant revival of real new births, as he did.

Beloved saints, let us take warning. Welcome the dear Holy Spirit in His unlimited pentecostal fulness. Fear not to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. Let the gifts of the Spirit be restored and displayed for God’s glory. Having received the Spirit, keep yielding to Him and learn the Word, so as to know how to be used by Him and how to “walk in the Spirit.”

If you want to lose out, be defeated and prove a failure, just yield to sadness. When grief comes, give up to it and hang your harp on the willow; quit singing about Jesus, quit praising the Lord; cool off your ardor for the Truth, and Satan will soon overpower you. If you seek to be nice and religiously polite and not so hilarious as formerly, your faith will weaken, your victory will subside, your physical frame will grow weary and the gate will presently be open for sickness to walk in and take possession. Oh, let not the joy wither. Keep the joy-bells pealing. Maintain the shout of triumph. Rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and the God of glory will never fail you, but He will thunder against your enemies and fight your battles for you.

TESTIMONY. I thank God over and over that He made me thirsty for the Holy Spirit. Despite the discouraging words of friends, He held the water trough before me until my thirst was quenched and my longing heart was satisfied. My mind was hot with thinking and study; my body was weary with ardent toil, and I yearned and cried for the “rivers of living water” (John 7:38).

1:9 The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.

1:10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

1:11 Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.

1:12 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: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

1:13 Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

1:14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

When I let go, threw up my hands in entire abandonment to God, threw off my preacher robe and bid goodbye to sectarianism, refusing to be bound by men and things, and let the Lord have absolute sway in my life, then He poured in unspeakable joy and gladness, which has never leaked out to this day. Over forty years of joy, and glory too, has been my daily portion. Hallelujah! If he could, the devil would put a quietus on me as he has on some others. He would make me still, nice, proper, and mechanical, if he could; for I am naturally studious, deliberate and exact; but I refuse satanic opiates and cooling parlors. By God's grace, I purpose to live in the torrid zone of Pentecostal power till Jesus comes.

Praise the Lord! He has brought me on victoriously and gladdened my heart wonderfully. He has shown me, not only by the Word, but by observation and experience, what it means to be filled practically with the Spirit, and to keep filling with the Spirit, and keep yielding to the Truth. He has made me to see the danger of compromise, especially with the religious world, and be willing to "sit alone" with Jeremiah, "filled with indignation" (*"filled me with indignation."* KJV)—Jer. 15:17. My fervent desire and purpose is to be among the "living creatures" whom Ezekiel said, "ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning" (Ezek. 1:14), and from whose midst, other linen-clothed messengers may fill their hands with "coals of fire and scatter them" (*"with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them"*—Ezekiel 10:2 KJV) near and far for God's glory. God forbid that He should have to say, "Gird yourselves and lament, ye priests; howl ye ministers of the altar, etc."—V. 13. We will never hear such a dismal exhortation if we go "every one straight forward whither the Spirit goes" (*"every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go"*—Ezekiel 1:12 KJV), and turn not when we go; but the glory of the Lord will be lifted up and stand over the threshold of His house and the court will be filled with the brightness of His glory—¹Ezek. 1:12, 13 and 10:1, 4.

PROPHETIC and pathetic. "The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of God; the priests, the Lord's ministers mourn"—Vs. 9, 13. Evidently these words refer to the future from Joel's day. The offerings were still kept up in his time. Hosea said, "Israel shall abide for many days

¹ Ezekiel 1:12, 13 "And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; *and* they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, *and* like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning."

Ezekiel 10:1, 4 "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne... Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory."

1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

1:16 Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

1:17 The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.

1:18 How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; *yea*, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

1:19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

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.

without a king and without a prince and without a sacrifice” (“*Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice*” *KJV*)—Hos. 3:4. For 2520 years, they have been deprived of a king, having rejected Jesus when He offered to return and reign—¹Acts 7:55, 56. The offerings were discontinued no doubt from the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. These words about the offerings being cut off will have their final and most important fulfillment during the seven years of coming judgment. Verse 15 indicates this clearly, which says, “The day of the Lord is at hand”—V. 15. That is, the day of the Lord will be here, “as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come” (V. 15), when the priests and ministers will lament, mourn, weep, and howl on account of the cutting off of the offerings and sacrifices. Before that period of judgment will begin, the Jews will be at home in their land and will resume the sacrifices, because the real Priest, Jesus Christ, will be due to be received; but they will not yet receive Him. Hence, they will return to the shadows, and accept overtures from one who will prove false to them and cause the daily sacrifice to cease and also the meal offering—²Dan. 8:11 and 9:27. Then they will weep and mourn, as Joel foretells.

¹ Acts 7:55, 56 “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

² Daniel 8:11 “*Yea*, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.”

Daniel 9:27 “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

Chapter 2

2:1 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 the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;

Second Portion

Devastation Described

Chapter 2:1-11

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain”—Verse 1. The first two divisions of the book were covered in our former lesson. Let us note several preliminaries before studying this portion. The name Joel means “Jehovah is God, or might.” There is real significance in this and in the meaning of his father’s name.

TIME. When Joel’s prophecy will be fulfilled, the anti-Christ will be in power, and the world will be wondering after him because he will show off himself as God. He will deceive the people and make them believe that he is the Son of God, the Anointed of God and the millennial king. But the truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ will be God. He will be the Jehovah for that day. In Isaiah 9:6, we read of the entire career of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the beginning of His first advent to the end of His second advent. “Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given.” This speaks of Jesus’ first advent. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace”—Isa. 9:6. These last statements of course refer to His second advent, which will cover a period of 1,000 years. Bethuel, the father of Joel, means, “persuaded, or enlarged of God.” Israel will be persuaded that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and He will be the Persuader. As a result of His persuasion, they will be enlarged. We will read of their enlargement later in this prophecy. I wish to speak again briefly of the time of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

NO OVERLAPPING. “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy”—Dan. 9:24.

This verse was fulfilled within the first seven years of this age. That extended from the crucifixion of Christ to the death of Stephen. Those first seven years were the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ, if the Jews had received Him as their Messiah; but because they did not receive Him and because God knew that they would not receive Him, Daniel was moved to make another statement. Let us look at the 26th verse to get the connection. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood: and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined.”

Notice that a “prince” is coming, a wicked prince. His ancestors would destroy Jerusalem. That people was the Romans, who, in A. D. 71, under Titus, the Roman General, came up with a great army and besieged Jerusalem for seven years. That connects immediately with the next verse. “And he shall confirm the covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even unto the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator.” (*“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”—Dan. 9:27 KJV*). Nearly 1900 years intervene between Titus’ campaign and this verse. That Roman prince (who is doubtless here now) will make an agreement with the Jews for seven years. But he will break that covenant in the middle of that seven years by rejecting Jewish ceremonies.

Verse 24 speaks entirely and absolutely of blessing; no curse, no devastation, no destruction. It names six items altogether of blessing. In verse 27, we read of no blessing whatever. It speaks only of devastation, destruction and overspreading desolation. Prophetic students make a serious mistake. They insist that the 24th verse must be fulfilled again simultaneously with the 27th verse; but it is not so stated by Daniel at all. The 24th verse does not need to be repeated. Its six blessings only wait to be received by the Jews. Notice further, that the 24th verse was “determined.” The 27th verse was simply announced. The 24th was fulfilled in the will of God. The 27th verse will be fulfilled out of the will of God, because the blessings of the 24th verse were not received by the people upon whom they were bestowed. The 27th verse of desolation will come inevitably as a chastisement upon the Jews because they did not receive Christ as their Messiah, who brought the six blessings of verse 24.

When Jesus Christ will set up His throne in the heavens, the Gentile times will end. The 2520 years of Gentile dominion must cease when Jewish times begin. Two lines of kings cannot reign over the same domain at the same time. Gentile dominion was divinely decreed for 2520 years, from 606-587 B. C. to A. D. 1914-1933, and cannot go beyond that period without a herculean crash. Jesus Christ, the divinely anointed Jew of destiny, must begin to reign at the close of that period. Now because the nations will not accept His rulership, but continue their dominion, wholly by the power of the devil, the Lord must take the universal dominion from them by divine despotic force; for they will be devilish usurpers of His domain. Unsparring and worldwide judgment is inevitable.

No, there will be no overlapping of Dan. 9:24 and 27 during those days. Because Israel refused the six blessings of verse 24 at the beginning of this age (which should have begun the millennium) and accepts the overtures of “the prince” (the Roman), God will use the usurping powers to give them a final spanking during the days of “darkness and gloominess” of which Joel writes. Then the woes of Dan. 9:27 will culminate and end with the battle of Armageddon, Israel will receive Jesus as their national Deliverer and Savior, and the six blessings of Dan. 9:24 will flow in upon them without measure.

ALARM sounded. “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain... for the day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand”—V. 1. If the alarm was first given 2700 years ago, how very necessary that it be sounded out today. That period was not “nigh at hand” in Joel’s time; but in the time prefigured by his startling words it will indeed be at hand. That critical period is fast approaching. The day of the Lord is imminent. In the broadest sense, the day of the Lord, called “the Lord’s day” in Rev. 1:10, embraces the entire thousand years reign of Jesus Christ. But Joel refers to a brief period of judgment, which will cover nearly the first seven years of the millennium.

DESCRIPTION of that day. Joel here says, It is “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, great and very terrible, and who can abide it?”—V. 2. Zephaniah 1:15-18 describes it more in detail—“That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation... a day of clouds and thick darkness.” God says, “I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust and their flesh shall be as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath”—Zeph. 1:17, 18. Amos. 5:18-20 speaks of the terribleness of that day upon those who call for the day of the Lord with their lips only. It says, “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light, as if a man did flee from a lion and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light? even very dark and no brightness in it?”

We have cited only three of the many references to “the great and dreadful day of the Lord”—Mal. 4:5. The phrase, “day of the Lord,” occurs over 24 times in the Old Testament. It is found in Isa., Jer., Amos, Obed., Zeph., Hag., Zech. and Mal. It seems that more space is given in the Scriptures to the happenings of the first seven years of the millennium, than to any other subject. The phrase, “that day,” referring to the day of the Lord, occurs scores of times. You will not believe me till you search the Word along this line. Consider that the whole world will be arrayed against Jesus Christ in that day. Satan will then have his final swing of 42 months on earth. The Jews as a nation will receive

2:2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

the anti-Christ. The Gentile nations allied as one grand empire will “wonder after the beast” (“*and all the world wondered after the beast.*”—*Rev. 13:3 KJV*) the anti-Christ. At the beginning of the seven years, many Christians will be perched on the fences of indifference, half-heartedness, uncertainty and selfishness, even where they are now; hence, they will not know when the Lord’s dominion really will begin, and will not be prepared for translation out of this terrible scene. The Jews’ rejection of Christ, the Gentiles’ rebellion and usurpation against Him and the Christians’ indifference to His place and honor—these combine to make a great and terrible day. Oh, let us be in the perfect, glorious will of God by keeping absolutely surrendered to Jesus now, every day, every hour; and thus be prepared to ascend to meet the Lord in the air, when He blows the trumpet of translation. We belong in His perfect will now. We will belong in heaven when that day dawns, even when the millennium begins. By God’s grace, we may be “accounted worthy to escape those things that are coming to pass and to stand before the Son of Man” (“*that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*” *KJV*)—*Luke 21:36*.

I repeat, that the great majority of the Church will be in some considerable measure out of God’s perfect will at the beginning of those seven years. That sad fact will help to pave the way for Joel’s “great and terrible day of the Lord”—*V. 31*. The whole Church ought to be of Philadelphian character, that is without blame before the Lord. All should be full overcomers. Our Lord says to all Philadelphia saints, “Because thou hast kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (lit., out of) the hour of temptation that is coming on all the world to try them that dwell on the earth” (“*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*” *KJV*)—*Rev. 3:10*. That hour of temptation will begin where Gentile dominion should end and where Christ’s dominion should commence. It will continue nearly seven years and will be culminated by the battle of Armageddon. Philadelphia saints will be kept out of that hour of temptation by translation. Other saints will pass into it and “come out of” it (*Rev. 7:14*) before the “great tribulation” of ¹*Matt. 24:21* will begin. “The hour of temptation” (*Rev. 3:10* and *7:14*) will be worldwide and affect the Church. “The great tribulation” (*Matt. 24*) is “Jacob’s time of trouble” (“*the time of Jacob's trouble*” *KJV*) (*Jer. 30:7*) and will especially affect the Jews in Palestine. Keep these two facts distinct. All present day believers should live so as to escape the former. They should live in preparation for translation any moment. But by their fruits, we know that multitudes are not so living. Their love for pleasure, or fame, or place, betrays them. Their greed for wealth and their avaricious

¹ Matthew 24:21 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

hoarding it up betrays them. Hear the thousands of eagles screaming in the safety vaults of saved people. Hear the sad groans of houses and lands deeded to those who sometimes speak of the advent of Jesus. Do not tell me that such possessors of wealth are looking for Jesus to come, or that they are prepared for His coming. They are talking about and preparing for “old age.” Oh, how few believers really believe the Bible.

TERROR of the devastators, Joel declares that they will be “a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any after it, to the years of many generations”—V. 2. This cannot refer to the siege of the Romans against Jerusalem in A. D. 70, or to any divine visitation before then, because it speaks expressly of “the day of the Lord.” The latter phrase of the verse suggests Satan’s assembled hosts at the end of the millennium—¹Rev. 20:7-11.

“A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth. The land is as a garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them”—V. 3. Today, Palestine is being improved by the expenditure of immense sums of money. Houses are being built. Irrigation devices are being planted to make the land productive. The Zionist movement would usher in millennial prosperity if they could. The devastating nations will find a fat field before them indeed. But oh, how terrible and unsparing the waste and desolation that is soon to come. Could we expect anything less? In that day, God will gather all nations to battle before Jerusalem, says Zech. 14. “The holy city shall the Gentiles tread under foot for forty-two months” (“*for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*” *KJV*)—Rev. 11:2. “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision”—Joel 3:14. One’s pencil fails to picture the overspreading hordes in the Holy land in that day.

APPEARANCE of the devastators. Joel’s portrayal of them is quite similar to John’s painting in Rev. 8. They are like “the appearance of horses, and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array”—V. 4, 5. These graphic utterances suggest the simultaneous movement of earth-planes and aeroplanes in the same direction and for the same purpose—utter devastation. Power, speed, height,

2:3 A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

2:4 The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

2:5 Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

2:6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

¹ Revelation 20:7-11 “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”

2:7 They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:

2:8 Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

2:9 They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.

2:10 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:

2:11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very great: for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

flight, daring, endurance, unitedness, persistence unto perfection will characterize that warring host. Now this may seem strange that God calls them “His army, His camp”—V. 11. Tho Satan will equip that host and move them to assemble there; yet, God will use them to chastise His ancient people, the Jews. See Zeph. 1:17.

“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”—V. 10. The tribulation of the Jews will be ended by the consummation of that great and terrible day of the Lord, even as ¹Matt. 24:29 indicates, ²Isa. 13:6-11 foretells that awful day. He announces one important purpose of it concerning Palestine, saying, “He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it”—Isa. 13:9. Those Jews, who will accept the anti-Christ and reject the true Messiah, will be overthrown and perish. A remnant will be preserved miraculously and delivered by divine intervention. The convulsions of nature in the heavens and on the earth beggar description. There will be indescribable death struggles between nations and nations. Hitherto unknown and unused war implements in earth and sea and sky will be employed. The battle of Armageddon will rage. Devil-possessed men will not only fight one another; but they will be arrayed with thrice heated hatred against Jehovah and His Anointed One. No doubt some aeroplanes will attempt untried upward flights and endeavor to destroy the glorified saints. But the Lord will descend with His mighty host of holy ones and overthrow all His foes with glorious triumph. Hallelujah!

¹ Matthew 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:”

² Isaiah 13:6-11 “Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces *shall be as* flames. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 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. And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”

Chapter 2 (cont'd)

2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

2:13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

2:14 Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

Third Portion

Devastation Reversed

Chapter 2:12-32

“Therefore, also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning”—V. 12. The six verses, 12 to 17, indicate that God will bring the dire devastations to an end, upon Israel’s repentance. Hence, they will be fulfilled within the seventh year of the “week” of world-wide trial.

“TURN YE,” is Jehovah’s earnest exhortation, as of a loving father to his wayward children. That was always His tender attitude toward His ancient people after He had divorced them. Hosea 13:9 expresses His deep, plaintive feelings, He exclaims, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.” Their repentance must be “with all the heart.” An outward, apparent turning will not suffice. Hence, He says, “Rend your heart, and not your garments”—V. 13. We have witnessed superficial, make-believe repentance. It sheds tears, rolls on the floor, tears its raiment; but has no depth, and does not last. It turns seemingly, because it was caught in the wrong, or because it wants to be delivered from trouble. When the heart is actually torn with sorrow because of departure from the Lord, there are abiding results; for He is drawn on the scene thereby and accepts those who turn to Him.

HOPE. “Who knoweth if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him?”—V. 14. Joel was not in doubt concerning God’s mercy. He knew what is written in Deut. 4:29, 30, where Moses said, “In the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God and shalt be obedient unto His voice, thou shalt find Him” (“*But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD 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 the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice*”—Deut. 4:29, 30 KJV). And Peter declares, that “the Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness”—2 Pet. 3:9. Some people are perplexed about God repenting. It is not as if He had done wrong; for He cannot do evil. He does not even change His mind; but His attitude toward men is changed when they turn from their evil ways unto Him. Note the references from ¹Gen. 6:6, and study especially ²Isa. 63:14. You will see that God never swerved from His purpose of cutting off the old creation and of bringing in a new creation. His “repenting,” or “repenting not,” hinged on that purpose.

¹ Genesis 6:6 “And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”

² Isaiah 63:14 “As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.”

Finally, observe, that whatever He did it was “to make Himself a glorious name” (“*to make thyself a glorious name.*” *KJV*)—Isa. 63:14. That is His ultimate object in showing mercy to Israel and replacing them in the promised land.

“A MEAT offering and a drink offering” (Chap. 1:9), the blessing which Joel hoped the Lord would grant, is yet future. See our notes on chap. 1:9, 13. Israel will resume their sacrifices, foreshadowing their hope of the coming of the Messiah. God will show His favor temporarily by accepting them. Presently, the Lord will reveal Himself to them from the skies, and bless them as indicated in verses 18-20.

2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

2:16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

2:17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where *is* their God?

A GREAT REVIVAL due. “Gather the people. Sanctify the congregation. Assemble the elders. Gather the children and those that suck the breasts. Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber and the bride out of her closet”—V. 16. The exhortations of the preceding verses will be heeded. Young and old, great and small, will assemble in Jerusalem and cry out to God. The crushing heel of the nations will drive the Jews to the Lord. The 85th Psalm will be the voice of their entreaty. “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?” With fervent expectation, the awakened prophets will exclaim, “Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn and He will heal us. He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days (2,000 years will have passed), will He revive us. In the third day (at the beginning of the millennium), He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight”—Hosea 6:1-3.

How to precipitate a revival. “Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar”—V. 17. It appears that the temple will be rebuilt between now and that time, probably not the one described in Ezek. 40. See ¹Isa. 60:10 and ²Zech. 1:16. And yet, will not Dan. 9:25 have another fulfillment?—“The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” The prayer of the priests will be, “Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?”—V. 17. That will be the time of the treading under foot of Jerusalem for three and a half years—³Rev. 11:1, 2. It will be the period of “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7),

¹ Isaiah 60:10 “And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.”

² Zechariah 1:16 “Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.”

³ Revelation 11:1, 2 “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.”

the “great tribulation,” than which there has been none greater—¹Matt. 24:21, 22. Oh, will there not be a dire need of repentance and crying out to the living God? A remnant will weep and wail, lament and mourn. Yes, it is the remnant always who save the situation by their bitter tears and dying groans. They will refuse the rulership of anti-Christ. He is not Israel’s Messiah and King. Infidels will yell mockingly, saying, “Where is the God of the Jews?” Then “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure”—Ps. 2:4, 5. See also ²Prov. 1:24-32. The proud and haughty shall be humbled to dust and destruction; but the Jews, who shall humble themselves before Almighty God, will be exalted forever.

2:18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

DELIVERANCE due. “Then will the Lord be jealous for His land and pity His people”—V. 18. This is the first of seven potent points in this portion. God will answer the prayers of His oppressed people and rise to their rescue. He will bring their sorrow to an end suddenly. Jesus said, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake, those days shall be shortened”—Matt. 24:22. They will fall short 250 days of the seven years that Satan purposes to dominate men and, destroy the children of God. Joel begins this portion by speaking of God’s blessing upon the land. The deliverance of Israel, related by other prophets, is implied.

2:19 Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:

REPROACH removed—verse 19. “Yea, the Lord will answer His people, Behold, I will send you corn and wine and oil and ye shall be satisfied therewith; and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen”—V. 19. The Jews are known to be thrifty. They make and lay up money where others fail. To be rag and bottle gatherers is indeed a reproach to them—a hiss and a byword among the Gentiles. And the most humiliating thing that could befall them is that their land should be barren. It is a stinging pain for a Jew to hear a Gentile say of him, “He is no good. He cannot make a living.” Therefore, what a day that will be when the whole country will again be productive. How Israel will rejoice, especially when they turn to the Lord and acknowledge Jesus Christ to be their Messiah and King. Then the tables will be turned. Then it will

¹ Matthew 24:21, 22 “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

² Proverbs 1:24-32 “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”

2:20 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, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

be the time for the Gentiles to blush; for Jehovah will be on the side of Israel. They will again be the chief folk on earth. Their three leading commodities—corn, wine and oil—food, intoxicant and lubricant will abound. There will be an ample supply.

REVENGE returned—verse 20. “But I will remove far off from you the northern army; and will drive him into a land barren and desolate,” etc. See notes on chapter one, under verse 4. Primarily, the army of the north refers to the Syrians; but other nations will be gathered at the gates of Jerusalem in that awful day. Compare ¹Jer. 1:14, 15 with Ezek. 38:1 to 6. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya will be there. “Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters and all his bands.”—Ezek. 38:6. Observe in verse 4, (Ezek. 38), that God says to Gog, “And I will turn thee back and put hooks into thy jaws.” Read Ezek. 38 and 39. Evidently the countries east from Palestine will be desolate. See ²Jer. 50:39, 40 and 51:42, 43.

“The East sea” refers to the Caspian sea, which is north of Persia and east from Russia. “The utmost sea,” also called “The Great sea,” is the Mediterranean, which borders Palestine on the west. “His stink and ill savor shall come up” (“*his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up*” *KJV*)—V. 20. The odor of the egregious defeat of Israel’s foes will ascend before them like the nauseating, steaming stench of a huge manure pile. The reproach will be turned upon them forever, “because he hath magnified to do great things,” margin. Satan will make Gog “think an evil thought,” or conceive a mischievous purpose, to overrun and despoil the holy land—³Ezek. 38:10.

¹ Jeremiah 1:14, 15 “Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.”

Ezekiel 38:1-6 “And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of *armour*, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: *and* many people with thee.”

² Jeremiah 50:39, 40 “Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell *there*, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD; *so* shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.”

Jeremiah 51:42, 43 “The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth *any* son of man pass thereby.”

³ Ezekiel 38:10 “Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, *that* at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought.”

2:21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

2:22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

2:23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

2:24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

But Jehovah will know it, and suddenly discomfit him and all his bloodthirsty horde.

PROSPERITY pledged—verses 21 to 24. “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit; the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength”—V. 21, 22. How wonderful! God’s eyes are upon the holy land to renew its fertility, and upon the animals to put an end to their groans and ferocity—¹Rom. 8:21 and ²Isa. 11:6-9. Everything everywhere in that region will abound with life and health and prosperity. The orchards will blossom and bloom and be fruitful. The vineyards will be green and vines laden with the most luscious grapes. The whole nation of Israel will be overwhelmed with prosperity, as illustrated by the fruitfulness of the vine and fig tree. The prophet’s words of encouragement continue, as he speaks now to the people.

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God” (V. 23), as if to say, “You have not brought all this about by your own efforts. Your wealth has not purchased this sudden outburst of plenty; neither have you merited it by your goodness. My grace, wisdom, and might, because of my covenant with your fathers, have wrought this for you.” God had promised the land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for an everlasting possession, saying also, “And I will be their God”—Gen. 17:8. Then follows the proof of it.

THE RAINS restored—verse 23. “For He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain (rains), the former rain and the latter rain in (as at) the first. And the floors shall be full of wheat and the fats (vats) shall overflow with wine and oil”—V. 23, 24. Some basic facts must be noted in order to understand these words easily and clearly. First, Joel wrote as if “the day of the Lord” were in sight. See chaps. 1:15 and 2:11 and chap. 3. He does not recognize the first advent of Christ and this church period. He beholds only Israel’s past plenty, while obedient under Joshua, and later, and then their poverty and the withholding of the rains because of their disobedience. The latter fact and the nearness of the day of the Lord stirred him up to exhort them to repentance.

¹ Romans 8:21 “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

² Isaiah 11:6-9 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And 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 not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

Before proceeding, let the student observe, that three Hebrew words in particular, are used with reference to the rains in Palestine. “Moreh,” the early sprinkling rain, translated, “the first, the former, the early rain,” which falls in October. “Malqosh,” the gathered rain, translated, “the latter rain,” which falls March. And “Geshem,” the heavy, drenching rains, which include the former and the latter. Geshem is always plural, and should be so translated, as in ¹Lev. 26:4, R. V. In ²Jer. 3:3, ³Ezek. 34:26 and ⁴Zech. 10:1, geshem is translated “showers.” In our text in Joel, it is “the rain” (lit. rains). Therefore, we may paraphrase the verse thus—“For He hath given you moreh, the early, sprinkling rain, in just measure (R. V.); and He will cause to come down for you geshem, the showers, that is, both moreh, the early sprinkling rain, and malqosh, the latter, or gathered rain, as at the first, when Joshua led Israel into Canaan.

Four Rain Epochs

It is very important to know that four distinct stages, or epochs are recorded concerning Israel and their rains.

First, was the original promise. God said to Israel, “If ye walk in my commandments and do them, I will give you RAINS (Heb. geshem) in their season; and the land shall yield her increase and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (*“If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.” KJV*)—Lev. 26:3, 4, R. V. Compare also ⁵Deut. 11:14, 15. That promise was most certainly fulfilled, beginning under Joshua’s dominion. Note ⁶Ezra 10:9, 13. Also S. Sol. 2:11, 12—“For lo, the winter is past; the rain (geshem, rains) is over and gone; the

¹ Leviticus 26:4 “Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.”

² Jeremiah 3:3 “Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.”

³ Ezekiel 34:26 “And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.”

⁴ Zechariah 10:1 “Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.”

⁵ Deuteronomy 11:14, 15 “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.”

⁶ Ezra 10:9, 13 “Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain...But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.”

flowers appear on the earth.” Joel remembered the days of prosperity, saying, “The land is as the garden of Eden before” the devastators—Chap. 2:3. And the phrase, “in the first,” refers back to that time. The word, “month,” is not in the Hebrew.

Second, was the period of scarcity and drought, which Joel deplores—Chap. 1:10 to 20. Study also ¹Jer. 3:1-3 and 5:24. ²Mal. 3:10 implies that time of barrenness of the land and promises plenty upon their repentance.

Third, the rains fell and plenty was restored at the first advent of Jesus. This is exactly what Joel’s words mean—“He hath given you the former rain (moreh) moderately” (V. 23) (or in just measure, R. V.). This is also implied by such citations as ³Jas. 5:7, ⁴Acts 4:34-37 and 11:28 with 3:19, which the student, may examine. The margin reads, “He hath given you a Teacher of righteousness,” which refers to Jesus Christ. How marvelous that the Hebrew word “moreh” should mean both the spiritual Blessor and the material blessings. Indeed, everything depends upon Christ. All God’s plans and purposes are wrapped up in His Son. “By Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17), or hold together. His coming brought spiritual and material plenty. “It is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you”—Hos. 10:12. Job is a beautiful type of Christ at this point. He said, of the people, “And they waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain”—Job 29:23.

¹ Jeremiah 3:1-3 “They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and 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; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.”

² Malachi 3:10 “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*”

³ James 5:7 “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.”

⁴ Acts 4:34-37 “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid *them* down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet.”

Acts 11:28 “And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.”

Acts 3:19 “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”

Joel and his contemporaries had only one advent of the Messiah in mind, even that which is yet future; but God saw much more. Therefore, Joel's declaration. "He hath given you the former rain moderately" (V. 23), was fulfilled by the advent of Jesus Christ as the Teacher of righteousness. In the New Testament. He is called. "a Teacher come from God"—John 3:2, The Greek word, translated "teach," or "teacher," occurs over a hundred times with reference to Jesus. The Greek term rendered "teacher" is translated "Master" nearly fifty times. The word "teach" is used of the Holy Spirit only once (¹John 14:26); but He is nowhere called a teacher. Hence, the phrase, "teacher of righteousness" in Joel 2:23 cannot refer to Him. Finally, we come to the

Fourth stage of Israel and of the rains on their land. This is yet future. Joel continues by saying, "And He will cause to come down for you the rain (geshem, rains or showers)—the former rain and the latter rain as at the first" (*"and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."*—V. 23 KJV). What is said of David, "the king's son," (Psalm 72:6), refers finally to Jesus—"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth." Hosea 6:3 confirms this view—"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain (geshem, rains); as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (*"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."*—KJV) R. V.. These citations speak of the Lord's second advent in particular. Hosea says, "After two days (two thousand years, as ²2 Pet. 3:8 explains), will He revive us. In the third day (the millennium), He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight"—Hos. 6:2. He agrees with Joel's second, or prophetic statement. From Hosea till Jesus returns will be more than 2,700 years. Hence, in his third dispensational day, Israel will be revived and their land will receive copious showers, the early and later rains, and will abound in fruitage. Zechariah speaks of the same hopeful days, exhort his people to "ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain" (*"Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain"*—Hosea 10:1 KJV) with the promise of the pent-up heavy rains (geshem) and a plentiful harvest. Without knowing it, Joel announced in one verse, both advents of Jesus.

"In the first month." Let us look at this perplexing phrase. This cannot mean that all the rains will be crowded into the first month. In fact, the word

¹ John 14:26 "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

² 2 Peter 3:8 "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

2:25 And 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.

2:26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

2:27 And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

“month” is not in the Hebrew, nor is it implied by the adjective, “first.” The Revised Version reads “at” instead of “in.” Now supply “as” before “at,” so that it reads, “As at the first”; then our problem is solved. Note how often “as” is used in ¹Job 29:23, ²Psa. 72:6 and ³Hos. 6:3. This is evidently the meaning. When the Lord comes again, the land will be restored to its original productiveness; for the rains will fall upon it as copiously as they did “at the first,” or when Israel first dwelt therein, before the showers were withheld because of Israel’s sins. The following four verses prove this to be the meaning. Read them and rejoice.

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten” (V. 25), etc. See notes on chap. 1:4. The unwordable devastation of the nations will be ended suddenly by divine interference at the coming of Jesus. Their ravages will be followed by marvelous prosperity. The land will be restored to its former fruitfulness. Hence, these gracious words of hope and comfort—“And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be ashamed”—V. 26. The Gentiles will never again have occasion to reproach the Jews on account of God’s judgment upon them. They will no longer be a “hiss and a byword” among the nations. They will dwell in their own land and be safe forever.

REVELATION renewed—verse 27. “And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else; and my people shall never be ashamed”—V. 27. “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”—Isa. 40:5. “So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel”—Ezek. 39:7. “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God. We have waited for Him and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation”—Isa. 25:9. The Jews as a people will accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King. He will overthrow the anti-Christ and save them. Hence, again, Joel says, “And my people shall never be ashamed”—V. 27.

PENTECOST Promised—Chapter 2:28-32. This division contains the culmination of the swallowing up of the devastation. The oft-promised spiritual showers are here foretold. The material rains were only reminders and symbols of the far greater spiritual “floods upon the dry ground”—Isa. 44:3. Joel beheld

¹ Job 29:23 “And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain.”

² Psalm 72:6 “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers *that* water the earth.”

³ Hosea 6:3 “Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.”

2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

2:29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

the pouring out of the Spirit just before the day of the Lord, the day of darkness, gloominess and judgment. But Peter, by divine inspiration, declares Joel's prophecy partly fulfilled in his day. Of course he expected the foretold day of darkness to follow the advent of the Spirit, even as Joel did. But he understood differently when he wrote his second epistle—¹2 Peter 3:8.

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,” said Joel (V. 28). But Peter said, “And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (“*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh*” *KJV*)—Acts 2:17, R. V. There are three points of difference between these two men's words tho they both spoke by and concerning the same Holy Spirit. Joel said, “Afterward,” that is, after all that is recorded in chapter 1 and in the preceding verses of this chapter. After the treading down of the city by the nations and the consequent losses, and after the overthrow of those nations and the restoration of fruitfulness and plenty in the land. Even after what we shall read in the third chapter; for the fullest measure of the Spirit's presence and power in Palestine will follow the battle of Armageddon. Hence, Peter could not say, “Afterward,” but “In the last days.” See our studies in Acts, chapter 2.

This leads us to the third point in which Peter differs from Joel. He says, that thus “saith God, I will pour out OF (Gr. apo) my Spirit”—Acts 2:17. The Pentecost at the beginning was only an earnest of the “floods upon the dry ground”—Isa. 44:1-4, “the showers of blessings” (“*there shall be showers of blessing.*” *KJV*)—Ezekiel 34:26. The Spirit has not yet been “poured upon all flesh.” The mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit, of the past 46 years is a renewal of the first showers of Pentecost and an earnest of the final and complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Peter's words, “In the last days,” includes the present church age and the coming millennial age. Time is compassed by two great periods, the first days or the period before Christ came, and “the last days,” the period since He came. These are expressed by the two calendar countings—A. M., Anno Mundi, in the year of the world, and A. D., Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord. Hosea (²chap, 6:1-3) and Peter (¹2 Peter 3:8) tell us that there are three last dispensational days. But we want to impress upon our minds, that the final Pentecost will be far more wonderful and powerful than the first, or the present, effusion of the Spirit. By means of the early spiritual rain, the first advent of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, God has been

¹ 2 Peter 3:8 “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

² Hosea 6:1-3 “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.”

“visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name” (*“did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”—Acts 15:14 KJV*). And there was only a sprinkling of salvation for the Jews, because they refused the Messiah nationally. But at Christ’s second advent, and the final outpouring of the Spirit, the great world-wide revival among Jews and Gentiles, will take place. “After this (after this church age), I will return, . . . that the residue of men”—“all Israel,” who, will believe (¹Rom. 11:26), “might seek: after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things”—Acts 15:14-17. Those will be halcyon days for both Jews and Gentiles. The golden age will then be here.

The second point in which Peter’s words differ from Joel, is this. Peter added, “Saith God,” the emphatic Greek order for “God saith.” Peter sought to impress his hearers, that he was not quoting Joel’s words simply, but the words of God. They were responsible to accept the prophecy as divine. And are we not responsible to accept them as divine? And were not Peter’s words also the voice of Jehovah? Not one prophetic student denies that we are in the last days. Then how can men deliberately denounce the present, effective, phenomenal working of God and call it fanatical and devilish? What happened in the beginning of the last days? How can verse 17 be fulfilled in the closing days except by a repetition, or a continuation of the same miraculous phenomena of the first last days? If the phenomena in Peter’s day were the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy in any measure, what else can similar supernatural phenomena today be if not another fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy? How dare men garble the Scriptures by introducing a substitute for Jehovah’s own sovereign Gift and His miraculous accompaniments? How dare men admit the miraculous of the early “last days,” and insist that we can be anointed with the Holy Spirit and power in the “last days” without the Spirit’s own phenomenal sign and without the works of power that prove His presence? Peter exclaimed, “This is THAT which was spoken by the prophet Joel”—Acts 2:16. Certainly, we need to be able to say of our anointing, or baptism, as some term it, “This is THAT which was spoken by Joel and enjoyed by Peter.” Anything less is spurious, being a vain imitation. Not only did God say, but He “saith.” He has continued to say, “This is that,” for lo, these 1900 years. How foolish are those who turn a deaf ear to His voice. But how blest and victorious and useful, and how pleasing to Him, are those who believe and heed His words.

Joel’s “afterward” has therefore already come to pass in a measure. The material rains have been falling to some extent in Palestine for about twenty five years. And over forty years ago, the Holy Spirit began to manifest His mighty power in signs and wonders. People became filled with the Holy Spirit,

¹ Romans 11:26 “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:”

2:30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

2:32 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

receiving the distinctive supernatural sign of their anointing. And our God be praised! these phenomena continue; for Jesus said, “These signs shall follow them that believe”—Mark 16:16, 17, and some saints still believe God is preparing the Church for translation; for it is “the day of His preparation.” The world is being warned of certain judgment, and the Jews are being made ready to receive Christ as their Messiah and King, tho they may not realize it.

TRIBULATION Days. “And I will show wonders in the heavens and the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke”—v. 30. Revelation 8 and 9 record somewhat in detail the things here mentioned by Joel. They will likely begin before and continue thruout the time of “Jacob’s trouble,” the great tribulation upon the Jews. “The great and terrible day of the Lord” (V. 31) will follow; for Jesus said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, etc.”—Matt. 24:29. The battle of Armageddon will culminate and end the tribulation days. It seems that the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars and the shaking of the heavens will be occasioned by that battle, or at least occur at that time. All the terrific and indescribable commotions in the sky and on earth for that brief time, Joel foresaw as “great and terrible.”

“THE Remnant” of Jews shall be delivered during those days. “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call”—v. 32. The prophecy of the two witnesses (Rev. 11) will be effectual. Some of their hearers will cry out to Jehovah and believe on Jesus and be saved from their sins and “endure unto the end” of the tribulation. “The same shall be saved” miraculously from physical death; for those days win be shortened by sovereign divine intervention—¹Matt. 24:13, 22. As we read in the next chapter, God says, “I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem”—Chap. 3:1. See also ²Micah 4:6, 7. Observe that Peter quotes only part of this last verse, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21), because the tribulation could not come within the first seven years of the Spirit’s advent. ³Daniel 9:24 only, with its half dozen

¹ Matthew 24:13, 22 “**But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved... And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.**”

² Micah 4:6, 7 “In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.”

³ Daniel 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”

proffered blessings, could be fulfilled. ¹Dan. 9:27, a week, (seven years) of trial and judgment, will occupy the opening of the millennium, because Israel as a nation did not accept those six blessings in the beginning; but that week will be shortened 250 days by the Lord's mighty hand. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened"—Matt. 24:21.

¹ Daniel 9:27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Third Portion Continued

Devastators Judged

Chapter 3:1-16

Chapter 3

3:1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

3:2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

3:3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

TIME of the judgment. “For behold in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem”—V. 1. The fulfillment of this portion will occur during the seven years of trouble mentioned in Dan. 9:27, called by some, ‘The last week of Daniel.’ It is termed “the hour of temptation (lit. trial) which shall come upon all the world”—Rev. 3:10. Within that time, the Lord will deliver Israel out of their long-drawn-out captivity.

DEVASTATORS Assembled. “I will also gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat and will plead with them there for my people and my heritage Israel”—v. 2. Zechariah 14 says that God will gather all the nations against Jerusalem at that time. The valley of Jehoshaphat is east of Jerusalem, between it and the mount of Olives. That international gathering will cover a small part of the three and a half years; “for the holy city shall they tread under foot forty-two months” (“*and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*” *KJV*)—Rev. 11:2. It will be Jehovah’s final chastisement of His ancient people which would be averted if they would accept Christ nearly three years before, instead of accepting a covenant with an enemy of His. But the Lord will also plead for them, not by gentle, persuasive words, but with fire, the sword, pestilence, hailstones and brimstone—¹Isa. 66:16 and ²Ezek. 38:22. The phrase, “all nations,” evidently includes especially the two contending great leagues of nations, the Western, or European Confederacy, dominated by the anti-Christ, and the Northern Confederacy, headed by Gog—³Ezek. 38:3. These two leagues will be bitterly opposed to each other. Study about “the king,” the anti-Christ, and “the king of the north” in ⁴Dan. 11:36, 40, 44, 45.

¹ Isaiah 66:16 “For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.”

² Ezekiel 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, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.”

³ Ezekiel 38:3 “And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:”

⁴ Daniel 11:36, 40, 44, 45 “And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done... And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over... But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

3:4 Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly *and* speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

3:5 Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

3:6 The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.

3:7 Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:

3:8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

3:9 Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

3:10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong.

3:11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.

3:12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

3:13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness *is* great.

RETRIBUTION Rendered. “Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? Will ye render me a recompense?”—v. 4. Tyre and Sidon, being part of the Roman Empire, were then representative of the Western League. Ostensibly they will protect the Jews from the onslaughts of the northern army (Ezek. 38:3-12), and thereby claim to do the Lord a great favor. But in reality they will be seeking the riches of that land, even as the Northern confederacy will be doing at that time. They will be usurping God’s place, as the Protector of His people; for He will be on His throne. Thus they will incur His just wrath. And He will not forget the cruelty of the four world-powers against Israel, before Christ came, viz., the Babylonish, Persian, Grecian and Roman empires. Compare verses 5 and 6 with 2 Kings, chaps. 17, 24 and 25. God will deliver His people from the slavery of the nations. Not only so; but He will punish the nations for their oppression of His people. This is the meaning of verse 7—“Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own heads.”

A DIVINE Challenge. “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles, Prepare war; wake up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near; let them come up,” etc.—vs. 9-13. At that time, Jesus Christ will be on His millennial throne. He will be the authorized Ruler; but the nations will be united against Him. He will know their wicked counsel and purpose—¹Psa. 2:2. They imagine a vain thing, viz., that they can control all the world and get possession of the holy land, the home of the Jew. Therefore, they gather around Jerusalem. The Western and Northern Confederacies will be in hot contention against each other. Hence, the Lord utters the seven-fold challenge of these five verses. He bids all the nations to make the fullest and most powerful preparation. He challenges the utmost wisdom and skill of their mightiest men. He invites their ships, both air and sea, as well as their land tanks. And he exclaims, “There will I sit to judge all the nations round about”—V. 12.

JUST Judgment executed. When the hatred and rage of the nations are at their height, and their cup of iniquity is full, “the Lord shall bring down His mighty ones” (v. 11) and deliver Israel. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (the glorified saints), in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”—2 Thess. 1:7-9. “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision (concision, threshing, mar.); for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of concision” (v. 14); that is, in the valley of cutting off by just judgment. The time of that assemblage of the

¹ Psalms 2:2 “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,”

3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.

3:15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

3:16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

3:17 So shall ye know that I *am* the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

nations is plainly “the day of the Lord.” His judgment of them will culminate with the battle of Armageddon, which will extend to about 60 miles north from Jerusalem in the valley of Megiddo.

SIGNS In heaven. “The sun and the moon shall be darkened and the stars shall withdraw their shining”—v. 15. Jesus declared that the darkening of the sun and moon should immediately follow Israel’s time of tribulation—¹Matt. 24:29. Chap. 2:31 shows that it occurs “before the great and terrible, or notable day of the Lord.” ²Dan. 7:12 seems to come in here. That day is described in ³Zech. 14:5-8 thus, “The light shall not be with brightness and with gloom; but it shall be one day which is known unto the Lord; not day and not night” (“*that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night*”—Zech. 14:6, 7 KJV) R. V. It will be 75 days long. (See our chart on Rev.) “The Lord shall roar out of Zion” (V. 16) (as a lion roars over its prey) in triumph over his conquered foes, “and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake” (V. 16), because of His mighty power. The whole world will lie defeated at His feet, and begin to acknowledge Him as “King of kings and Lord of lords”—Rev. 19:16.

Devastation Followed By Millennial Glory

Chapter 3:16 to 21

“But the Lord will be the hope (or harbor) of His people and the strength of the children of Israel”—v. 16. He will not roar against His own. He will appear to their mighty deliverance and great delight. That will be the beginning of the golden age. Israel will know then that Jesus is the Lord their God dwelling in Zion. Neither the Arabs, nor any other foreigner will have quarters there.

PROSPERITY will prevail. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come

¹ Matthew 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:”

² Daniel 7:12 “As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.”

³ Zechariah 14:5-8 “And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains; for the valley of 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: and the LORD my God shall come, *and* all the saints with thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, *that* at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”

3:18 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

3:19 Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence *against* the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

3:20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

3:21 For I will cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim”—v. 18. The vineyards will be unspeakably productive. Cattle and goats will roam the forests and hills. The rains (geshem and morah), promised in ¹Lev. 26:4 and ²Deut. 11:14, will fall very copiously and fill all the river beds with fresh water.

We read of the same fountain, named here, in ³Psa. 46:4 and Ezek. 47. In Rev. 22:1 we read of a stream “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” in the heavenly city, which corresponds with the one of which Joel Writes. The stream below is the symbol and result of the one on high, which is the Holy Spirit. Shittim is a place in Moab east of the Salt Sea. Israel camped there just before crossing Jordan, and from there Joshua sent two spies to view Jericho—⁴Josh. 2:1 and 3:1. The Shittim wood, or acacia tree, grew there. It is likely somewhat barren now; but will be fertile and productive during the millennium.

Egypt and Edam will be desolate places because of their ill treatment of God’s people in the past. God does not forget the sore bondage that Jacob endured in Egypt over four thousand years ago, nor the selfishness and cruelty of the Edomites against them on their way to the promised land—v. 19.

FINAL Word of Joel. “But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation”—V. 20. A thousand years of safety, peace and plenty lie just ahead for God’s ancient people, who suffered losses and crosses, hardships and persecution. And they shall continue in their own land thruout eternity. God says, “For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion”—V. 21. The many plagues and diseases that have fallen upon humanity will be gone forever. Israel will not suffer from scabs, scurvy, and leprosy; for the Lord will purify their blood. No doctors and druggists will be needed then; for where the Lord shall dwell, all will be forever well.

The End

¹ Leviticus 26:4 “Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.”

² Deuteronomy 11:14 “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.”

³ Psalms 46:4 “*There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.”

⁴ Joshua 2:1 “And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot’s house, named Rahab, and lodged there.”

Joshua 3:1 “And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.”