

# **Joel 2 - The Day of the Lord; Restoration of the Land, Material Blessings; Effusion of the Spirit; Jesus' Return & Establishment of the Kingdom**

## **II. Future day of the Lord (Joel 2:1-17)**

- (1) Report (2:1-11)
  - (A) Alarm (2:1-2)
    - (a) Sounded (2:1a)
    - (b) Reason for the alarm (2:1b-2)
      - (i) General description of the day of the Lord (2:1b –2a)
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## **III. Deliverance in the present day of the Lord (2:18-27)**

- (1) Covenant curses repealed (2:18-20)
  - (A) Reproach removed (2:18-19)
  - (B) Northern enemy defeated (2:20)

(2) Land restored (2:21-27)

- (A) Agricultural productivity restored (2:21-22)
- (B) Drought removed (2:23)
- (C) Famine to conclude (2:24)
- (D) Consequences created by the locusts to be removed or undone (2:25-26)
- (E) Knowledge of the Lord to be revealed (2:27)

IV. Deliverance in the future day of the Lord (Joel 2:28—3:21)

(1) Covenant curses repealed (2:28—3:17)

- (A) Restoring of Israel (2:28-32)
  - (a) Time of the restoration (2:28a)
  - (b) Pneumatological restoration (2:28b-29)
  - (c) Cosmological signs associated with the restoration (2:30-31)
  - (d) Salvation for Israel in the day of the Lord (2:32)

All OT prophets connect the Day of the Lord with military action (Joel 3:9-12). Amos predicted that a foreign army would invade the country, etc. (Amos 6:14). Attacks are against Jerusalem (Dan 11:41; Zech 14:1-2, etc.). In Joel, the Lord controls the locusts the same way He controls the armies...but he's not limited to military incursions.

Joel 2:1-11 is set apart from 1:15-20 as the prophet deepens the sense of gloom by moving away from the literal comparison between the disaster and the Day of Lord to a set of figures of speech in which the locusts *become the fearful army of Yahweh in the great day of His judgment*. Is there a way out? Joel 1:15 is near, but not yet present!

For the wicked: Day of complete destruction

For the Lord's own: Day of Deliverance!

### **Order of Events in Joel 2-3**

**Joel 2:1-10 - Gentile Invasion; Armageddon**

**Joel 2:11 - Destruction of the Invaders**

**Joel 2:12-17 - Repentance of Judah**

**Joel 2:18-27 - Response of YHWH**

**Joel 2:28-29 - Effusion of the Spirit**

**Joel 2:30-32 - Return & Establishing the Kingdom**

Joel 3:1-17 - Judgment of the Nations

Joel 3:18-21 - Full Kingdom Blessing

### **Joel 2**

II. Future day of the Lord (Joel 2:1-17)

(1) Report (2:1-11)

(A) Alarm (2:1-2)

(a) Sounded (2:1a)

(b) Reason for the alarm (2:1b-2)

(i) General description of the day of the Lord (2:1b-2a)

1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Indeed, it is near,

1 Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near,

1 "Sound the ram's horn in Zion! Sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Tremble, all of you inhabitants of the land, because the Day of the LORD is coming. Oh, how near it is!

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;

- The results of the second invasion were described in 1:15-20; Joel now begins to describe the invasion itself in this passage by sounding the alarm.

— An alarm was sounded to announce an approaching army (Num 10:9)

— Now an alarm will sound from the holy mountain, Mount Zion, where the Temple stood

— When this alarm sounds, it means the Day of the Lord has arrived with full force

(ii) The day of the Lord's uniqueness (2:2b)

2 A day of darkness and gloom, A day of **clouds** and **thick darkness**. **As dawn is spread over the mountains**, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.

2 A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.

2 A day of doom and gloom, a day of clouds and shadows like the dawn spreads out to cover the mountains— a people strong and robust. Never has there been anything like it, neither will anything follow to compare with it, even through the lifetime of generation upon generation."

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.

- A description of the Day of the Lord...

- "...clouds" - *anan*; "thick darkness" - *arapel*, both all descriptions of the Day of the Lord or Great Tribulation throughout Scripture (Is 8:22; 60:2; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:14-16)

— These same terms describe His presence on Mt. Sinai (Deut 4:11)

- "...As dawn is spread over the mountains" - Joel's making the point that just as dawn is sudden and widespread, so also will the Day of Jehovah come suddenly and be

widespread

- It will come not only upon the Land of Israel, although this is Joel's particular theme, but will also extend to all parts of the world
- It will be the darkest period in human history because it is the outpouring of the wrath of God before the establishment of the Kingdom
- The last part of this verse makes the point that this, first off, is a human army ("a great people"), and second, as bad as the invasion of locusts was, this invasion will be much worse ("Never has there been anything like it" [ISV]).

(B) Specific description of the day of the Lord (2:3-11)

(a) Destruction (2:3)

3 A fire consumes before them, And behind them a flame devours. The land is like the Garden of Eden before them, But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them.

3 A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them.

3 "A fire blazes in their presence, and behind them a conflagration rages. Before they come, the land is like the garden in Eden; after they leave, there is only a barren wasteland. Indeed, nothing escapes them.

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.

- Describes the massive devastation of the invading army

— Joel contrasts a land that looks like "the Garden of Eden" before the invaders arrive, with a "desolate wilderness" after they leave

(b) Appearance (2:4a)

(c) Velocity (2:4b)

4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run.

4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run.

4 As to their form, they're like horses; and like chariot horses, how they can run!

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

- The invading army appear "as" (simile) "horses" and run "as" "horsemen"

— Joel is describing something that appears to be "like" an ordinary military invasion, but it is not

(d) Sound (2:5)

5 With a noise as of chariots They leap about on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people drawn up for battle.

5 With a noise as of chariots They leap on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people arranged for battle.

5 They leap like the rumbling of chariots echoing from mountain tops, like the roar of wild fire that devours the chaff, as an army firmly established in battle array.

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.

- The description moves from appearance (v4) → to motion (v5) → to sound (v6)

(e) The response it invokes (2:6)

6 Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale.

6 Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale.

6 The people are terrified in their presence; every face grows pale.

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

- As soon as the people see them, they are terrified and their faces turn pale

(f) Its orderliness (2:7-8)

7 They run like warriors, They climb the wall like soldiers; And each of them marches in line, Nor do they lose their way.

7 They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths.

7 They run like elite soldiers, climbing ramparts like men trained for war. Each man advances in proper order, never breaking rank.

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:

- Emphasizes their speed...

8 They do not crowd each other, Every warrior of them marches in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks.

8 They do not crowd each other, They march everyone in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks.

8 Neither does a man crowd his fellow soldier; each one marches in his own path. When they fall by the sword they are not injured.

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.

- Emphasizes their discipline and invincibility

(g) What it targets (2:9)

9 They storm the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief.

9 They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief.

9 They swarm through the city, running upon its ramparts. Climbing atop the houses, they enter through windows like a thief."

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.

- Description of their attack...

The description given in v4-9 is very similar to that given by John. Rev 9:2 mentions the same blackout (as v10) in which there will be no light penetrating to the earth from the sun, moon, or stars. Thus Joel set the stage for what John developed later. What Joel described in the prophetic invasion is not a locust invasion, but a locust-like invasion. The demons that will be involved in this invasion will have the appearance of locusts as well as the appearance of horses and horsemen. See note: **OT Background** in Rev 9.

(h) Cosmological phenomenon (2:10)

10 Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon become dark, And the stars lose their brightness.

10 Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.

10 "The land quivers in their presence; even the heavens shake. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will stop shining.

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:

- Two major results of the invasion:

1. Earthquakes and "heaven-quakes"

- Upheavals in the sky are typical on the final Day of the Lord (Is 13:10; Zeph 2:14-15; Rev 6)

2. A "blackout" (no light will penetrate the earth from the sun, moon or stars)

- There are five blackouts described in Scripture during the last days of the Church Age and Tribulation. One occurs before the Tribulation; the other four occur during the Tribulation and Interval, before the Millennium.

1. Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20 - Before the Tribulation

2. Rev 6:12 - After opening the 6th seal
3. Joel 2:10; Rev 9:2 - Smoke from the opening of the bottomless pit
4. Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25 - At the Second Coming
5. Joel 3:15 - During the Judgment of the Nations (Sheep & Goat Judgment)
  - (i) The Lord is the commander (2:11a)
  - (j) Its uniqueness (2:11b)

11 The LORD utters His voice before His army; **His camp is indeed very great**, For mighty is one who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?

11 The LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?

11 The LORD will shout in the presence of his forces, because his encampment is very great; for powerful is he who carries out his message. Truly the Day of the LORD is great, and very terrifying. Who will be able to survive it?"

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?

- This judgment will occur because of the divine judgment of God
- "...His camp is indeed very great" - according to Rev 9, this army will be comprised of 200 million demons
- Joel states that God is able to "execute His Word", and He will execute it during the "great and terrifying" Day of the Lord

What Joel described in these verses is the same thing John described in Rev 9, where he wrote of two demonic invasions: the first, in v1-11, is for the purpose of tormenting. The demons are given authority to torment men for five months, but they are not permitted to kill anyone. The second demonic invasion, in v13-21, comes after five months of torment that will destroy one third of the inhabitants of the world in that day.

- (2) Call to repentance (2:12-17)
  - (A) God tells the people to repent (2:12-13)

12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "**Return to Me with all your heart**, And with fasting, weeping, and mourning;

12 "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning;

12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Turn back to me with your whole heart, with fasting, tears, and mourning.

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:

- "...Return to Me with all your heart" - a call for national repentance

— Joel encouraged the nation and the priests to fast and repent and call upon the Lord in prayer. The same thing will occur in the future

### **What About Us?**

Will God answer the repentant plea of a nation marked for judgment? The cynic says: "No!" The religionist says: "I hope so." The believer, responding in faith: God Will!

- Jeremiah to Judah: "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I (God) will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jer 18:8)
- Amos to Israel: "Seek ye me (God) and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4)
- Jonah to Nineveh: "God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10)

The locust plague experienced by Joel's generation was a harbinger of an even more devastating judgment. The Lord Himself was leading an awesome locust-like army toward Judah, but perhaps judgment could still be averted. After all, the Lord Himself was calling His people to repentance (v12) and, as Joel reminded his audience, He characteristically relented from sending announced judgments on His covenant people throughout their history (v13). Though one could never be certain if the Lord had not been explicit, Joel urged the people to respond appropriately and encouraged them with these words: "Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing" (v14). The people apparently took heed to Joel's advice, for subsequent verses state that the Lord did indeed take pity on His people (v18) and promised to restore what the locusts had devoured (v19-26). This important passage again illustrates that God is able and willing to retract announcements of judgment.

13 And **tear your heart and not merely your garments.**" Now return to the LORD your God, **For He is gracious and compassionate,** Slow to anger, abounding in mercy And **relenting of catastrophe.**

13 And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.

13 Tear your hearts, not your garments; and turn back to the LORD your God. For he is gracious and compassionate, slow to become angry, overflowing in gracious love, and

grieves about this evil.

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.

- "...tear your heart and not *merely* your garments" - Joel stated that the people's requirement in that future day will be to *turn*, meaning "to repent"
- The repentance is to come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. This time they are not to rend their *garments*, but to rend their *hearts*.
- God never commanded His people to rend their garments, but usually the action accompanied repentance (Gen 37:29,34; 1 Sam 4:12; 1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 22:11)
- "heart" - whole heart (Deut 6:5). The Great Commandment — if you really love the Lord, it will show in your conduct
- Obey His Commandments (Deut 11:13-15; Cf. Joel 2:18-27)
- "...For He is gracious and compassionate" - *hesed*, lovingkindness, demonstrating the Lord's loyalty or faithfulness to His covenant with His people (Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15)
- He bound Himself with an oath to Abraham to bless the nation (Gen 22:16-17). His people forget the covenant; He doesn't.
- "...relenting of catastrophe" - where there is true repentance, God will respond in grace
- "relenting" - see note: **Does God Change His Mind?** in Ex 32:14
- "catastrophe" - calamity; the judgment that will come with the Day of the Lord can be turned back! God is not anxious to bring it; He would much prefer to bring a blessing.

**God is more ready to bless than to blast; to pardon than to punish; to win by love than to wound by lashing. This is the nature of God.** Verse 13 indicates (in the style of a creed) that God characteristically relents from sending announced judgment. This willingness to change His mind is linked with other divine attributes, such as His grace, compassion, patience, and love. The creed has its roots in Ex 34:6-7, where, following God's merciful treatment of Israel after the golden calf incident, the Lord described Himself as follows: "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." God's willingness to change His mind concerning judgment is not mentioned in these verses, but the inclusion of this theme in later verses is certainly justifiable in light of Ex 32:14, for God's decision to relent stands in the background of the creedal statement recorded in Ex 34.

(B) God promises the judgment will relent if they repent (2:14)

14 Who knows, He might turn and relent, And leave a blessing **behind Him**, *Resulting in a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God.*

14 Who knows whether He will *not* turn and relent And leave a blessing behind Him, *Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?*

14 Who knows? He will turn back and relent, will he not, leaving behind a blessing, even a grain offering and drink offering for the LORD your God?"

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?

- "...behind Him" - contrasts with "behind them" in v3

- If they will turn around, God will turn around and leave a blessing behind, so that the destruction will not be total. Indeed, toward the end of the Tribulation, the whole nation will repent in just this way, and God will respond in grace.

(C) National repentance described (2:15-17)

(a) Nation assembles (2:15-16)

15 Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,

15 Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,

15 "Sound the ram's horn in Zion! Dedicate a fast and call for a solemn assembly!

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

- When the trumpet sounded in 2:1, it was a warning that the invading army had arrived. This time, the alarm is sounded in order to call a solemn assembly (Cf. Num 10:10).

16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. **Have the groom come out of his room** And the bride out of her bridal chamber.

16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her *bridal* chamber.

16 Gather the people! Dedicate the congregation! Bring in the elders. Gather the youngsters and even the nursing infants. Call the bridegroom from his wedding preparations, and the bride from her dressing room.

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.

- The totality of the call: all people should come to repentance in the nation of Israel

— The examples include, but are not limited to: old men, children, infants, even brides and bridegrooms

- "...Have the groom come out of his room" - an extreme sense of urgency; every single person; also pre-empting normal priority commitments

— Military duties normally exempt for a year after a wedding (Deut 24:5)

(b) What the priests pray (2:17)

17 Let the priests, the LORD'S ministers, **Weep between the porch and the altar**, And let them say, "Spare Your people, LORD, And do not make Your inheritance a disgrace, With the nations jeering at them. Why should *those* among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"

17 Let the priests, the LORD's ministers, Weep between the porch and the altar, And let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, And do not make Your inheritance a reproach, A byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?'"

17 As they serve between the porch and the altar, let the priests and ministers of the LORD weep and pray: 'Spare your people, LORD, and do not make your heritage a disgrace so that nations ridicule them. Why should they say among the people, "Where is their God?""

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?

- "...Weep between the porch and the altar" - priests to intercede...where?!

— Notice the location where they intercede: between the porch (point of choice) and the altar

- The priests are to intercede for help based on two things: (1) on the basis of being the chosen people, and (2) on the basis of not allowing the Gentiles to deride them and say: *Where is their God?*

— Ps 79 is another example of Israel calling upon the Lord in the closing days of the Tribulation. Ps 79:10 uses the same reasoning as v17: in order not to remain a derision among the Gentiles.

To summarize this unit: Joel describes the recent invasion of locusts and the calling of a solemn assembly, asking God to intervene, lest there be mass starvation. This led to a discussion of a prophetic invasion of demons, bringing destruction by fire, and once again a call goes out for a solemn national assembly for national repentance.

III. Deliverance in the present day of the Lord (2:18-27)

(1) Covenant curses repealed (2:18-20)

(A) Reproach removed (2:18-19)

18 Then the LORD will be **zealous for His land**, And will have **compassion for His people**.

18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land And will have pity on His people.

18 Then the LORD will show great concern for his land, and will have compassion on his people.

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

- "...zealous for His land" - God was merciful on behalf of Israel; His mercy arises out of His jealousy for His land

— Elsewhere, His jealousy is described as being unique to Jerusalem (Zech 1:14; 8:2)

— "...compassion for His people" - God's compassion ("pity") will never allow a total destruction of the Jewish people

- In v18-19, verbs change (*waw-consecutive* with the "imperfect") to the forms normally used for narrating events that have *already taken place* in the past

— Talking about the future with such certainty as to refer to them almost in the past tense is called the "Prophetic Past Tense" (see Tag: **Prophetic Past Tense**)

- The structure of the book of Joel is built on a comparison between what happened in the past and what will happen in the future

— If the Lord had not responded, who would be present to hear Joel's charge to teach these events to their children and grandchildren? (Joel 1:3)

— The fact that God did respond to His people in their crisis becomes the pledge that in the future Day of the Lord all who call upon His name will be saved

— The promise should be seen in the context of the covenant with Israel: to Abraham, then to David, now through Joel...a promise of an everlasting relationship

19 The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you **grain**, new **wine**, and **oil**, And you will be satisfied *in full* with them; And I will never again make you a disgrace among the nations.

19 The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied *in full* with them; And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations.

19 The LORD will say to his people, "Look! I will send you grain, new wine, and oil, and you will be content with them. I will no longer cause you to be a disgrace among the nations."

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:

- In v17, the priests prayed that the reproach of the Gentiles against the Jews might be removed; God will answer that prayer

- "...grain...wine...oil" - representative of the lost crops. Blessings from appeal found in v24-27.

— The people contemporary with Joel must have responded, *but the invitation to call upon God and receive His grace remains open forever!*

- The bounty of the Land during the Millennium (Is 30:23-26; 35:1-2; 65:21-24; Jer 31:1-6,11-14; Ezek 34:25-31; 36:8-15; Joel 3:18)

(B) Northern enemy defeated (2:20)

20 "But I will remove the **northern army** far from you, And I will drive it into a dry and desolate land, Its **advance guard** into the eastern sea, And its **rear guard** into the western sea. And its stench will ascend and its odor of decay will come up, Because it has done **great things.**"

20 "But I will remove the northern *army* far from you, And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, And its vanguard into the eastern sea, And its rear guard into the western sea. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, For it has done great things."

20 "I will remove the northerners from you, driving them to a barren and desolate land—the front toward the Dead Sea and the back toward the Mediterranean. Their stench will rise, and their stinking odor will ascend, because they have done great things."

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.

- "...northern *army*" - Joel begins describing a third invasion: the invasion of a human army known today as the Campaign of Armageddon

- The "head" of this northern army is the Antichrist, and refers to his Assyrian roots
- That final war will bring about the Second Coming and the Messianic Kingdom. This event will be detailed further in Joel 3.

- Foreign armies always invaded from the north, regardless of their origin (Cf. Is 14:31; Jer 1:14-15; 4:6; 6:1,22; Ezek 38:6,15; 39:2; Zeph 2:13). The locust plagues came from the south (the desert).

- "...advance guard" - *panayw*, its vanguard, its face

- "...rear guard" - *sopo*, its end

— This is not the Magog Invasion described in Ezek 38. What is in view here is Is 10 and Dan 11

- "...great things" - terrible things; denotes negative things

In the counterattack, the main body of the army is destroyed in the Negev Desert, the land in the southern part of Israel that is *barren and desolate*. Its *forepart* will be destroyed in the Dead Sea region on the east side of Israel. The *hinder part* will be destroyed in the *western sea*, which is Mediterranean Sea on the west side of Israel. This will result in the *stench* of dead bodies of the armies of the Antichrist that come against the Jews in the Campaign of Armageddon. They will be destroyed in the south, east, and west of Israel.

The north is not mentioned because this is the direction from which the army invaded. (Cf. in Dan 11:36-45?)

(2) Land restored (2:21-27)

(A) Agricultural productivity restored (2:21-22)

21 Do not fear, land; shout for joy and rejoice, For the LORD has done **great things**.

21 Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, For the LORD has done great things.

21 "Stop being afraid, land! Rejoice and be glad, because the LORD will do great things.

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

- "...great things" - in v20, a stench arises from dead bodies, because they had done "great things"

— In v21, the land is to rejoice and be glad, because the LORD has done "great things"

22 Do not fear, animals of the field, For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, For the tree has produced its fruit, The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.

22 Do not fear, beasts of the field, For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, For the tree has borne its fruit, The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.

22 Stop being afraid, beasts of the field, because the desert pastures will bloom, the trees will bear their fruit, and the fig tree and vine will deliver their wealth.

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.

- The animals who had earlier suffered because of the devastation of the land (Cf. 1:18,20) will also rejoice because the pastures and wilderness will spring up again, and there will be sufficient food and water.

(B) Drought removed (2:23)

23 So shout for joy, you sons of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for *your* vindication. And He has brought down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.

23 So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for *your* vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.

23 And so be glad, children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, because he has given you the right amount of early rain, and he will cause the rain to fall for you, both the early rain and the later rain as before.

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.

- "...former rain moderately" [KJV] - *moreh*, rain (*in isolation*, it means "teacher")
- Many translations interpret the Hebrew word as "former rain in just measure" because that seems to make more sense in the text, *but this is not a valid translation because the Hebrew literally reads, "the teacher of righteousness"*
- This "Teacher of Righteousness" is Jesus Christ the Messiah Himself. They are rejoicing because the "Teacher of Righteousness," the Messiah, is in their midst. [Fruchtenbaum, A. G. (1983). Vol. 74: The Messianic Bible Study Collection (12). Tustin, Calif.: Ariel Ministries]
- "...former rain" [KJV] - *moreh*, can mean "early rain" however *gesem* is the more general Hebrew word for rain. *Moreh* occurs in the Fall.
- "...latter rain" [KJV] - *malqos*, "latter rain" comes in the Spring
- The rains will now come in their proper seasons. Joel mentions three categories of rain: the main body of rain, the *former rain* that precedes it, and the *latter rain* that follows it.
- If the rains come in their proper seasons, the land will produce more crops. Since the rains will come in their proper seasons after Israel is saved as a nation, there will be rejoicing because that will mean an abundance of crops.
- These are all future blessings during the messianic kingdom
- Hebrew wordplay between teaching and rain can also be found in 1 Kings 8:36; Is 30:20-23; 45:8; Hosea 6:3; 10:12

(C) Famine to conclude (2:24)

- 24 The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.
- 24 The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.
- 24 The threshing floors will be smothered in grain, and the vats will overflow with wine and oil.
- 24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.
- When the rains come in their proper seasons, an abundance of grain, wine, and oil will occur
- Instead of tearing barns down as they had done previously (Cf. 1:17), now they will have more than they can fit into these barns

(D) Consequences created by the locusts to be removed or undone (2:25-26)

- 25 "Then I will compensate you for the years That the swarming **locust** has eaten, The **creeping locust**, the **stripping locust**, and the **gnawing locust**— My great army which I sent among you.
- 25 "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent

among you.

25 "Then I will restore to you the years that the locust swarm devoured, as did the young locust, the other locusts, and the ravaging locust, that great army of mine that I sent among you.

25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpiller, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

- Not only will there be this new abundance, but there will also be a restoration of all previous losses Israel suffered in all previous plagues, such as the locust plague of Joel's day

— God will so massively produce in the Messianic Kingdom that all of the previous losses will be more than compensated

— Joel 3:18 states that there will be an abundance of water in the Land

- "...locust...creeping locust...stripping locust...gnawing locust" - order reversed from 1:4 since Joel is looking back (Cf. Rev 13:2 with Dan 7)

26 "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied, And you will praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame.

26 "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame.

26 You will have plenty to eat, and will be fully satisfied. You will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has performed wonders specifically for you. And my people will never be ashamed.

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.

- They will have plenty to eat and will be satisfied. The reproach they felt among the Gentiles, which they prayed might be removed in v17, will indeed be removed and now they will rejoice for it.

## **Five Reasons for Thanksgiving**

1. "The former rain in just measure"; "the Messiah is present" (v23a)
2. The rains will come in proper seasons (v23b)
3. Their crops will be plentiful (v24)
4. The locust's damage restored (v25)
5. They'll be satisfied and their reproach removed (v26)

So the Land will rejoice, the animals will rejoice, and the people of Israel will rejoice over the restoration of the material blessings. The result of the restoration of material blessings is given in v27.

(E) Knowledge of the Lord to be revealed (2:27)

27 "So you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.

27 "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.

27 As a result, you will know that I am in the midst of Israel; that I myself am the LORD your God— and there is none other! And my people will never be ashamed."

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.

- This seems to vindicate Fruchtenbaum's analysis [remember, these verses are future to Joel 1 but before 2:28—3:2]

### **Effusion of the Spirit**

#### **[Hebrew Bible: Joel 3:1-5]**

Joel's successful preaching in his own day foreshadowed a new era of fresh prophetic utterance. This section deals with the spiritual and physical phenomena that will accompany the end times—looking through the broad sweep of history to the day when the Lord Himself will establish His new kingdom for His people upon the earth.

### IV. Deliverance in the future day of the Lord (Joel 2:28—3:21)

(1) Covenant curses repealed (2:28—3:17)

(A) Restoring of Israel (2:28-32)

(a) Time of the restoration (2:28a)

(b) Pneumatological restoration (2:28b-29)

**28** "It will come about **after this** That I will pour out My Spirit on **all mankind**; And **your** sons and your daughters will **prophesy**, Your old men will have dreams, Your young men will see visions.

**28** "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

28 "Then it will come about at a later time that I will pour out my Spirit on every person. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your elderly people will dream dreams, and your young people will see visions.

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:

- Israel's national salvation is frequently connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Joel describes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in v28-29...
- "...after this" - after what? — After the judgments of the Great Tribulation and Israel's repentance (from the preceding context)
  - When Israel repents, there will be this outpouring upon the whole nation that will lead to the nation's salvation. It is an outpouring that occurs during the last three days of the Great Tribulation (Hosea 5:15—6:3).
  - "...all mankind" - the context is "all Jewish flesh"
  - Joel does not mean that there will be an outpouring upon the whole world in general, but upon the whole nation of Israel in particular. This is the same event that Paul spoke of in Rom 11.
  - "...your" - the pronoun refers to Joel (a Jew): *your daughters, your young men, your old men*. He is speaking of Israel, not of the Church.
  - In this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there will be no distinction of age, sex, or social status. The whole nation will receive this outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will result in prophetic *dreams* and *visions*. Thus Joel speaks of that future outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will result in the salvation of the whole nation during the last three days of the Great Tribulation.
  - Other OT verses, pouring out of the Spirit, especially to Israel (Is 32:15; 44:3-4; Ezek 36:27-28; 37:14; 39:29; Zech 12:10)
  - "...prophesy" - one result of the pouring out of the Spirit: new prophetic revelation. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit results in:
    - Justice, righteousness, and peace (Is 32:15-16; 44:3-4)
    - Obedience; new heart (Ezek 36:25-27; 37:14; 39:29)
    - Sorrow over previous rejection (Zech 12:10)
    - *All three involve the regathering of Israel in His Land...*

- 29 "And even on the **male and female servants** I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
- 29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
- 29 Also at that time I will pour out my Spirit upon men and women servants."
- 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.
- "...male and female servants" - includes Gentiles (Deut 20:10-14; Gen 30:3,9; 1 Chr 2:34-35)
  - Women as well as men: Deborah (Judges 5); Miriam (Ex 15:20-21); Huldah to King Josiah (2 Kings 22:11-20); NT (Luke 2:36)

Joel is speaking about the last days of the Great Tribulation, when the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon the whole nation of Israel. Peter quoted this passage in Acts 2:16-21 only as an application to their experience, for there was a pouring out of the Spirit in a limited way, but only upon the Twelve Apostles, not on the whole nation of Israel. The fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29 did not occur in Acts 2 nor is it occurring at the present time. It will occur only when the whole nation of Israel will be saved.

(c) Cosmological signs associated with the restoration (2:30-31)

30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke.

30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke.

30 I will display warnings in the heavens, and on the earth blood, fire, and columns of smoke.

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

- Joel now points out certain signs that will lead to this outpouring of the Holy Spirit (v30-31)...

- Have these happened yet?

— "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jer 30:4-9; Zech 12:2-9; 14:1-2)

— Wonders, to inspire awe (Ex 4:21; 1 Kings 13:3,5; 2 Chr 32:24; Zech 3:8; Rev 6:12-17)

31 "The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, **Before** the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

31 "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

31 The sun will be given over to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and terrifying Day of the LORD.

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

- "...Before" - this blackout of the sun will occur before the Tribulation (also described in Acts 2:20)

— There are actually five blackouts described in Scripture during the last days of the Church Age and Tribulation; this is the first. The rest will occur during the Tribulation

1. Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20 - Before the Tribulation

2. Rev 6:12 - After opening the 6th seal

3. Joel 2:10; Rev 9:2 - Smoke from the opening of the bottomless pit

4. Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25 - At the Second Coming

5. Joel 3:15 - During the Judgment of the Nations (Sheep & Goat Judgment)

— Similar to the blackout in Egypt (Ex 10:21-23) and during the crucifixion (Matt 27:45)

- Signs preceded the presence of the Lord Himself on the earth, and on the Day of Yahweh's wrath proper (Cf. Is 61:1-2)

### **Blood Moons**

An inspection of the Hebrew context and grammar of Joel 2:31, along with an inspection of the Greek context and grammar of Jesus' comments about the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, clearly show that the four Blood Moons that occurred in 2015-16 (on two consecutive sets of Jewish festivals) have nothing to do with the imminent return of Christ.

Joel 2:31 [ISV]: The sun will be given over to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and terrifying Day of the Lord.

From this rendering, you can tell there are two events described by one verb. The "sun turns dark" and the "moon turns red," both at the same time. There are not two events going on at the same time...there is one event, and it affects both the sun and moon at the same time. The red moon isn't being caused by sunlight filtered through the earth's atmosphere to create an oft-observed reddish appearance to the moon. If the moon turns red from the earth's shadow, by definition the sun is shining brightly on the other side of the earth.

Joel doesn't predict four lunar eclipses that will come a year apart. There's only one event, the darkening of the sun followed by a red moon. The diminished light from the darkened sun itself causes the moon to turn red. Whether this is an unexpected shift of the sun's behavior, or some supernatural phenomenon, is anybody's guess. While Scripture is silent on the cause of the phenomenon, it isn't silent as to the purpose...to serve as the final harbinger of the end of days, as Jesus noted:

Matt 24:29: Now immediately after the troubles of those days, The sun will be darkened, the moon will not reflect its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers from the heavens will be disrupted.

By comparing Joel 2:31 to Jesus' interpretation/quote, Jesus renders the Hebrew phrase "the moon into blood" (which does not have a verb associated with it in the Hebrew text) by adding the Greek verb "will not reflect its light". The pronoun "its" refers to the light coming from the sun, not the moon. Jesus is confirming that the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy will not be light from the sun reflected through the earth's atmosphere. Instead, the moon will experience a diminution of light from the sun.

After the sun and moon are affected, what happens next?

Matt 24:30-31:

30 Then the sign that is the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the tribes of the land will mourn as they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 He'll send out his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they'll gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another.

From these verses, we gather:

1. The sun and moon being struck occurs at the end of the Tribulation, not before it begins.
2. The stars throughout the universe will fall from their courses. Heavenly "powers" will be disrupted.
3. After all these events occur, Christ descends from heaven (the Second Coming)

(d) Salvation for Israel in the day of the Lord (2:32)

32 "And it will come about that **everyone** who calls on the name of the LORD Will be saved; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, Just as the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

32 And everyone who calls upon the name of the LORD will be delivered. For as the LORD has said, 'In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, the survivors whom the LORD is calling.'

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.

- Joel gives the one prerequisite to Israel's salvation: Israel must call upon the name of the Lord. The Remnant of Israel will do precisely that.
- "...everyone" - none need perish in the Day of the Lord!
- Those who escape: Petra (Is 16:1-4; Rev 12:14-17; Obadiah 17; Is 37:31-32)

### **Citation in Acts 2:17-21**

Similarities: The Lord pours out the Holy Spirit on the community of regathered Israel. Dreams and visions; speak in tongues. Both to encourage the listener...Jews present from all over the *Diaspora*. The NT came into existence through a new burst of revelation, unified around apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42).

### **Differences**

- The Sun did not darken; the moon did not turn to blood
- The Lord didn't appear with wrath against the nations
- Peter knew well that the Day of the Lord had not come yet: He says so in 2 Peter 3:10

2 Peter 3:10: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Joel is telling us that during the last days of Israel's history, during the Tribulation period, the Spirit of God will work in mighty power in the saving of both Jews and Gentiles, and there will be mighty wonders and signs in the heavens. These are recorded in the Book of Revelation.

### **Role of the Gentiles?**

It's unlikely that Peter used the Joel passage in a Gentile context: Acts shows the early reluctance on this issue (for about 20 years!). Paul later explains the "grafting" of the wild branch into the cultivated olive tree (Rom 11:17). God's purposes for Israel will yet be accomplished. Meantime, Gentiles enjoy the unique blessings of the age of grace (Gen 12:3).