



Joel 1-3

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By Chuck Smith

Joel is an interesting prophet, in that we have absolutely no background for him. All we know that was, he was the son of Pethuel, whoever he was. Usually, the prophets would tell who the kings were during their time that they were prophesying. Joel does not do that. Thus, we have to search more or less the book itself, internal evidences and all, to try to discern the time of the prophecy of Joel. The fact that Amos quotes from Joel, would predate Joel to Amos. Amos prophesied around the year 790 BC. It is accepted by many scholars that the prophesies of Joel were probably about the time of Elijah, and surely contemporary with Elisha, which makes him one of the earliest of the prophetic books. Now, Elijah, and Elisha were prophesying, but they didn't write any books. So they feel that the prophecy of Joel is probably one of the first of the written prophesies of the old testament, and probably prophesied sometime between 880 BC, and 870 BC.

Now, he begins his prophecy as he is dealing with a current situation that was devastating the land. Over in the middle east, they have periodic plagues of locusts. Where these insects seem to just multiply to the extent that they just move through and just lay bare the land. They eat everything that is of vegetation. Just strip the land. There are records of their coming in so thick, that they are like a cloud, they cover the sun. Just land, and then begin to devastate the land. There was evidently a plague of locusts at this time, and Joel took that, and from that went on into the future, as God so often takes events, and from them. He makes the predictions of what's going to happen in the future.

That's exactly what we have here in the book of Joel, as he takes this plague of locusts, and from that jumps on into the prophesies of events that are yet future. The great day of the Lord, yet future. The most of the prophesies of Joel, have to do with the future, the day of the Lord, the things that are coming. But, he starts with the local events.

The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, ye old men, [Alright!] and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? ["Can you remember anything like this? Can you remember any plague like this? Can you remember any time when you had a plague of locusts that equaled what was going on?" So, he's calling them to more or less, you know, "Your fathers, this is unparalleled!" The devastation that the land was experiencing because of these locusts.] Tell your children of it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation (1:1-3).

"So ask your fathers, tell your children. This is something that is happening that's unparalleled. Pass it on down from generation, to generation!"

For that which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left the caterpillar has eaten (1:4).

Now these are thought to represent the four stages of a locust development. The Hebrew words are, the palmerworm, is from the Hebrew word, "gazam", which means to gnaw off. "The locust hath eaten", that's the, "arbeh", which means, many or multitude. "That which the locust hath left, the cankerworm", and the cankerworm is the Hebrew word, "yeleq", which is to, lick off. Yeleq, you can almost hear it can't you? Yelek, to lick off. The word caterpillar is the Hebrew word, "chaciyl", which is, to devour. The locust in it's four stages, as it is developing. To gnaw off the multitude of the locusts. Then, as they develop their wings, they move and they begin to fly to other areas. Then they come in, and they begin to lick off, and then to devour everything that is green. Stripping even the bark off of the tree. So he calls upon...

The drunkards, to weep; and to howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. [The locusts have moved through the vineyards. They have eaten all of the leaves, they have eaten all of the grapes. The first people that are going to really suffer as the result of this locust plague, will be those who drink wine. Then, he said,] A nation is come upon my land, that is strong, it is without number, whose teeth are like the teeth of a lion, and hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. And he has laid my

vine waste, and barked my fig tree: [Now the vine is used as a symbol of the nation of Israel, as is also, the fig tree. The nation has been devastated. It has been wasted by this plague of locusts.] *he hath made it clean bare* [The fig tree] *he has casted away; the branches thereof are made white* (1:5-7).

As the bark has been eaten off, and the inside, the whiteness of the fig tree.

Lament like a virgin who is girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. [One who has lost her husband.] *The meal offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn. For the field is wasted, and the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, and the olive trees have been affected by it.* [The land is just stripped as the result of this plague of locusts.] *Be ye ashamed, O ye farmers; howl, ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.* [A scene of great devastation.] *The vine is dried up, the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men. Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, and lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meal offering and the drink offering is withheld from the house of your God. So sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord, and cry unto the Lord* (1:8-14).

So, in response to this plague, and the desolation of the land, he calls upon the priests and the ministers to lead the people, in seeking God, turning to God, calling upon God, because the land is really wasted. The crops have been destroyed. Things are very serious indeed.

Now, he jumps, leaps frogs from this local situation, out to the Day of the Lord. He is now gonna take events that are happening, and he's going to prophecy of the future.

Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. [“Another time is coming in which the world is going to be made desolate. In which there is going to be world wide famine. The events of this day of the Lord, the day of God's judgement, are detailed for us in the book of Revelation, and all of the corresponding events of the day of the Lord. So, he is speaking of the day of destruction from the Almighty, it's, that shall come. “Is it not the meat”,] *Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under the clods, the garners [or the barns] are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flames hath burned the trees of the field. 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* (1:15-20).

Again, events of the great tribulation period. You can read of it in the book of Revelation. How that these cataclysmic events that are going to come to pass upon the earth, are going to destroy the fresh water supplies. They're going to destroy the food supplies. There will be a famine so great, that a quart of wheat will be sold for uh, a huge price. A inflation like you can't believe, because of the shortage of food. A day of great, great desolation.

Chapter 2

So he calls in chapter two, to...

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain: and let the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, it is close at hand; A day of darkness, of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations (2:1-2).

A tremendous battle. A tremendous gathering of people for this final conflict, the day of the Lord, which will culminate in the battle of Armageddon. The prophet is warning about this.

We are familiar with the destructive power of radiation. When Chernobyl had that melt down, the effect upon Europe, as the radioactivity moved across Europe, even to England. And how that they couldn't drink the milk, because the cows eating the grass, that had become radio activated, were producing radioactive milk. And how the crops had to be destroyed. The tremendous desolation that took place in Europe, for a couple of years after Chernobyl. That was just minor compared with the damage that would result from full-

scale atomic warfare.

The book of Revelation, as it describes the great period of judgement and tribulation that is coming, describes events that sound exactly like what would take place in atomic warfare. As does, Zechariah, in his prophecies. So, it is quite possible that the world's supply of food, as the result of the great wars that are yet to come. Don't breathe a sigh of relief because communism has failed in Russia. They still have their militaries, in, in fully equipped. They are still building the typhoon submarines with their multi-atomic missile capacities.

The Bible warns that when they say, "Peace and safety", for then comes sudden destruction. But the real danger of the world really doesn't lie in Russia's atomic capability, but it's in the fact that other nations are developing atomic capability. This is where the real danger lies in the world today. That little nation, like Pakistan, nations like Iran, and of course we know that Saddam Hussein has been doing his best to develop the atomic capacity.

With these nations developing, and gaining, the powers to use atomic weapons, it puts the whole world in a state of imbalance. As long as there were two major atomic powers, we could sort of hold off each other with the threat of destruction. But now you have nations that are careless enough to start an atomic warfare. So the military men today are extremely concerned, about what could possibly develop into full-scale atomic war. Of course, the damage that would be done, not just from the initial blast, but from the radioactive fall out. It's just unimaginable what would happen to the earth!

So the day of the Lord, this day of judgement, "is a day of darkness and gloominess, of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like". The armies that will be masked. We, we saw in WWI and WWII, the nations gather together. But this coming world battle, has not been equaled in the history of man.

A fire devours before them (2:3);

Now this, the battle ground, the scene of the battle, will be of course in Israel. Now we know that there are nations from the north, that are going to attack Israel. Ezekiel tells about it in chapter thirty eight, and thirty nine. When the nation of Israel has reestablished their dwelling there in the land, that there will be an evil thought in the mind of the leader of Magog, which is the city and people of the north, of Accosis mountains. Including those southern provinces, as well as Russia. They will align with Iran, with Turkey, with Libya, with Ethiopia, tremendous army, described in Ezekiel, to invade the land of Israel.

Now, there are two great battles yet to come. The one which will feature these nations coming against Israel and the middle east, to take a spoil. That's described in Ezekiel, chapter thirty eight and thirty nine. This battle will end by God intervening in a super natural way, and destroying this invading army. At the time that God destroys that confederation of nations, that come against Israel, He is going to put His Spirit again, upon the nation of Israel. Ezekiel, thirty nine, twenty nine. But then for the seven year period, as God is dealing with the nation of Israel, will bring the rise of the Antichrist, and the rise of the western empires. The western empires will seek to rule the world, under the leadership of the Antichrist. The forces and the powers of the east, and the north, will come against him, and that will culminate in that final battle of Armageddon that you've heard about, fought in the valley of Megiddo. So two great battles yet to be fought.

My wife was reading of what's going on over in Bosnia, and all. She was saying today, "You know war is the craziest thing in the world!". Really, it is! It's, it's, it's inhumane, I mean, you can't really imagine the horrors of war, unless you're actually there, and, and experiencing and seeing the insaneness of war. What does it accomplish? Surely, we should be smart enough, to not destroy man like we do. But we're not. Unfortunately, there are two great wars yet, that the world is going to experience.

Now, it is quite possible that this particular invasion that Joel is speaking about here, is indeed the invasion by the northern kingdom, federated under Russia, with Iran, and all, that will make this attack against Israel. "A great people and strong."

A fire devours before them; behind them the flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; [As they come into the land, they're like the locusts, they are just destructive. They're destroying everything. Before them, the land like a garden of Eden, behind them, they leave just nothing but desolation.] yea, nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the

appearance of horses; and as horsemen so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots [Which is interesting, it sounds almost like he is seeing tanks, but doesn't understand what they are. With his own background, he hears the noise like the noise of chariots,] on the tops of the mountains and they shall leap like the noise of a flame of fire that devours the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: and all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: And neither shall they thrust one another; and they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up on the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. And the earth shall quake before them; and the heavens shall tremble: and the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining (2:3-10).

So the description of this invading army, its power, its awesomeness.

But the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: [So they are going to, they are coming, in fact, it says concerning the Antichrist, "Who can make war with him? His power is so great, the earth trembles at the military might that he has amassed. Yet, the Lord will destroy him with the brightness of his coming, and with a sword that goes forth out of His mouth". With a word, the Lord will destroy him! So, "The Lord shall utter his voice", and of course we are in the battle of Armageddon here. "Before his army",] *for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executes his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; and who can abide it (2:11)?*

So this day of the great battle, when the Lord descends and sets His foot on the mount of Olives, the thing splits in two, and the Lord destroys the Antichrist, and his armies. This day of the Lord, which will then go into a time of judgement.

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even with me with all of your heart, [So here God is calling to the people. "Your land has been wasted. The crops have been destroyed." So God is calling, "Turn unto me with all of your heart!" Half-hearted repentance will not do! Half-hearted seeking of God will not do! To Jeremiah, the Lord said, "And ye shall seek me, and ye shall find me in the day that you search for me with all of your heart". "Lord, I'm sort of sorry. I sort of want your help." You're not apt to get much! It's when you really seek the Lord with all of your heart, that He is found of you.] *seek the Lord with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning (2:12):*

Really become serious with God, desperate before the Lord!

And rend your heart, and not your garments, [So customary in those days, to show grief, to just rip your clothes. Peculiar way to show grief, but that's the way they did it. You hear about the death of your child, you'd say, "Oh no! Can't be!", and you'd rip your clothes. It shows that you're deeply grieved over the thing. The Lord said, "Hey rend your heart. I would rather see your heart broken before me, than your clothes torn. Rend your heart, and not your garments".] *and turn unto the Lord your God: [Why?] because he's gracious, he's merciful, he is slow to anger, and of great kindness, and it repenteth him of the evil (2:13).*

God does not delight in judgement. God would much rather show mercy than judgement. God cried to the sinners to turn. He said, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked!", so He called upon them to, "Turn! For why will you die?", saith the Lord. God wants to show His mercy. He wants to demonstrate His grace. He is slow in judgement. He lets people get by with so much before He moves! He's so patient.

There are a lot of people who are just filling the earth with filth. People that are damning other men's souls. People that have such a rotten influence upon our children. I'd like to just snuff em all, now! Ha, ha! But God is so patient, and it, it's a problem to me. "God why do you let them get by with that? Why do you let them do that? Lord, why don't you smite them?" I have a real problem with the patience of God, and the longsuffering of God, and how He is so patient with man's evil. But it's because He is wanting to give man every opportunity to turn from his evil. Chance after chance, after chance.

However, there is a limit. Even to the patience of God. The prophet speaks of the day, "When the cup of His indignation is going to overflow", and watch out! God is very patient with you. Don't misinterpret that, as that He doesn't know, or He doesn't see. He does see, and what He sees pains Him greatly. What He

knows about you, pains Him greatly. But He loves you, and thus He is patient with you. Don't think that God approves of what you're doing, because He has let you get by with it. God can never approve evil or sin. But, He is just gracious, He is merciful, He's slow to anger, of great kindness, and He just doesn't want to bring evil. He doesn't want to bring His judgement. He will be forced to, but He doesn't want to.

But the cry of the prophet to the people, was to, "Turn to God with all of your heart", because God is merciful. We'll be getting to the book of Jonah pretty soon, and Jonah knew the character of God. He knew that God was merciful, and gracious, and didn't like to really bring judgement. That's what problem Jonah, when God said, "Go to Ninevah, the capital of Assyria, and warn them that in forty days, I'm gonna wipe them out". Jonah tried to go the other direction, why? Because he knew that God was merciful, and gracious, and didn't like to really bring judgement. He was afraid that if he preached to the people, they might get saved. Now that's an interesting twist isn't it? For a minister to worry about preaching, because people might hear, and be saved. But that's exactly his condition. So he decided, "I'm getting out of here! I'm gonna head for Tarsus".

We know the story of how God intercepted him, and sent him back. It's one of those cases where God will not force you to go against His will, but He can sure make you willing to go. Ha, ha! Jonah became willing to go, as the result of that experience. When he preached, it happened. The king put on sackcloth, covered himself with ashes, and he began to repent before the Lord! The people followed the example of the king.

So, God forestalled the judgement. "I'll not destroy you now." And Jonah got mad, so mad at God he started pouting. God said, "Do you, you know, is it right for you to be so angry?" "You bet your life! I knew that you were gracious, I knew you were merciful, I knew that you would, if they would repent, you'd let them get by with this!", and he was angry with the Lord.

Now the prophet Joel is saying, "Look, who knows!". Now that's all, that's all, the, the, the Assyrians had, when Jonah preached to them. They repented. "Who can tell", they said, "maybe God will have mercy upon us, and this judgement can be forestalled". Yes, God is so merciful that often His judgement is forestalled, and surely it is the moment you turn to Him, with all of your heart. You may be deserving and worthy of just being wiped out by God. The things that you've done could be so bad, that you really should be judged by God, but the thing is, He is so merciful, if you'll just call upon Him, and seek Him with all of your heart, God will forgive you. He's so kind, and He is so reluctant to bring the evil of judgement upon people.

Who knoweth if he will return and change, and leave a blessing; even a meal offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? So blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly of the people: And gather the people, and sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, and gather the children, and those that are nursing: and let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. And let the priests, and the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, give not your heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God (2:14-17)?

So the priests and the ministers were to lead the people in this repentance, crying out to God, and seeking the, the mercies of God for the nation, that they would not be conquered. For why should they say, "Where is their God? Their God has let them down. Their God has not defended them".

And then will the Lord [the prophet said] be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto the people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and be no more make you a reproach among the heathen: But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land that is barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and the hinder part towards the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. [So God promises to respond, and to destroy and to drive out their enemies.] Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things (2:18-21).

I like that scripture. "The Lord will do great things, be glad and rejoice." Your Lord will do great things!

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God: for he has given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first

month (2:23).

In the nation of Israel they have an interesting weather pattern, in that in the months of November, December, they begin to get their former rains. They have these great downpours and it causes the whole land to just green out. Much like southern California, when we have a good winter, and our mountains are all green. Then they have usually a period of just beautiful winter weather, where it's sunny, and nice. Then during the early spring, they begin to get what they call the latter rains. It's, it's that which of course, waters the crops. They, they do a lot of what they call dry farming, in Israel. That is during this interim time, they, they plant and all, and then their irrigation is just by the rain. If they have good spring rains, then they have good, healthy tomatoes, and great crops, in this dry farming area in Israel. So, God is promising the former rains, and the latter rains also, that the land might just really produce abundantly.

Thus the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow [That's the, the vats actually] with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years [Remember we began with the locusts plague, and all of the, the devastation? "I will restore to you the years",] that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, the caterpillar, the palmerworm, and my great army that I sent among you (2:24-25).

Now there's a beautiful spiritual analogy that could be made of this. As we take it from a national condition, to an individual's life, sin always has a very destructive effect upon people. The very nature of sin is destructive. It destroys. It eats away at your life. You look at a lot of people who have given themselves over to sin, over to drugs, over to alcoholism, or other forms of sin, and you can see the devastating effects. Wasted years in sin, as the cankerworm, and the palmerworm, and all, has just eaten out years of their lives. Their just sort of blank because of the devastation that sin had brought into their lives. Wasted years, and has left them wasted. But now the Lord is promising, to restore to those, to them the years that the locust have eaten, and the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm. God is so good!

When you turn your life over to the Lord, He makes you, your whole life new! Those wasted years, the Lord just comes along and He restores the things that you lost, the things that were destroyed in that time of sin. What a beautiful thing! How kind, and merciful, and gracious is our God! As He says, "Hey just turn to me, I'll restore to you those wasted years, that you lived in sin, that you began to destroy yourself. I, I'm gonna restore to you".

And so to the nation of Israel, the promised restoration. Oh look at how they, for so many years, because of their sin, were wasted, as they were scattered all over the world! But God has promised restoration, and the restoring of those wasted years. So beautiful, so gracious, so merciful.

And you shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of Yahweh your God, that he hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. ["I'll restore that which you've lost, and you'll praise Yahweh your God."] 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 (2:26-27).

As Jesus comes to establish His kingdom upon this earth, in this millennial kingdom, they'll recognize Him as their God, the Jehovah, or Yahweh.

And it shall come to pass afterward [Or in the latter days, or in the last days. The word, "afterward" there is, the Hebrew word for latter, or last. "It shall come to pass in the latter days, or the last days",] 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: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit (2:28-29).

Now, during the old testament period, the Spirit of God would come upon individual lives, but it was a rarity. The Spirit of God was upon Moses. When the care of the nation of Israel became too great for Moses to handle, he spent the whole day with this long line of people, waiting to talk to them about the grievances that they had, the problems with their neighbor. So they finally, the Lord said, "Moses take seventy of the elders, and bring them into the tent of congregation, and I will take the Spirit that I have put upon you, and I will put it upon those seventy, so that they can deal with these petty issues that you're having to deal with day by day. When anything is too difficult for them, then they can come to you. But you're just being destroyed by this regime that you're trying to keep".

So Moses gathered the seventy elders into the tent of the congregation. As they were there, God took the

Spirit, and He put it upon the seventy, and they began to prophecy. There were two men out in the camp who did not come in, and they began to prophecy. Word was brought to Moses that Eldad, and this other fellow, Medad, were out in the camp prophesying, and Joshua said, "Oh, my Lord Moses, do you want me to go out and stop them?", and he said, "Oh no! Would to God that His Spirit was upon all of Israel! How much easier my job would be if they were all filled with the Spirit!"

So, here is the promise that the day is going to come, when the Lord is going to pour out His Spirit upon all people. It won't be limited to just a few special. The Spirit of God was upon Samson, the Spirit of God came upon Saul, the Spirit of God was upon David. But it was only upon individuals, it wasn't a general outpouring of God's Spirit on the people. But here's the promise of Joel, that in the last days, God is gonna pour out His Spirit upon all flesh.

Now Jesus, when He was ready to ascend into heaven, after His resurrection, and being with His disciples for forty days, He was with them in Bethany, and He said to them, "Now you wait in Jerusalem, until you receive the promise of the Father, which you have heard from me. For John did indeed baptize with water unto repentance. But you're going to be baptized in a few days, with the Holy Spirit. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me, both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth". At that, He ascended into heaven.

Now He told them, "Wait for the promise of the Father, that I talked to you about". No doubt, this promise of the Father that He had talked to them about, was this promise in Joel. That, "In the last days, I'll pour out my Spirit upon all flesh". The reason why I say that, is that when the Holy Spirit then did descend upon the waiting believers, the early church, and the multitudes that were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, when they heard the sound perhaps, of the mighty rushing wind, they, they came to the place where the disciples were being filled with the Spirit. They wondered what was going on! They said, "What is, what is happening! What's, what's going on here? Are not all of these people Galileans, and yet we hear them praising God, and declaring the glorious works of God in our own languages! What does this mean?" Some suggested that they had gotten hold of some wine, and they were all pretty drunk.

So Peter stood up, and he said, "Men and brethren hearken unto me. These men are not drunken as ye suppose. It's only nine o'clock in the morning! But, this is that which is spoken of by the prophet Joel". Now this is probably because Jesus had given them the promise of the Father, here in Joel, "I'll pour out my Spirit upon all flesh". Because Peter immediately points back to this prophecy of Joel and says, "This is, this is what's happening. God's Spirit is being poured out upon all of us. The day is come, when God's Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophecy", which was the sign of the Spirit of God being upon a person in the old testament, and they prophesied. "And so your sons and daughters shall prophecy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Upon my servants and handmaidens will I pour out my Spirit in that day, saith the Lord."

Now this promise, when, when Peter then preached the message about Jesus Christ, they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do since we've crucified the Lord of glory!" Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive this gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise, the promise of the Father in Joel, is unto you, and to your children, and to those that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call".

So this promise of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all flesh, is to us today. "Those that are afar off. Even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Surely, the prophecy of Joel, carries right into the great tribulation period. So rather than ceasing with the apostolic age, it was a promise that was to be carried on through the great tribulation period. Really, the promise is perhaps even more for the great tribulation period, than it has in past history.

This could be in a figurative sense, the latter rain that God promised. His Spirit that will come upon the nation of Israel, once this northern army has been defeated, in Ezekiel thirty nine, twenty nine, and God puts His Spirit again upon the nation of Israel. A glorious time of God's Spirit moving upon that nation, and those people. But now, God's Spirit is upon us, the Gentile believers. "Those that were afar off", and the promise is unto us, of this filling of God's Spirit, the pouring out of God's Spirit. Then God said...

I will shew wonders [And this is the great tribulation.] in the heavens and in the earth, blood, fire, pillars

of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes (2:30-31).

Jesus quotes this in relationship to the great tribulation period, in Matthew twenty four.

It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered: [Or saved, as Peter interprets it in Acts.] for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call (2:32).

So the glorious promise of, of the power, and the pouring out of God's Spirit upon all flesh.

Several years ago, our older daughter Jan, who was at that time at University of California, Irvine, she was gathering with a group of young people for prayer meetings, and Bible studies. She came home one evening, just bubbling, came in to Kay and I, and just glowing, and she said, "The Lord gave me the gift of prophecy tonight". And she shared with us just how the anointing of God's Spirit was upon her, and she had received a gift of prophecy from the Lord. So at that time, Jeff was going to Harbor-Newport High, and we were having some real problems with him, wasn't walking with the Lord as we would have liked to have seen him walk. So I turned to Jeff who was there as Jan was sharing, and I said, "Well Jeff", I said, "the Bible says, 'Your son's and daughters will prophecy', when are you gonna start prophesying Jeff?" He was sharp in the scriptures! He said, "When are you gonna start dreaming dad?" "Your old men shall dream dreams", it says. You know, he put me in my place.

Chapter 3

So behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, ["When I bring them back and deliver them from this captivity"], I will also gather all nations and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, [The valley of judgement.] and I will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. And they have cast lots for my people; they have given a boy for a harlot, and they sold a girl for wine that they might drink. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompense? and if you recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head (3:1-4);

The day when the Lord comes will be first of all, a day of judgement. We read in Matthew twenty five that, "When the Lord returns, He is going to gather together the nations for judgement", and it will then be determined, as He separates the people as a shepherd separates sheep, uh the sheep from the goats. It will determine, be determined, which of the people will be allowed to go into the glorious millennial kingdom age. And which will be cast out, at that time. It is when He will say, "Come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the foundations of the earth, for I was hungry, you fed me, naked, you clothed me, I was thirsty, you gave me to drink, I was sick and in prison, and you visited me". And He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me ye accursed into the everlasting fires, the Gehenna that was prepared for Satan and his angels. For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. Thirsty, you didn't give me to drink". "Lord, when did we see you like this?", and He said, "Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, my brethren", unto the Jews, the treatment of the Jews, "you did it unto me".

So be judged for the way they had treated His brethren, the Jewish nation. Many nations are gonna come into severe judgement, because of their ill treatment of the Jews. The blessing that God promised to Abraham, still stands. "I will bless those that bless you, and curse those that curse you." It pays to be pro-Israel. God has promised a blessing, if we will. So this valley of judgement, Jehovah's judgement. "Jehoshaphat", and again the judgement is for how they have treated God's heritage, God's people. For the fact that they sold them as slaves, they mistreated them. Wherever they went, they were persecuted, and they were, uh, went through terrible, terrible persecutions, and just of course, in this last war, in the great Holocaust. The things that these people endured at the hands of the Nazis.

Because you have taken my silver and my gold, and you have carried it to your temples [That is, Tyre and Zidon, the land of the Philistines, Palestine.] and my goodly pleasant things: And the children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have you sold to the Grecians, that you might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither you have sold them, and return your recompense upon your head: 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. [So retribution. "As you have sown, so shall you reap."] So proclaim this among the Gentiles; [The Gentile nations.] Prepare for war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: and let the weak say, I am strong. And assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause the mighty ones to come down, O Lord. And let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about (3:5-12).

The great judgement of God in the battle of Armageddon. The call for the people to come, to be gathered, that they might be judged by God in this great battle of Armageddon. This is in contrast to what will happen of course, when the Lord returns to establish His kingdom. "Then they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks and they will study war no more." A reversal of that. But before that happens, they will be, "Beating their plowshares into swords, and their pruninghooks into spears, and being gathered for this great day of God's judgement". So God commands...

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, [That is the, the, the winepress. The, the judgement, the wrath of God is ready to overflow upon them is as mentioned in Revelation, where the cup of His indignation is overflowing.] the vats are overflowing; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, the stars will withdraw their shining. The Lord also will roar out of Zion, [In Revelation, chapter ten, "As He comes with the open scroll, one foot upon the earth, one foot upon the sea, and roaring as a lion." Triumphant, victorious!] and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. For so shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: and then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills will flow with milk, all the rivers of Judah will flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim (3:13-18).

Now, this valley of Jehoshaphat, could, it could be that it doesn't exist yet. We know that when Jesus returns, He's gonna set His foot on the mount of Olives, and the thing's gonna split right in the middle, forming a new valley. That new valley that is formed, may be named, "Jehoshaphat". Just giving you a tip, might be! It's, it's the valley of judgement, where God is going to judge. We know that Jesus is going to sit in judgement when He returns. But the multitudes, the multitudes in this valley of decision.

You know, we sang tonight, "I have decided to follow Jesus", and that is a decision that people make. You decide to follow Jesus, or you decide not to follow Jesus. "I've decided to go my own way. I've decided to pursue a life of pleasure in sin. I've decided to just, you know, forget God, and leave Him out of my life." Or, "I have decided to follow Jesus". It's the decision that every man makes for himself, and how wonderful when a person has enough wisdom to follow Jesus. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." Will I follow the Lord, or will I live after the flesh, and follow my own fleshly desires? Decisions that each of us make for ourselves.

Though this glorious day of the Lord is coming, he describes this kingdom age, the glory of the land. "When the mountains will drop down with new wine, the hills flowing with milk, and all of the rivers of Judah flowing with waters." And, this fountain coming out of the throne of God, described in, in other, in Ezekiel, this river that comes from the throne of God, that flows on down to the dead sea, and heals the waters of the dead sea and all. Flowing through the new valley that is formed.

Egypt shall be a desolation, Edom shall be desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion (3:19-21).

The Lord coming to dwell there in Jerusalem, to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth. So, interesting, fascinating prophecies by Joel, that will soon be coming to pass. I mean we're gearing up for it now. We're right at the time of the fulfillment of Joel, is my conviction. I really believe that we are right

there.

The time to make your decision is now. The time to seek the Lord with all of your heart, is now. Time to call upon God is now. The time to be filled with the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit, is now. I surely don't want to be around, when the judgement of God begins to fall upon this earth. As Jesus described events of the great tribulation, in Luke, twenty one, He said, "Pray ye always that you'll be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are gonna come to pass upon the earth, that you might be standing before the Son of Man". That's my prayer. Lord, I don't want to be around here when it happens, I want to be up there, standing before the throne of God, rejoicing as the Lamb takes the scroll out of the right hand, of Him who sits upon the throne. I want to be among those who are just singing, "O worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll, and loose the seals! For He has redeemed us by His blood out of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people, and made unto our God kings, and priests, and we're gonna reign with Him on the earth"! That's where I want to be! I've decided to follow Jesus, to let Him be the Lord of my life, in order that I might be with Him, in His glorious kingdom. His eternal kingdom. Your choice, your decision. It's your call. You're the one that decides for you, your destiny, your future. The valley of decision, multitudes in the valley of decision. What will your choice be? Shall we pray?

Father, as we look at Your Word, and realize the things that are gonna soon transpire upon the earth, this great battle of Armageddon, the coming day of judgement. As the nations are gathered together for this war, beating their plowshares into swords, pruninghooks into spears, Lord we just are thankful, that You have provided for us, Your children, a refuge from the storm. That refuge in Jesus Christ. Lord, we just look forward to being with You, and to see You in the glory, the glory that you had with the Father, before the world ever existed. Our glorious king! Our glorious Lord! Look forward Lord to be among those that are praising Your name, and rejoicing in the redemption that we have through the blood of Jesus Christ! We're so glad that we decided to follow Jesus! Lord there are those here tonight in the valley of decision. This could be the crucial night when the die is cast. This could be the crucial night when their eternal destiny is determined. They make their choice, one way or the other. Let the Spirit of God Father, just move upon our hearts. We thank You for Your Holy Spirit, you said that You pour out upon all flesh. Let Your Holy Spirit right now Father, speak to their hearts, and draw them unto that decision to follow Jesus. In His name we pray, Amen.