

**The Pilgrim Way Commentary on  
the Book of Joel**



**by Dr. John Cereghin  
Pastor  
Grace Baptist Church of  
Smyrna, Delaware**

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by Dr. John Cereghin  
PO Box 66  
Smyrna DE 19977  
[pastor@pilgrimway.org](mailto:pastor@pilgrimway.org)  
website- [www.pilgrimway.org](http://www.pilgrimway.org)

### **Apology for This Work**

This work grew out of over 35 years of both preaching through Joel in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the book as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached, so this commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market, and they tend to be somewhat dull and not very practical in their application.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote "There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else", he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as any other human theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin's teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understanding of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems to influence my understanding of what the clear teaching of Scripture is.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked "I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter." Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current "flavor of the month" of the apostate professing church, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birth and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used and that God has blessed. It is far too late in

church history to change English translations! We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Matthews Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God’s remnant.

We will compare the superiority of the readings in the Authorized Version to the inferior readings in the mis-named “English Standard Version” and the newer “Legacy Standard Version”, which is John MacArthur’s unneeded revision of the New American Standard Version.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of the book of Joel. A commentary over 35 years in the making can never truly be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added, and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relationship with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s own writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children and three grandchildren. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

## Introduction to Joel

Joel has three chapters, seventy three verses, and 2,034 words.

“Joel” means “Jehovah is GOD.” There are thirteen other Joels in Scripture, but this one prophesies either in the reign of Joash or perhaps Uzziah (800–760 B.C.). The name “Joel” occurs frequently in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 8:2; 1 Chronicles 4:35; 5:4,8,12, etc). Tradition says he was from the tribe of Reuben.

Joel prophesies from 488 to 477 B.C. according to Bullinger. Evidence for Joel prophesying in the reign of Joash (837–801 B.C.) is given by some of the commentators. Various reasons are given for date setting but since all of these come from internal evidence, as no date is given in the book. Much depends upon how the reader interprets the various passages. We will hold to the earlier date, 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. It would really depend on dating this locust swarm but those happened so frequently that narrowing it down to one incident would be very difficult.

Some will take a post-exilic date on the theory that the word “Grecians” in 3:6 could not have been used until the time of Alexander the Great or at least the time of Artaxerxes. Bullinger (who accepts the late date) suggests 488–477 B.C. because in his system (see Appendix 86 in his *Companion Bible*) Jerusalem is destroyed in 498 B.C.

Joel never mentions any king in Jerusalem. If Jehoida the priest was in charge (2 Chronicles 24), this would explain the omission and it would also help to explain the reference to the priests in the book (1:13, 2:17). Joel also avoids any reference to Israel; this leads most of the scholars to believe that Israel has already gone into captivity. But this reasoning has holes in it, for if Israel had gone into captivity, Sennacherib would be threatening Judah (see the reign of Hezekiah) or Nebuchadnezzar would be threatening Judah (see the reign of Zedekiah). Neither Syrians, Assyrians, nor Chaldeans are mentioned in Joel. When all the evidence is in (including several dead ends on Shishak’s invasion in 1 Kings 14:25), it would appear that 885–865 is a good period in which to look for Joel’s prophecies to Judah. (On Bullinger’s calendar this would be 785 B.C. to 765 B. C.)

Regardless of the date, Joel is preaching to the Southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

Scholars make a grave error in assuming that all of Joel’s prophecies have to have reference to contemporary historical events. One will observe that David speaks of having his hands and feet pierced when they never were pierced a day in his life (Psalm 22:16), and who that read Isaiah 53 would be a big enough fool to think that some man from Judah went through Isaiah 53:1–10 so Isaiah could record it in the past tense? When Joel sights in his opening guns (1:2), he is already glancing forward with the prophetic eye and has picked up the last three years of Daniel’s Seventieth Week. The attempts to run verses like 18–20 back into 880–440 B.C. are ridiculous.

Joel has been well-called the “Prophet of the Day of the Lord”.

## Booklist on Joel

\$ Cyril Barber, *The Minister’s Library*

\* James E. Rosscup, *OT Commentaries for Expositors 1987-1992*, Master’s Seminary

@ Keith Mathison, Ligonier Ministries, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-book-of-joel/>

# Charles Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*

Remarks on commentaries are those of the writer, not the author. As always, discernment is required in the purchase and use of commentaries.

\$ Ahlstrom, G. W., *Joel and the Temple Cult of Jerusalem*, 1971. A scholarly assessment of the historical background and cultural setting of Joel's prophecy. Interspersed through this work are important comments on the motifs alluded to by the prophet.

@ Allen, Leslie C., *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 1976. In terms of technicality, Allen's commentary on Joel falls somewhere in the middle. The NICOT series is thorough, but it remains generally accessible to most readers. In his section on Joel, Allen offers a helpful survey of the various arguments for different dates. Like Dillard, he ultimately decides in favor of an early post-exilic date. On the interpretation of chapter 1, Allen agrees with the majority view, taking the description literally. Overall, a helpful commentary.

\*Allen, Ronald B., *Joel*. Bible Study Commentary, 1988, 120 pages. Allen is skilled in Hebrew and interpretation, and writes in an appealing manner. He is conservative and premillennial. In his view the locusts are literal in chaps 1 and 2, yet supernatural in the latter case. He never seems to clear up what the supernatural locusts are in the future time of Armageddon, but stays general and vague. They sound like angelic hosts when Allen links them with Rev 9:11-16. The volume has good emphases on God's grace, compassion, anger, and love in 2:12-17. Apparently the author sees the "northern army" of 2:20 as a human one, not identified with the locusts of 2:1-11. He has a long and helpful discussion of whether Acts 2 fulfills the outpouring of the Spirit, and concludes it is a partial fulfillment (95). In 3:9 ff., he believes the blessing is in the millennium after the second advent, yet he identifies the fountain of v. 18 as the river in the ultimate state, the New Jerusalem (116), and is not clear on why or how he leaps from the millennium to the ultimate bliss.

# Chandler., Samuel, *A Paraphrase and Critical Commentary on Joel*, 1735. Chandler makes very few remarks of a spiritual kind, but explains the letter of the word with considerable skill. In writing upon Joel he does not appear to the same advantage as in his "*Life of David*." He does not effect much in clearing up the "things hard to be understood" in the prophet, and he is of the old broad school.

\$ Di Gangi, Mariano, *The Book of Joel*, 1970. A brief, handy study manual. Of value to laymen.

\$ Driver, Samuel, *The Books of Joel and Amos*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, 1897. Based on the RV, these brief studies attempt to illuminate the English text with pertinent archaeological and philological information. Dated.

\*Finley, Thomas J., *Joel, Amos, Obadiah*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary, 1990. 417 pages. This conservative and premillennial work by a professor of Old Testament at Talbot School of Theology has a good bibliography of five pages and a very full discussion of many issues, a rich use of other studies, help in Hebrew exegesis, and a good effort on word meanings. Hebrew words are transliterated into English. Finley sees literal locusts in chapters 1 and 2 of Joel. One wishes that he had listed and given arguments, yet he does give some when he arrives at individual verses. It sounds as though he believes rich blessing will come to Israel (not the church in this case) in 2:18-27, but it also sounds like he sees it realized in past history. He is not

wholly clear. He sees fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 and the fulfillment of details of 3:9 ff. in the future tribulation period and Messianic Kingdom after the second advent, not in the church or the ultimate state.

@ Hubbard, David Allan, *Joel & Amos*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 1989. I placed Hubbard's commentary on Hosea in third place in my post on Hosea commentaries. His commentary on Joel also takes the bronze. He is in general agreement with Dillard on the date of the book and the interpretation of the locust plague in chapter 1. His commentary, however, is written at a much more accessible level.

# Hughes, Joseph, *The Prophecy of Joel. The Hebrew Text metrically arranged, with a New Translation and Critical Notes*. A purely literary treatise, useful to Hebraists only.

\$ Kapelrud, Arvid Schou, *Joel Studies*, 1948. A scholarly study.

\*McComiskey, Thomas, Raymond Dillard, and Jeffrey Niehaus. *Hosea, Joel, Amos*. An Exegetical and Expository Commentary; 1992, 509 pages This volume is part of a new series on the Minor Prophets with McComiskey as its editor. It is evangelical and shows expertise in exegesis, background, and sensitivity to hermeneutics, plus evidencing a good grasp of recent scholarship. Its bibliography is splendid. The format of the work puts a textual section first, followed by an expository part.

@ The commentary on Joel in this volume was written by the late Raymond Dillard. I do not agree with Dillard's conclusions regarding the date of the book (He suggests a post-exilic date in the late fifth to mid sixth century) or the interpretation of the locust plague in chapter 1 (He argues that it is a description of a literal locust plague), but, nevertheless, his commentary is very useful, especially on the details of the Hebrew text.

Phillips, John, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, 1998, 22 pages for Joel. Short pre-millennial comments based on the King James Version, but Phillips will correct the King James, as he on page 75. He makes application to the Assyrian Empire and their military activity around Israel historically but looks ahead to the tribulation and millennium.

# Pocock, Edward, *A Commentary on Joel*, 1691. [The same volume contains his common. taxies on Micah and Malachi.] Full of antique learning. Holds a high place among the older comments, but will never again be popular

@ Robertson, O. Palmer, *Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel* Welwyn Commentary Series, 1995. Written at an accessible introductory level. Robertson places the book in the late ninth or early eighth century, in the very early pre-exilic period. He appears also to take the majority view of chapter 1, seeing the description of the locust plague as a reference to literal locusts. Robertson's commentary should be supplemented by his thoughts on the book in his more recent *Christ of the Prophets*.

# Rowley, Adam Clarke, *Joel. Metrical Translation*, 1867. The translation has been carefully executed. The notes are illustrative and literary only; they do not profess to open up the moral and spiritual teaching of the prophet. Could Adam Clarke rise from the dead, he would rejoice to find his grandson following in his footsteps.

Ruckman, Peter, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on the Minor Prophets, volume 1*. Dispensational, pre-millennial, strongly prophetic (going where other commentaries fear to tread)

and based on the King James Bible. Ruckman makes many practical and prophetic applications to the tribulation and millennium.

@ Stuart, Douglas, *Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary, 1987. I have already mentioned in my comments on Hosea commentaries that the best commentary on the first five minor prophets is the commentary by Douglas Stuart in the Word Biblical Commentary series. Stuart argues that Joel is a late pre-exilic prophet, a view with which I agree. He also takes a minority view on the interpretation of Joel chapter 1, seeing the locust invasion as a figurative description of a human army rather than a literal locust plague. I find his arguments persuasive on this point. Whether you agree or disagree on that point, however, his commentary is always worth consulting on these books. Very highly recommended.

# Topsell, Edward, *Times Lamentations; or, An Exposition on the Prophet Joel.*, 1599. Among the old English commentaries Topsell is the writer on Joel. He has the usual force, homeliness, piety, and fullness of the Puritan period.

# Udall, John, *The true remedie against Famine and Warres. Flue Sermons upon the first Chapter of the prophesie of Joel*, 1586. We gave so high a price for this small black letter volume that we should like to make it profitable to our brethren, and therefore we commend to the more starchy of them the following extract, which will also serve to show how the old preachers lashed with vigor the fashions of the times. Udall says: "For the feeding of our monstrous humor of vanity, how many thousands of quarters of the finest wheat, which God ordained for the food of man, are yearly converted into that mast devilish device of starch. A sin so abominable that it doth cry so loudly in the Lord's ears for vengeance, as his justice must needs proceed against us for it, without speedy repentance."



## Joel Chapter 1

Through this prophecy, we will be invoking the Law of Double Application, referring to the literal historic event and then dealing with the eventual prophetic application in the tribulation, leading up to the Day of the Lord.

### **1:1 The word of the LORD that came<sup>a</sup> to Joel<sup>b</sup> the son of Pethuel.<sup>c</sup>**

1a The usual format for a prophet to describe that the prophecies and revelation he is about to relate came from the Lord through revelation and did not originate with him. See Jeremiah 1:2, Ezekiel 1:3 and Hosea 1:1.

1b Joel means “Jehovah is God”.

1c “The son of Pethuel: more of this man I know not, and it is possible he might be, as the Jews suppose, very eminent, because he is named; however, it is an honour to be reported a prophet’s father. (Matthew Poole).”

### **1:2 Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land.<sup>a</sup> Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?<sup>b</sup>**

2a The land of Judah and by extension, Israel, not the entire earth. This was a localized event, just as the events of the Day of the Lord will be centered in Israel.

2b Can any of you remember such a catastrophic event as the locust plague that Joel is referring to? The implied answer is “no”. There have been such events in the past, but nothing to compare with this one! It is so bad that probably no one, no matter how old, can remember anything like it. Prophetically, the upcoming tribulation judgments will also be so severe that there will be no counterpart of them in history.

One locust swarm in north Africa in 2004 was 230 kilometers long, at least 150 kilometers wide, and contained an estimated 69 billion locusts. There is a website to track locust activity at <http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>. About the only thing that can stop a locust swarm is a drought or a shift in wind. Locust swarms have also been transported across the Atlantic Ocean by hurricanes, where the swarm was carried from Africa to Caribbean Islands.

### **1:3 Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.<sup>a</sup>**

3a This is worth remembering and worth telling and worth recording, they are so important. The tribulation period will also be of such historic significance that it should be recorded for study and reference by those in the millennium and beyond.

AV	ESV	LSV
<b>3</b> Tell ye your children of it, and <i>let</i> your children <i>tell</i> their children, and their children another generation.	<b>3</b> Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation.	<b>3</b> Recount about it to your sons, And <i>let</i> your sons <i>recount about it to</i> their sons, And their sons to the next generation.

**“tell ye”** The LSV had the more complicated “recount about...”

**1:4 That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust<sup>a</sup> eaten; and that which the locust<sup>a</sup> hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.<sup>b-c-d-e-f</sup>**

4a Since we will be making a tribulation application of Joel’s prophecy, we notice the “locusts” mentioned in Revelation 9:3-11. The supernatural beasts from the pit that are compared to locusts, and that were much more destructive. What kind of supernatural/demonic activity will we see in Israel in the days leading up to the Day of the Lord? Locusts can resemble well-armed horsemen and have incredible strength with teeth like saws that devour everything they encounter. They will literally eat anything, including linen, wool, fabrics and leather.

4b The crops were totally devastated and nothing was missed. If the locust missed anything, the palmerworm got it. There was no escape and no remedy.

Although Joel is describing a locust swarm, the prophetic application would be tribulational, leading up to the Day of the Lord.

4c The palmerworm (“gazam”) means a gnawer or a biter. The locust (“arbeh”) refers to locusts. The cankerworm (“yeleq”) means “a lick.” The caterpillar (“chasil”) is a “devourer,” an animal that cuts off the blossom or bud from the stem. So we literally have the *gnawing* locust; the *swarming* locust; the *licking* locust; the *consuming* locust; forming a climax to the most destructive kind.

These four animals are mentioned again in Joel 2:25, and there they are called “my (the Lord’s) great army.”

4d “In the Hebrew text, this summary of the plague is given in meter. There are three lines in each verse, each consisting of four words. The first and third of the four words are the same in each line. The fourth word of the first line becomes the second word of the second line, and the fourth word of the second line becomes the second word of the third line... Joel used four descriptive words to depict the four stages of the locust. Note the italicized terms: “That which the palmerworm [gazem, the gnawer, the old locust] hath left hath the locust [arbeh, the swarmer, the newly hatched hopper] eaten; and that which the locust [arbeh] hath left hath the cankerworm [yelek, the devourer, the crawler, the pupa] eaten; and that which the cankerworm [yelek] hath left hath the caterpillar [hasil, the consumer, the mature flier] eaten.” These four words show the completeness of the Almighty’s destructive agents. (John Phillips, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, pages 70-72).”

4e John Phillips, in *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, gives a rather complete description of the life cycle of these locusts. “Locust plagues are the scourge of agricultural communities. The worst in modern times struck the Middle East in the early 1950s. In Iran, Iraq Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, every green thing in hundreds of thousands of square miles was destroyed. The desert locust, ranging a territory of some eleven million square miles, threatens nearly 20 percent of the world’s land surface in all or parts of about sixty-five countries where 10 percent of the world’s population live. Locusts have been called “the teeth of the wind” and, even more expressively, “the incarnation of hunger.” Human intervention has never stopped a locust plague and probably never will. The only thing that can stop one is an equally terrible disaster: widespread drought.

“When food is abundant, locusts begin to multiply until their numbers reach astronomical proportions. The more they eat, the more they breed. In a breeding area there can be five thousand eggs in a square yard. There are no compact or mapped breeding areas, so no

continuous or systematic control measures are possible. At intervals females deposit their egg pods four inches deep in damp soil or sand where conditions are favorable for hatching. Each female will lay at least three hundred pods in her lifetime and each pod contains up to one hundred eggs.

“Each pod remains in the ground from ten to twenty days. When the eggs hatch, usually after a rain, the hatchlings find their way to the surface, shed their first skin, and become hoppers. If they have adequate living space, they will remain in this solitary phase—developing, breeding, and dying where they were hatched—just as ordinary grasshoppers do. However, if living conditions become crowded, the insects will enter a gregarious stage in which they seek each other's company and constantly touch one another. This change of behavior triggers a change in color from green to yellow, black, and red. Then the locusts form bands and begin to march. Small bands merge to form larger ones and all of them move forward together in the same direction.

“Marching forward, feeding as they go, the locusts pass through five stages of growth, shedding their skins in each stage. They take short flights and then begin to migrate in swarms. A medium-sized swarm may comprise more than a billion locusts, and some swarms reach prodigious proportions with an estimated million million locusts extending over two hundred square miles. Having no maps, homing instinct, or control over where they go, locusts simply ride the prevailing winds. During its five or six months of life, each locust travels between two and three thousand miles, breeding as it goes.

“The swarms move forward in a kind of rolling motion, some of the locusts always being on the ground as the rear ones pass on to the front. As the rear of the swarm passes over them, those on the ground resume flight. The period spent on the ground enables each locust to replenish its fuel supply for further flight.

“Locusts look like well-armed horsemen and have incredible strength. With teeth like saws, they devour grass and leaves, fruit and foliage—everything green and edible; they attack the young branches of trees and the bark on trunks; they consume corn in the field and fall on vines, willows, and even bitter hemp; they strip palm trees bare.

“Many observers have described locust plagues. One person saw the air eighteen feet above the ground filled with the insects. Reddish-brown in color with gauzy wings sparkling in the sunlight, they reminded him of dense snowflakes driven by a storm. He was awed by their numbers and said the strange sight would have seemed beautiful if he could have forgotten about the devastation the locusts were bringing.

“Another person observed a plague that came like a living deluge on his village. The villagers dug trenches, kindled fires, beat drums, and flailed and burned locusts to death by the thousands, but their efforts were useless. The swarm rolled up the mountainside, poured over obstacles, and descended on crops and trees. It took days for the whole swarm to pass through the area. The roads were covered with locusts marching along like soldiers. The villagers broke their ranks, but the locusts closed rank again as soon as they passed the men. Someone else who witnessed a locust plague said that hundreds of the insects sat on each bush and after eating the leaves, gnawed frantically at the woody fibers. The locusts invaded towns and houses and devoured food, linen, woolen garments, and leather belts.”

4f “There will be literal swarms of literal insects in the Tribulation (see Rev. 11:6) taking the same form as the Egyptian plagues (Psa. 78:46) conjured up by Moses (Exod. 10:13). Following the decimation of the land (see Exod. 10:4 and comments), the demoniac “locusts” of Revelation 9 will come on the land as “a nation...whose teeth are the teeth of a LION” (Joel 1:6), but the army that follows (chapter 2) is no more the army of that nation than it is the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The stripping of Israel's land was prophesied in Deuteronomy 28:38, 40, and the “nation” of verse 6 was prophesied by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:49–52. [See also Hosea 2:12,

10:8, 4:3, and Joel 1:10. As we have said in our comments on Hosea, you cannot separate the physical and material prosperity of a land from its moral standards and its God consciousness.] (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, volume 1, page 184)."

**1:5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine;<sup>a</sup> for it is cut off from your mouth.<sup>b-c</sup>**

5a This is the non-fermented wine, that can be processed into the alcoholic wine. But no new wine meant no fermented wine later. New wine (non-alcoholic) was an important part of the Jewish diet so when the locusts cut off the grapes, everyone was affected.

This is different from Revelation 6:6 where the "**oil and the wine**" were not to be affected as a result of the third seal. The basic foodstuffs were affected (the wheat and the barley) but the more "high-end" materials like the oil and wine (the alcoholic beverages) were not to be affected.

5b They will howl and cry not because of the judgments of God and for their own sins (personal and national) but because the grapes have been destroyed so there is no more wine. They are in despair for personal, selfish reasons. Their own belly and their own self-interest trump any greater meanings or sufferings behind these judgments. This reminds us of the judgments upon Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18. The merchants of the earth and those who has affairs with her do not wail for her when the judgments of God rain down on her, but they lament the loss in business!

5c Wine was the common table beverage in the Orient, so drunkenness was always a problem.

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

6b A lion can symbolize both Satan (1 Peter 5:8 "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**") and Christ (as the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah**, Revelation 5:5). This is obviously referring to Satan as the Devourer as he comes into the land of Israel through the person of his son, the Antichrist. We shouldn't have much trouble identifying this lion, but we do notice that the lion can refer to Christ or Antichrist, depending on the context. Discernment is required to discern which lion we are talking about since the work of Satan can resemble the work of Christ at times. This shouldn't surprise us as the realm of Satan's work is also religious.

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

6,7a God calls Israel "my land" and the nation "my vine" and "my fig tree". Despite all the sins and apostasies of the nation, Israel is still God's people and always will be. He may send Nechuchadnezzar or the Assyrians or the Antichrist against the land in His wrath and in His judgment but once they have fulfilled their purpose, God will severely judge them for coming against the apple of His eye. The land does not belong to the United Nations or the Palestinian Authority. It belongs to God, and He will give it to whom He will, and He give it to the Jews and that is that. No man or government will be able to overturn that divine decree.

6,7b A good picture of these eating insects- strong in their numbers, impossible to count, who eat and devour as a lion would. When the Antichrist is finished with his program to lay waste to

Israel, the land will resemble the aftermath of a locust attack. They stripped the branches bare so that there were no leaves and no greenery.

**1:8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.<sup>a</sup>**

8a The drunkards are to lament but so are the virgins, the more honorable people in Israel. The locust plague brought such desolation that Joel likened Judah to a young bride who has been suddenly widowed. These judgments will affect all people, young and old, rich and poor, sinner and saint. None will escape. You can be sure that when the Antichrist starts his genocide program against Israel after the Abomination of Desolation, he will spare none among the Jews. God will often work this way, as sometimes the godly must suffer along with the unrighteous, as they dwell together. God's people were affected by wars, economic depressions and natural disasters along with the wicked.

**1:9 The meat offering<sup>a</sup> and the drink offering<sup>b</sup> is cut off from the house of the LORD ; the priests, the LORD's ministers, mourn.<sup>c</sup>**

9a The meat offering was of fine flour, oil, and frankincense, as laid out in Leviticus 2. This meat-offering was necessary to every sacrifice offered under the law.

9b This was required to be offered daily.

9c None of the ceremonial worship is possible after the swarm. The locusts and company have cut it all off and the materials needed for the offerings have been destroyed. The Antichrist will do the same after the Abomination of Desolation when he will cut off the renewed worship at the rebuilt Jerusalem temple in the tribulation.

AV	ESV	LSV
9 The <b>meat offering</b> and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.	9 The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests mourn, the ministers of the LORD.	9 The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off From the house of Yahweh. The priests mourn, The ministers of Yahweh.

"**meat offering**" The ESV and LSV have "grain offering". Also in 1:13.

**1:10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth;<sup>a</sup> for the corn is wasted:<sup>b</sup> the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.<sup>c-d</sup>**

10a It looked like a no-man's land after a nuclear detonation- utterly ruined and wasted.

10b This would affect the food supply, bringing on famine conditions.

10c Such as the olive oil- the locusts got that, too.

10d "The field is wasted...the corn is wasted the oil languisheth" (vs. 10). To quote Van Gorder (*Ill Fares the Land*), a "famine" is on the way. In America's case it was planned by the government; in Israel's case it was brought about by sin. Either way, America will not escape judgment, for America has sin, plus a planned famine. With meat prices going from 98 cents a pound to \$1.60 a pound in two years, the farmer was given 26–35 cents a pound for the meat

on the hoof when he delivered it. With the professional liars of the news media (the greatest professional liars in the world) saying, "Last month the price index went up only 1.15% as compared to 2.58% last year at this same time, etc.," any fool knows that the prices on gasoline, candy, milk, bread, fruit juice, meat, cheese, and vegetables went up 100 in three years, and chocolate went up five hundred percent in ten years—while BEER and WHISKEY remained stable.

"Thirty percent price increases in a year is 2.50% increase every month, running three years straight (1971–1973). There have been months (in 1975) when the price of a jar of mayonnaise or a roll of toilet paper or a jar of jam went up thirty percent in one month. The housewives know what the "wholesale index" is. It is an index that increases retail prices thirty to fifty percent every ten months.

"The corn is gone (vs. 10) because of liquor; the new wine is gone because it went into fermented hooch on the grocery store counter (vs. 11); the oil (vs. 10) dried up because America threw away 100,000,000 barrels of it in two "police actions" that weren't worth two hours of Class "C" time on daylight television (how much worse are things in 2023 as compared to the 1970s when Ruckman wrote this!) (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, volume 1, pages 186-187)."

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

11a Both were out of a job as a result of this judgment.

**1:12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree,<sup>a</sup> even all the trees of the field, are withered:<sup>b</sup> because joy is withered away from the sons of men.**

12a Christ is likened to an apple tree in Song 2:3 ("**As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.**"). The apple tree is among the other many trees of the woods. Yet something about it makes it stand out. Christ is among many other (false) gods out there and the truth can easily get lost among the many religions of the wood. Yet the believer can spot Christ among the other gods with no problem and will be attracted to him as we would be attracted to the apple tree among the other trees of the wood. Christ is special to the believer:

1. Because of who He is- He is God and none else is
2. Because of what He did- saved us where no one else could
3. Because of what He will do- bring us home to glory where no one else can

The apple tree is by no means the most attractive of trees- it is rather plain, as Christ appears to the eyes of the world. Isaiah 53:2 "**For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.**" The apple tree may be plain and even ugly, but you get fruit out of it and that is what is important.

Under the apple tree is a great place for communion and fellowship with Christ. In order to commune with Christ, we must sit under His tree out of delight and not duty.

Observations regarding the apples:

1. God refers to His people as the apple of His eye.

- A. Deuteronomy 32:10 **“He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.”**
- B. Psalm 17:8 **“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,”**
- C. Zechariah 2:8 **“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”**
2. The Word of God is referred to as apples in its nourishment value.
- A. Proverbs 25:11 **“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”**
3. We are spiritually raised up and nourished under the apple tree.
- A. Song 8:5 **“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.”**
4. When carnality, sin and backslidings come into the life, it dries up the apples and hence our source of nourishment and communion.
- A. Joel 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.”)**
- B. The Shulamite sat down under the shadow of that apple tree. Sitting down implies several things:
- i. Rest, when you are tired
  - ii. Fellowship
  - iii. Dwelling- you plan to stay for a while. We just don't visit under the apple tree- we live there.
  - iv. And she sat down with great delight. She loved being there and with Whom she was having fellowship with.
5. That tree also provides shade, which is something everyone needs for rest, relaxation and protection from the heat of the glaring sun of this generation. Every saint needs to get out of the glare of this world system and rest under the protection and shade of the apple tree.

Yet all this will be taken away in the Day of the Lord as the apple tree will be smitten, as there will be little opportunity for communion with God. It can be difficult to have communion when you are on the run for your very life, with the Antichrist and his followers determined to destroy you and all like you!

12b The fruit trees were also destroyed, even the palm tree, which is among the most useful and durable of trees. The palm tree is a type of the flourishing of the righteous man (Psalm 92:12). But with the palm tree stricken, there shall be no spiritual flourishing of the righteous man leading up to the Day of the Lord, just as there shall be little in the way of any communion (as seen by the judgment on the apple tree) by the righteous in that day.

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

13a If you think the locusts were bad, just wait until you see what is next in the aftermath! Everyone will have a good reason to howl and lament as a result of this divine judgment.

**1:14 Sanctify<sup>a</sup> 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,<sup>b</sup>**

14a Three things to sanctify in Joel:

1. Sanctify a fast- 1:14
2. Sanctify a fast- 2:15
3. Sanctify the congregation- 2:16

14b It's time for a national day of prayer, fasting and humiliation. And all the inhabitants of the land should participate since all of them have been affected by these judgments. Also, the tribulation is coming fast and hard with the divine judgments on the earth and the pending Jewish genocide program by the Antichrist. With that on the horizon, you had better call a fast and cry unto the Lord!

**1:15 Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD<sup>a-b</sup> is at hand,<sup>c</sup> and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.<sup>d-e</sup>**

15a This is Joel's burden and message- the Day of the LORD is coming and here is what it will be like and here is what you need to do to prepare!

15b Biblical revelation of the "day of the LORD":

1. It is among those who are proud and lofty
  - A. Isaiah 2:12 For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:
2. It comes as a destruction from God
  - A. Isaiah 13:6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.
  - B. Joel 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.
3. It is cruel, with wrath and fierce anger
  - A. Isaiah 13:9 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.
  - B. Zephaniah 2:2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.
4. It will lay the land desolate
  - A. Isaiah 13:9 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.
  - B. Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
5. It is the day of the Lord's vengeance
  - A. Isaiah 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.
  - B. Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.



- C. Zephiniah 2:3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.
6. None will escape it
    - A. Lamentations 2:22 Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD'S anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.
    - B. Zephiniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
  7. It is a cloudy day
    - A. Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.
  8. It is a day of the heathen, when they will be judged
    - A. Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.
    - B. Obadiah 15 For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.
  9. It is "at hand"
    - A. Joel 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;
  10. It is great and very terrible
    - A. Joel 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?
  11. The sun will be darkened and the moon "turned to blood" before that day
    - A. Joel 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.
    - B. Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come
  12. It is a day of darkness
    - A. Amos 5:18 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.
    - B. Amos 5:20 Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
  13. Some people were actually looking forward to it and are rebuked
    - A. Amos 5:18 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.
  14. It is associated with a sacrifice
    - A. Zephiniah 1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.
  15. The strong and mighty men will cry because of it
    - A. Zephiniah 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.
  16. Elijah will return before that day
    - A. Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
  17. It is a great and dreadful day
    - A. Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
  18. It comes as a thief in the night

A. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

B. 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.

19. The heavens will pass away and the elements will melt in that day

A. 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.

The “day” covers an extended period of time, mainly through the tribulation period but also extending through the Battle of Armageddon and even beyond the millennium to the renovation of the heavens and the earth. It covers a broad period of time that cannot be limited to any single event. It refers to a series of related events, all dealing with the outworking of the long process of God’s judgments.

15c Joel will liken the locust swarm and its resulting devastation as a type of this “day”, even as a “dry run” for the prophetic unveiling of this “day”. But “at hand” has a prophetic significance too, as this term is used in Revelation 1:3 (“**Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.**”) and Revelation 22:10 (“**And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**”). Even though John wrote Revelation 2000 years ago and the bulk of that book has not been fulfilled, John still says twice that these things are “at hand”. We know the answer does not lie in a preterist or a historicist interpretation of Revelation, but how can unfulfilled prophecies be said to be “at hand”? Obviously, “at hand” does not need to mean “right now” as they can be delayed and yet be “at hand”. We must also remember that **a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years a day** (2 Peter 3:8, a vital verse for understanding God’s movements in history and in prophecy). In that reckoning, God gave John the Revelation only 2 days ago and this locust plague Joel describes only took place less than 4 days ago. Things are “at hand” when you are only talking about a period of days.

15d All this is a type and shadow of the tribulation period and the Day of the Lord, the events leading up to and including the Battle of Armageddon.

15e The Day of the Lord is described as a “destruction” that comes from the Almighty. And it shall come! That is a certainty! Nothing is going to prevent the Lord from judging this age and the Antichrist and the enemies of Israel. And nothing else matters! Who cares about Super Bowls, presidential elections, vacations, New Year’s Eve parties and whatnot when the Day of the Lord is at hand?

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

16a A resulting famine of meat. After the locust have devoured all the plants, what will you use to feed the cattle? They will starve and there goes the meat and even the dairy products.

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

19a Even in the midst of a smoking and smoldering ruin, the prophet will cry to God for mercy, as Israel will do in the midst of even the worst part of the tribulation.

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Verses 16-19 describe the condition of the land after the locusts but also will refer to the state of the land of Israel after the Antichrist has finished with it.



## Joel Chapter 2

**2:1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain:<sup>a</sup> let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD<sup>b</sup> cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;**

1a A reason for alarm- the events leading up to the Day of the Lord are about to break forth upon the land. This can certainly apply to the locust swarm, as there would have been panic when it was spotted but it is obvious that there is a greater, prophetic application here.

1b Joel may have been the first writer and prophet to use this phrase and develop it meaning.

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

2a A description of the Day:

1. It is one of darkness
2. It is one of gloominess
3. It is a day of clouds
4. It is a day of thick darkness

2b The ants are also called a “people” in Proverbs 30:25 but these locusts are a “great people”.

2c Historically, this referred to the locusts, which may have numbered in the millions. Prophetically, it would refer to the various armies under the leadership of the Antichrist that will invade Israel in the tribulation period.

2d There have been other locust plagues but there has never been an army like the one the Antichrist will lead in that day in terms of strength and number.

**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;<sup>a</sup> yea, and nothing shall escape them.<sup>b</sup>**

3a As the locusts totally destroyed the land, so will the armies of the Antichrist. The land was pleasant and bountiful before the locusts came and it will be so again before the tribulation period. But when the Antichrist is finished, the land will look like Egypt in Exodus 13 after God was finished with His plagues on it.

3b Nothing and no one escaped the locusts, just as none will escape the ravishes of the Antichrist and his army in that day.

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

4a Compare with Revelation 9:7-9 (“**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 those demonic “locusts” that resemble horses.**”).

**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:<sup>a</sup> all faces shall gather blackness.<sup>b</sup>**

6a The locusts of Revelation 9:10 (“**And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.**”) also cause pain when they strike men with their tails. That pain lasts 5 months (and “5” is the Biblical number of death) and the men so struck will be in so much pain and agony that they will seek death in that day but will not be able to find it.

6b The blackening of the faces could be a reference to a nuclear exchange at Armageddon as the bodies melt in the heat of the bombs. Zechariah 14:12 is the cross reference (“**And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.**”).

AV	ESV	LSV
6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather <b>blackness</b> .	6 Before them peoples are in anguish; all faces grow pale.	6 Before them the peoples are writhing; All faces turn pale.

“**blackness**” The ESV and LSV have “pale”

**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:<sup>a</sup>**

7a This is a very disciplined army.

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

8a This would be a human army (not a reference to the locusts), and this would refer to their military discipline in keeping rank as they march.

8b They are also a (devilish) supernatural element or portion of the army of the Antichrist that cannot be destroyed by conventional means. Run them through with a sword and they will not die. Only the Lord could defeat such an army.

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

9a This “wall” has been mentioned several times so far in Joel 2:

1. In 2:7, they “climb the wall”
2. In 2:9, they “run upon the wall”

9b The “Day of the Lord” comes as a “thief in the night” after all in its suddenness and in its surprise.

1. Matthew 24:43 **“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.”**
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 **“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”**

**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:<sup>a</sup>**

10a This is symbolic language as there is no historical record of this happening, unless it is a picture of the locusts being so thick and numerous that they blotted out the sky and the heavenly bodies. But it will be literally fulfilled in the Day of the Lord as there will be these supernatural heavenly signs and events.

1. Earthquakes
  - A. Revelation 6:12 **“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;”**
  - B. Revelation 8:5 **“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”**
  - C. Revelation 11:13 **“And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”**
  - D. Revelation 11:19 **“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.”**
  - E. Revelation 16:18 **“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”**
2. The darkening of the sun and moon
  - A. Revelation 6:12 **“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;”**
  - B. Revelation 8:12 **“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.”**
3. The stars not shining
  - A. Revelation 6:13 **“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.”**

**2:11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very great: <sup>a</sup> for *he is* strong that executeth his word:<sup>b</sup> for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it?<sup>c-d</sup>**

11a “His” army? This can’t refer to the historical locusts or the prophetic army of the Antichrist. We do know the Lord returns with the armies of heaven in Revelation 19:14 (**“And the armies**

which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”), which would probably be both angelic and made up of glorified saints. And this army is “very great” as the numbers of this host (saint and angelic) would probably be astronomical. Also see Song 6:13 (“**Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.**”) where the Church is called a “terrible army with banners”.

11b This would be the Lord Himself.

11c Further description of that Day:

1. It is great
2. It is very terrible
3. None can abide it

11d No one! There are always some “he men” who imagine they are strong enough or tough enough to handle whatever God throws at them but God has a way of humbling such men quickly (Amos 5:18 “**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.**”). Today, there are some who do not believe in the premillennial and pre-tribulation rapture, who insist the Church is going to go through the tribulation, and brother, they are ready for it! They have 10,000 rounds of ammo and dozens of guns buried in their back yard, months of food and dehydrated water stored up and they can live “off the grid” for months. Just let the Antichrist try to defeat him! It’s men like this who will be the first to crawl into the rocks and hills and wimper like a baby (Revelation 6:15-17 “**And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**”)

**2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD , turn ye *even* to me with all your heart,<sup>a</sup> and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:<sup>b-c</sup>**

12a There is no other way to turn to God. If it is not done with the whole heart, then it is not done at all. Anything done for God must be whole-hearted.

12b Because of the severity of these judgments, God calls Judah to repent and return to Him. The Jews remain in their blindness and hardness of heart right up to the Second Coming. This is repeated in 2:13.

12c Fruits of this conversion would include:

1. Fasting
2. Weeping
3. Mourning

AV	ESV	LSV
12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye <i>even</i> to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and	12 “Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with	12 “Yet even now,” declares Yahweh, “Return to Me with all your heart And with fasting, weeping, and



with <b>mourning</b> :	mourning;	wailing;
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“**mourning**” The LSV has “wailing”.

**2:13 And rend your heart, and not your garments,<sup>a</sup> and turn unto the LORD your God:<sup>b</sup> for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.<sup>c-d-e</sup>**

13a Rending the garment was a public sign of intense grief and mourning.

13b The judgments of God through history have been designed not only to punish but to turn His disobedient and apostate people back to Him. These kinds of judgments are designed to be “call backs” to God, both historically in the Old Testament and prophetically. The tribulation judgments are also designed to purify Israel and prepare them for the upcoming Kingdom.

13c Even in the midst of judgment, Joel is careful to remind Israel about these attributes of God:

1. He is gracious
2. He is merciful
3. He is slow to anger
4. He is of great kindness
5. He repents of the evil He sends

It may seem easy to forget about these positive attributes of God in the midst of a severe judgment like this and Israel will be hard put to call these to mind in the tribulation, but they still are true, even when God is acting as a judge and a man of war.

13d It must be remembered that God sent these judgments, the current locust plague and the future tribulation. Isaiah 45:7 says that God “creates evil”. This is not moral evil, such as sin, but evil or bad situations and conditions, such as Joel is describing. God brought the “evil” of the locust plague and He will bring the “evil” of the tribulation period.

13e God will “repent” of the evil He allowed under the Antichrist when the remnant of Israel cries out to Him at the end of the tribulation.

AV	ESV	LSV
<p><b>13</b> And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he <i>is</i> gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and <b>repenteth</b> him of the evil.</p>	<p><b>13</b> and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.</p>	<p><b>13</b> And tear your heart and not your garments.” Now return to Yahweh your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, And relenting concerning evil.</p>

“**repenteth**” The ESV and LSV have “relents/relenting”. Also in 2:14.

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

14a He just might! He did regarding Nineveh in the book of Jonah. He just might change His mind and withhold. We know that He will not regarding the tribulation period as it is too

important prophetically and is necessary to bring in the millennial kingdom. Even in the midst of great and severe judgments, there is always hope that God will not make a full end and will restore what He has destroyed.

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

15-17a Joel urges the people to do the following in the light of these judgments:

1. Blow the trumpet to call for an assembly and to call the people to attention. Trumpet blasts were often used to get the attention of the people.
2. Call a fast. If there ever was a reason to fast, weep and pray, it is this.
3. Call a solemn assembly and sanctify them
4. Call off the weddings and other social engagements, as this is far more important. This is no time for singing and rejoicing, with certain destruction on the horizon.
5. Let the priests weep and pray as their ministry is about to be cut-off, or at least severely interrupted.

**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?<sup>15a-b-c</sup>**

17b In the midst of judgment, God's people should still be greatly concerned for the honor and reputation of the Lord. Pray that the judgment and what results from it will not be so severe and total so as to give the heathen any excuse to blaspheme the Lord as He deals with His people.

17c The calling for a "solemn assembly" with the "elders" and "children" and "priests, the ministers of the LORD" is what we would be looking for if any sort of revival came to America. All public life would cease, even the newly married couple would postpone their honeymoon to do this. A national holiday would be declared so that everyone could participate. Whenever I hear of some part of the country that is "having a great and mighty revival", I don't believe it until I see the governmental, civic, business and religious leaders meeting in a public gathering, praying and confessing their sin like Daniel did in Daniel 9. What we are looking for is the President, his cabinet, all 535 members of Congress, the Supreme Court justices and state governors and legislators gathering together on live television and weeping and praying over our national sins. Until and unless that happens, America will be destroyed in judgment like all the sinful and rebellious nations that came before us. This also applies to every other nation on earth.

**2:18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.<sup>a-b</sup>**

18a God may judge and judge severely, but He will not totally destroy or make a full end of His land or people. If the national repentance is genuine, God will respond in mercy and restoration. After Israel repents, God will deal with their enemies harshly.

18b Israel. In the tribulation, God will take pity on Israel, not the Gentile world powers.

**AV**

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

**ESV**

18 Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people.

**LSV**

18 Then Yahweh will be zealous for His land And will spare His people.

“jealous” The LSV has “zealous”.

**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:<sup>a</sup>**

19a God promises a restoration, provision and blessing after the judgment. Although the judgments of the tribulation will be extreme, God will restore His people and land in the millennium. Again, this promise is for Israel during the tribulation. God is judging the Gentile nations, but He is purifying His people. Any Gentile blessings that they receive during the tribulation and beyond will be dependent upon their relationship with Israel.

**2:20 But I will remove far off from you the northern *army*,<sup>a</sup> and will drive him into a land barren and desolate,<sup>b</sup> with his face toward the east sea,<sup>c</sup> and his hinder part toward the utmost sea,<sup>d</sup> and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.<sup>e</sup>**

20a When the Antichrist invades the land leading up to Armageddon, He will invade from the north. Did the locusts also come from the north?

20b The Lord will repulse his attack and divert him from his plans into a barren and desolate area.

20c Not sure what this “east sea” is unless it is the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf area. It is not the Mediterranean as it is to the west of Israel.

20d Could this be the Mediterranean Sea? If so, the army of the Antichrist will be stretched across the northern part of Israel from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf or Red Sea.

20e His reputation precedes him and it is all bad. The “stink” could also refer to the literal smell of millions of rotting corpses in the land after Armageddon when the Lord shall utterly destroy his army.

**AV**

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

**ESV**

20 “I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear guard into the western sea; the stench and foul

**LSV**

20 “But I will remove the northern *military force* 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 rise up,

shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.	smell of him will rise, for he has done great things.	and its foul smell will rise up, For it has done great things.”
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“**army**” The ESV does not use “army” (since it is in italics) but uses “northerner”. The LSV mangles it to “military force”, Also in 2:25.

“**utmost sea**” The ESV and LSV have “western sea”.

**2:21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Great things for the land and the people, so the hope remains, even during the darkest hours of judgment.

AV	ESV	LSV
21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for <b>the LORD will do great things.</b>	21 “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things!	21 Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, For Yahweh has done great things.

“**the LORD will do great things**” The ESV and LSV have this as past tense.

**2:22<sup>a</sup> 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.**

22a Verses 22-27 are promises of restoration of the land and the nation after the judgments and destruction by the locusts historically and by the Antichrist prophetically. This would be an application to the millennial kingdom when God will restore all things, especially after the destructions and judgments of the tribulation period.

**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<sup>a</sup> in the first *month*.<sup>b</sup>**

23a Charismatics like to use verses like this as some justification of the Charismatic “revivals” that started on Azusa Street near Los Angeles in 1901, with their tongues, manifestations, “signs, wonders and miracles” and other nonsense.

David Hoffman, on page 1331 of *The Common Man’s Reference Bible* has this as an “abundance of rain” to replenish the parched earth at the beginning on the Millennium after the long drought of the tribulation period.

23b In the Millennium, agriculture will return to its full activity as it was before the tribulation and God will make sure that the regular seasonal rains will take place so that there will be no danger of drought or crop failure.

AV	ESV	LSV
23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your	23 “Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, for he	23 So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in Yahweh your God, For He has given

God: for he hath given you the <b>former rain moderately</b> , and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain <b>in the first month</b> .	has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.	you the early rain in righteousness. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and late rains as before.
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“**former rain moderately**” The ESV has “early rain for your vindication” and the LSV has “early rain in righteousness”.

“**in the first month.**” Both the ESV and LSV omit.

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

AV	ESV	LSV
24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the <b>fats</b> shall overflow with <b>wine</b> and oil.	24 “The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.	24 The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.

“**fats**” The ESV and LSV have “vats”. Also in 3:13.

“**wine**” The LSV adds “new”.

“**fats**” “From the Old English ‘faet’, meaning ‘vessel, cask or large tub’. It was pronounced ‘vat’ in Southern England. In Old English and in German, the ‘f’ was pronounced as ‘v’. This kind of ‘fat’ was used in the Bible for the production of wine and oil, although it had other unrecorded uses, such as for the dying of cloth (Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, page 103).’ Related words are “winefat” and “pressfat”.

**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.**

AV	ESV	LSV
25 And I will <b>restore</b> 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.	25 I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you.	25 “Then I will pay back to you in full for the years That the swarming locust has consumed, The creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust, My great military force which I sent among you.

“**restore**” The LSV has “pay back to 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.<sup>a</sup>**

27a Verses 23-27 are millennial, when Israel will be re-established to a place of universal prominence, a position they will never lose again. Even in the midst of the great destructions of the locusts and prophetically of the Antichrist, Israel has great reason to hope for the future, as God promises to fully restore them. Look at Job in Job 42. He is a type of Israel in the tribulation. He loses it all in Job 1 and 2 and laments and suffers concerning it in Job 3-41. But in chapter 42, he is fully restored- and then some!

**2:28<sup>a-b-c</sup> 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:**

28a This passage and its New Testament companion of Acts 2 (especially verse 16) throws off the majority of the commentators and the majority of Pentecostals and Charismatics. The assumption that Joel 2 was literally fulfilled in Acts 2, especially the “tongues” and the “baptism with the Holy Spirit” parts. Although Peter quoted this passage in his Pentecostal sermon in Acts 2, it is clear that the majority of this prophecy was not fulfilled during the book of Acts:

1. The spirit of God was not poured out upon all flesh. The Spirit was poured out only locally and on a limited number, the 120 disciples that were “gathered together” on that day. Luke says nothing about the Spirit being poured out on those 3,000 that were saved after Peter’s sermon. They would have received the Spirit at their conversion, but it was not “poured out” on them in the same manner as it was on the 120. Nor was the Spirit poured out on all Jerusalem and Israel on this day, nor did that ever happen at any time in the Book of Acts or since.
2. Some of the sons and daughters (of Israel) did prophesy but not all.
3. Some old men dreamed dreams but not all.
4. Some young men had visions, but not all.
5. There were no wonders in the heavens and in the earth involving blood, fire and pillars of smoke.
6. The sun was not turned into darkness nor was the moon turned to blood.
7. There was no deliverance for Israel in the book of Acts.
8. Joel says nothing about the tongues in his prophecy, despite their appearance in Acts 2. Why any Charismatic would then try to run the tongues of Acts 2 back to Joel 2 is a mystery. Nor does Joel say anything about “cloven tongues of fire” or “rushing winds”.
9. Peter is addressing “ye men of Judah and all that dwell at Jerusalem” in 2:14, so the context is Jewish. Also see Acts 2:36 where Peter mentions “**all the house of Israel...**”
10. The word “this” also appears in Acts 2:6,12,16,33, which, by context, is plainly referring to events that were taking place on that day at that time then, namely the tongues resulting from the giving of the Holy Spirit.
11. Peter is saying, “I’ll tell you what Joel says; what Joel says is THIS...” This a simple grammatical observation but it is very important.

28b But these all could have come to pass if Israel had accepted the Kingdom offered by Christ and re-affirmed in Acts 2-7. The offer is made again in Acts 2 and is “held out” to Israel until the end of Acts 7.

1. The Kingdom was originally offered by Christ and was rejected. It was offered in Matthew 21 at Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, riding on the foal of an ass. It was rejected by the leaders of the nation when they cried out to Pilate “Away with this man, we have no king but Caesar!” in John 19:15.
2. Peter makes another offer of the kingdom in Acts 3:19,20 (“**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; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:").** Israel rejects it again.

3. Stephen makes the offer at the end of his sermon in Acts 7. Christ is standing in Acts 7:56 not to “welcome the first Christian martyr” but to return to earth to establish the Kingdom if these Jewish leaders accepted his message. They murdered him instead, so Christ then sits back down, and the gospel starts to move to the Gentiles starting in Acts 8.

4. The Samaritans get the gospel in Acts 8, the apostle to the Gentiles is called in Acts 9 and the “Gentile Pentecost” takes place in Acts 10. There are no more offers of the Kingdom to Israel from that point on.

5. If Israel had accepted the kingdom at any of these three offers, the tribulation period could have started then, Rome and Caesar could have fulfilled the role of the Antichrist, these signs would have been manifested and the Second Coming could have taken place in the book of Acts. But that would have meant no church age and no offer of the gospel to the Gentiles that we know today.

It must be the leaders of the nation that accept Christ. Many individual Jews accepted Christ but the leadership as a whole never did. They crucified Jesus, persecuted the early church (Acts 3,4) and murdered Stephen. Until the leadership accepts Christ, the Kingdom will not be given.

28c “Going back to Joel (one more time with feeling, brother!), let us see what Joel said would happen “before that great and notable day of the Lord come” (vs. 20).

1. Deliverance would not be at Golgotha (Mt. Calvary); it would be inside the city (Heb. 13:13!) on Mount Zion.

2. Salvation at this time (Acts 2:21) was in the form of “DELIVERANCE” (Joel 2:32).

3. Those who would be saved would be “the REMNANT” (Joel 2:32), exactly as the remnant of Revelation 12:17; Zechariah 8:6, 12; Zephaniah 3:13; Amos 5:15, and a dozen other places.

4. The “early and latter rain”—called “the FORMER rain, and the LATTER RAIN” in Joel 2:23—couldn’t be connected to Acts 2 with a hydraulic coupling. The “early and latter rain” fall “in the FIRST MONTH,” according to Joel (Joel 2:23), and Pentecost is more than two weeks into the SECOND MONTH. Therefore, all this baloney about the “early and latter rain” referring to the first advent of the Holy Ghost and the twentieth century revival of “Pentecostalism” is blatant falsehood and deliberate lying against the Holy Ghost’s own words—which He wrote. You cannot believe the “whole Bible” and subscribe to such perversion. The “rain” of Joel 2:23 comes on the “children of Zion” (vs. 23), and it falls on their wheat fields and grape vineyards (vs. 24) so that they get good crops (vss. 22, 26). There isn’t one indication anywhere in the passage that “THE FORMER RAIN, AND THE LATTER RAIN” (vs. 23) have anything to do with anybody “pouring” any Spirit on anybody before, after, or during Pentecost.

Now, the only time that the Spirit of God will be “POURED OUT ON ALL FLESH” will be “AFTERWARD” (Joel 2:28), and notice how this thing was worded in Acts 15:16–17 when James spoke of the conversion of Gentiles in the Millennium. “Afterward” is after the Tribulation by virtue of every context dealing with the subject (see Heb. 8:10, for example). And the “blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke” (Joel 2:30) will be just as literal as the Pacific Ocean, the Atom Bomb, and the Chicago conflagration of October 8, 1871. “IN THOSE DAYS,” Joel says (Joel 3:1–2), Israel is redeemed and restored (see Luke 1:68–79), and the phenomena that accompanies the last days of this tribulation are described in detail in Joel 3:9–21 (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 86-87).”

**2:29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.<sup>a</sup>**

29a The Lord will be doing great things spiritually among the Jews during the Tribulation, especially through the 144,000 witnesses. The book of Revelation and the Old Testament prophets only mention this in a limited fashion.

AV	ESV	LSV
29 And also upon the <b>servants</b> and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.	29 Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.	29 “Even on the male slaves and female slaves I will in those days pour out My Spirit.

“**servants**” The ESV has “male and female” which is unnecessary. The LSV blunders by using “slaves”, which is an error it is guilty of in always translating “servant” as “slave:.”

**2:30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.<sup>a</sup>**

30a Tribulational.

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

31a The Battle of Armageddon and the events leading up to it and surrounding it are described as:

1. Great. It will be the greatest battle in human history.
2. Terrible. Since it will be so great, the human toll and destruction it will cause cannot be described or imagined.

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

32a A remnant as in that 2/3rds of Israel will be killed by the end of the tribulation (Zechariah 13:8 “**And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.**”). There are about 20 million Jews today. If the tribulation period were to start today, about 12-13 million of them would be killed over those seven years by the Antichrist. He will attempt to finish what Hitler started but will be much more successful. Those that survive the Day of the Lord will all be delivered, and all believe on the Lord and will all go into the Millennium.



### Joel Chapter 3

This is primarily a millennial chapter, following up on the events of the Day of the LORD.

**3:1 For, behold, in those days,<sup>a</sup> and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,<sup>b</sup>**

1a Millennial.

1b Referring to the persecutions and near-destruction of Israel and Jerusalem by the Antichrist in the tribulation. Jews worldwide from every tribe will be restored in the land as the land will be given to Israel in the millennium, not to the Palestinians, who have no real claim upon it.

**3:2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat,<sup>a-b</sup> 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.<sup>c</sup>**

2a A clear description of the “Judgment of the Nations” in Matthew 25:31-46.. Here, God will bring “all nations” in the sense that all peoples and representatives of the Gentile world governments that will all be under the control of the Antichrist will be brought (against their will) into the “valley of Jehoshaphat” (in northern Israel) where God will “plead” with them. That means He will “have it out” with the nations for their historic and current treatment of His people, the nation of Israel. God’s judgment upon these nations will be swift, strong and severe.

This judgment is not the Bema Seat nor the Great White Throne Judgment nor the “final judgment” for those who mistakenly believe in a future “general judgment”. Those judgments involve the judgment of individuals. This judgment deals with the nations.

2b “**Jehoshaphat**” “God hath judged”, a very fitting title for this valley, which would be the Kidron Valley. This will be the location of Armageddon, in this valley in northern Israel. This valley was a common burial place for the people of Jerusalem.

This valley was also the place where Asa Josiah, and Hezekiah cast out and burned the idols that had defiled the land.

1. 1 Kings 15:13 **“And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.”**

2. 2 Kings 23:4, 6, 12 **“And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel... And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people... And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.”**

3. 2 Chronicles 30:14 **“And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron.”**

2c This is a result of the anti-Semitism of the Gentile nations since the crucifixion. Many Gentiles (Christians) blamed the Jews for the death of Christ and persecuted them accordingly. Martin Luther went anti-Semitic in his frustration of their refusal to convert to the gospel in the Reformation. This program of persecution involved driving the Jews out of the land (Rome in A.D. 70) and then refusing to allow them to return or denying their right to the land today (the United Nations, Arab countries, European Union...). They have a desire to "part the land" (initially) with the so-called "Palestinians" which eventually would lead to kicking the Jews out of Israel once and for all. But neither the Palestinians nor the United Nations own the land- God does, and He has given it to Israel forever.

**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.<sup>a-b</sup>**

3a They had utter contempt for the Jews. The Antichrist will consider the Jews as the Nazis did- as sub-humans at best, unworthy of any human rights or consideration and he will treat them as such. And they would do all this just for enough money to buy a beer.

3b Reasons for this judgment upon the Gentiles:

1. They cast lots for Israel 3:3
2. They paid for harlots with boys 3:3
3. They bought wine by selling girls 3:3
4. They took God's silver and gold 3:5
5. They looted the temple and placed them in the temple of the Antichrist 3:5
6. They sold the Jews into slavery 3:6

**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 recompense?<sup>a</sup> and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense<sup>a</sup> upon your own head;<sup>b</sup>**

4a The idea of "recompense" (also in 3:7) is a major theme prompting the judgment and destruction of the Gentile world powers. They have opposed God and His people Israel (and even the Church by extension) since Nebuchadnezzar's Day. It is as though they dared God to "bring it on" by their continual opposition to His program and government, so God obliges by "pouring it on" during the tribulation, ending at Armageddon.

4b The judgment of the Gentile world powers will be a swift one. It will have been building to the consummation in the tribulation period, but the "ax" falls at Armageddon.

**3:5 Because ye have taken my silver and my gold,<sup>a</sup> and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:<sup>b</sup>**

5a The things the army of the Antichrist loots from the land really belong to the Lord as He lays claim to them. Any "spoils of war" taken by this army will be considered stealing from the Lord Himself.

5b Nebuchadnezzar did this when he emptied the Jerusalem temple and carried its contents into Babylon. The Antichrist will do it as well. Where is his temple? Will it be the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem that he defiled at the Abomination of Desolation? Or will he build another one elsewhere? He claims to be God so he must have a temple of his own!

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

6a When did this happen historically? When were Jews sold into slavery to Grecians? Even if it did not happen historically, we would expect the Antichrist to do this with any Jewish prisoners-of-war or captives he has. When Joel wrote, the Grecians were a third-rate nation, so this must be prophetic.

**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:<sup>a</sup>**

7a God will raise up the captive Jews in the place of their captivity and they will strike at the Antichrist and his supporters from their captivity.

**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*.<sup>a</sup>**

8a What goes around comes around. Those who sold the Jews into captivity will likewise have their children sold to the Sabeans by Israel when they are victorious over the Antichrist and his armies.

**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:<sup>a</sup>**

9a In anticipation for the Battle of Armageddon and the Day of the Lord, which will strike against the Gentile world powers that will be under the control of the Antichrist. A great battle was brewing so all the armies and their mighty men were warned to make their preparations. Man and nations have been in constant rebellion against God since the Creation. They have always dreamed in overthrowing God and setting up their own kingdoms and laws (Genesis 10 at Babel, Psalm 2). They imagine they can overthrow God by political, moral, religious and military force, so God challenges them to do so.

**3:10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears:<sup>a</sup> let the weak say, I *am* strong.<sup>b</sup>**

10a The United Nations loves to quote/cite this verse (also from Isaiah 2:4, from a Book they hate!) as some sort of justification for their existence and their vain hope that they will be able to bring in some semblance of world peace. But what they don't see is a verse like this is smack in the middle of a context prophesying the greatest and bloodiest battle in human history!

10b A divine taunt to the Antichrist and his followers. Let them brag and boast about their might and power and how they will destroy Israel and defy God. But God knows exactly what they are- weaklings that will be easily defeated.

AV	ESV	LSV
10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I <i>am</i>	10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a	10 Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a

<b>strong.</b>	warrior.”	mighty man.”
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“I am strong.” The ESV has “I am a warrior” and the LSV has “I am a mighty man”.

**3:11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about:<sup>a</sup> thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.<sup>b</sup>**

11a In the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where God will gather the armies of the Antichrist.

11b The saints, who will follow the Lord at the Second Coming, Revelation 19:14 (“**And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**”). They (we) will come down with the Lord at the Second Coming.

**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.<sup>a-b</sup>**

12a The judgment of Armageddon, and what a total, complete and devastating judgment it will be!

12b Only the heathen are judged here, not Israel.

**3:13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe:<sup>a</sup> come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow;<sup>b</sup> for their wickedness *is* great.<sup>c</sup>**

13a A harvest of sinners, ripen in their sin, at Armageddon.

13b Like ripe grapes ready to be placed in the press to be crushed.

13c Great enough to warrant this kind of judgment, such as never has been seen in human history.

**3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision:<sup>a</sup> for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.**

14a How many millions will be in this valley in this day, where their eternal destinies will be determined, for the worst. This will be a valley of judgment upon the heathen.

I have heard this preached as an evangelistic text for sinners “in the valley of decision” regarding whether or not to accept Christ and be saved, but that is not the interpretation, and it would not be a good idea to use this verse in that application either!

**3:15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.<sup>a-b</sup>**

15a This never happened in the Book of Acts (as some Charismatics and Pentecostals try to make Joel 2 and 3 to have been fulfilled in Acts 2, which, of course, it wasn’t) but it will happen at Armageddon. And there is no use trying to “spiritualize” these events as many non-premillennialists try to do (historicists and preterists are famous for spiritualizing away the plain, literal meaning of Scripture).

15b Matthew 24:29-31 “**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: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”**

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

16a There shall be the “shout” and the trumpet at the rapture. There shall be a “roar” at Armageddon as God roars as a lion at the forces of the Antichrist, to literally try to “put the fear of God” into them, which they will not receive. “Shouts” are to get someone’s attention. But the “roar” is as a lion getting ready to pounce- it is a warning of impending doom. The followers of the Antichrist will come to a full realization of exactly Who they are up against at the time of this roar, not just the remnant of the Jews, but the Very God of the Jews Himself. This roar from God will thunder from the heavens and shake the earth as a powerful earthquake.

16b Israel will be reassured and strengthen in that day, even as they face their total annihilation.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

<p>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 <i>will be</i> the <b>hope</b> of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.</p>	<p>16 The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.</p>	<p>16 And Yahweh roars from Zion And gives forth His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth quake. But Yahweh is a refuge for His people And a strong defense to the sons of Israel.</p>
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“**hope**” The ESV and LSV use “refuge”.

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

17a Written for the Jew, to reassure him that God is on his side and will fight for Israel and will triumph over the Antichrist and the Gentile world powers. The “other side” will also come to this realization as God reminds them of exactly Who they are fighting against.

17b There will be no more foreign occupations of Jerusalem in the Millennium and beyond. No more “international control”. No more Islamic mosques or Palestinian occupations. The city and the land will revert fully back to Jewish control in the Millennium. The Gentile may go to Jerusalem to worship and to pay homage to the King but the city will belong to Israel and Israel alone.

**3:18<sup>a</sup> 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.**

18a In the midst of judgment and destruction, Joel still anticipates abundant harvests, barns overflowing and all manner of abundance in the millennium once these judgments are past. What great millennial blessings are in store!

1. The mountains will drop down new wine
2. The hills will flow with milk
3. The rivers of Judah shall flow with waters. Frequent droughts and uncertain precipitation patterns make the water flow in some of the rivers in Israel an uncertain thing. The environmental-based judgments of the tribulation will also no doubt take their toll on the rivers in Israel. But in the millennium, they will all flow like Jordan.
4. See Ezekiel 47:1-12.

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

19a In contrasty with Israel and Jerusalem in the Millennium, Egypt and Edom will be judged and made desolate. Both of these countries have been traditional enemies of Israel and will be more so in the tribulation period. They will see the attacks on Israel by the Antichrist as an excuse to settle some old scores and take advantage of her tribulational sufferings, so both Egypt and the Edomites (the modern-day Palestinians and Arabs) will ally themselves with the Antichrist and be active and willing partners in his program of genocide. The book of Obadiah gives a good example on the persecutions of the Edomites against Israel and how God will judge them for that.

**3:20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Despite the best efforts of the Antichrist and all his brags and boasts, the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, NATO, and every Arab and Palestinian nation, Israel will dwell safely and securely in their land after the tribulation, after the Antichrist is dead and gone, through the Millennium and into eternity to come, and there isn't anything anyone will be able to do about it because the Lord had spoken it. This is one of the clearest declarations of the total, complete and eternal restoration of the Jew to his land in Scripture and it must be interpreted literally as there is no theological justification to try to spiritualize it.

**3:21 For I will cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.<sup>a-b</sup>**

21a This is why He is so jealous for the land- He claims it for His own and He will dwell there in the Millennium as Jesus Christ will rule and reign over the Millennial earth during the Kingdom Age to come.

21b "In Joel 3:21 we read some puzzling words: the Lord said, "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." The word translated "cleanse" is not the word for natural cleansing. It means "to pronounce innocent." During the terrible times preceding the millennium, the antichrist and his minions will shed the blood of many believing Jews after accusing them of heinous crimes. But during the millennium God will publicly proclaim the innocence of these people of His whose names have been besmirched. Possibly this vindication will include all of God's people who, down through the ages, have been falsely accused, maligned, and slain (John Phillips, *Exploring the Minor Prophets*, pages 82-83)."

### Archaic Words Defined

**“fats”** “From the Old English ‘faet’, meaning ‘vessel, cask or large tub’. It was pronounced ‘vat’ in Southern England. In Old English and in German, the ‘f’ was pronounced as ‘v’. This kind of ‘fat’ was used in the Bible for the production of wine and oil, although it had other unrecorded uses, such as for the dying of cloth (Steven J. White, White’s Dictionary of the King James Language, volume 2, page 103).’ Related words are “winefat” and “pressfat”.





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### **About the Author**

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, she transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College, earning the first doctor's degree awarded by the school in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present). He and his wife Teresa have four children and three grandchildren.