

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Joel 2.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Joel 2.

Topics.

- The Day of the LORD is coming; it is near.
 - The land is like the Garden of Eden, but the army leaves it a wilderness.
 - The earth quakes, the heavens tremble.
 - The Day of the LORD is awesome who can endure it?
 - Let the bridegroom leave his room.
 - The LORD will no more make Israel a reproach among the nations.
 - The LORD has poured down the early and the latter rain.
 - God will restore the years that the locust has eaten, his great army.
 - God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh.
 - The sun shall be turned to darkness before the Day of the LORD comes.
-

INTRODUCTION: little is known about the prophet Joel, although his concern for Judah and Jerusalem suggests that he ministered in the southern kingdom. While the date of the book is uncertain (ninth to sixth century B.C. Joel urged everyone to repent, and told of a day when God would “pour out (His) Spirit on all flesh” (2:28), that day arrived on Pentecost (Acts 2:17).

In this chapter Joel continues to describe the approaching plague and urges Judah to repent, he is warning Israel that the day of the LORD is near and prophecies that Syria (Iraq) (Assyria/Babylon) will attack and enter Jerusalem. Joel’s primary focus is not upon the coming of the Lord, but upon God’s Holy Mountain and the day of battle and Israel’s victory. Joel sees Israel suffering until God delivers them (by Christ coming to their aid) (Micah 5:1-15) and Israel knows their Lord. There will never be an army of people like this again that causes Israel to suffer.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: “Map Locations and People of the Bible,” and the title: “Bible Dictionary” on Website Menu.

The LORD uses secular nations: the LORD uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. He used Assyria to bring judgment on Israel in the land of Samaria (the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom) and Babylon to bring judgment on Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem). Prior to Joel’s prophecy Assyria had taken Israel captive. In the book of Joel Babylon (called the Northern Army) is pictured as an army of locusts. Many times God through the prophets warned Judah they would be taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years, because of their rebellion against the LORD, but God would look after them while they were held captive and at the end of the seventy years He would deliver them.

Joel’s focus is Judah, God is about to use Babylon to bring Judgment on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land of Judah because of their gross sin. Joel is warning the people of Judah that the armies (the locusts) of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon are about to besiege the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding land. Sadly the people did not heed Joel’s warning of impending doom. Babylon spent about two years besieging Jerusalem, the people were without food and the inhabitants of the city were taken captive for seventy years, Jerusalem was

destroyed and the Temple of God pillaged (see Jeremiah chapters 50, 51, 52). Though Joel's focus is upon Judah at this particular period of time in history his prophetic message carries with it an echo of a future day when God will intervene in the history of the world once again and judge not only Judah, but the entire world.

The Day of the LORD is Coming; it is Near.

Joel 2:1-2 ----- ¹Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, ²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

Zion: is called God's Holy Mountain, because Jerusalem God's Holy City, sits on it.

Joel sees in the vision unfolding in his mind that Jerusalem is about to be attacked and the city invaded he warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem and tells them to sound an alarm.

The great and powerful people: refers to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his fierce armies bringing destruction on Jerusalem and the surrounding Jewish nations in the land of Judah. Babylon's armies invaded and destroyed Jerusalem, pillaged the temple of God and took the inhabitants of Jerusalem into captivity for seventy-years that is why God through Joel describes the event as day of thick darkness and gloom.

Like blackness spread upon the mountains: refers to the armies of Babylon on God's Holy Mountain Zion that Jerusalem is built upon (v1).

The LORD'S Great Army: refers to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. The LORD used Nebuchadnezzar His servant and the fierce armies of Babylon to bring judgment upon Judah because of their gross wickedness and rebellion.

The Land is like the Garden of Eden, but the Army leaves it a Wilderness.

Joel 2:3-6 ----- ³Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them. ⁴Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. ⁵As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle. ⁶Before them (Babylon's armies) peoples are in anguish; all faces grow pale.

The words, "Fire devours before them and behind them a flame burns," refer to the cruelty of Babylon's armies and the total destruction and ruin they leave behind them. Prior to Babylon attacking Jerusalem and its surrounding land towns, villages and farms were prospering, the land was fertile and crops were abundant, but after the Babylonian armies had marched through the surrounding Jewish nations of Judah the land was laid waste and its crops and vegetation destroyed this is what the words, "The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness," refer to.

Nothing escaped the power, strength and the might of Babylon's armies they were enormously fierce and powerful warriors ready for battle.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem are in terror: Joel in his vision sees the people of Judah thrown into total fear as they see the armies of Babylon approaching. Remember though some of the events prophesied in Joel's vision are spoken in the present tense the actual events in real life are still to take place in the future. This is a vision that Joel is seeing in his mind in the present moment, but the events are still to be fulfilled in real life in the future.

The Earth Quakes, the Heavens Tremble.

Joel 2:7-10 ----- ⁷Like warriors they charge; like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way; they do not swerve from their paths. ⁸They do not jostle one another; each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. ⁹They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls, they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. ¹⁰The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

The walls and city refers to the city and walls of Jerusalem, Babylon's armies are so well organised for battle nothing can stop them. God through Joel is using lofty language to depict the enormous horror terror and bloodshed of the battle. Biblical lofty language is also used to describe David's great victory in his battles on earth. David's armies were much smaller than the armies of his enemy, but the writer pictures God as a fierce warrior riding on a Cherub fighting for Israel (2 Samuel 22:8-16).

The expression, "The heavens trembled, the sun and moon are darkened and the earth shook" and similar statements like it are often used to describe the enormity of the battle. The battle is so great, the fear so intense, the destruction so enormous and the thousands of human bodies that are left on the surface of the earth for birds to feast on is so vast that the only way to describe the alarm, panic, terror, horror and magnitude of the battle and the widespread destruction of the land and its cities is to say, "The heavens trembled, and the earth shook out of its place".

The writer is using biblical lofty language to convey to the reader the magnitude and enormity of the awful events and the overwhelming killing, bloodshed and incalculable and gigantic number of deaths that take place on this horrific day. The heavens trembled, and the earth shook was used in a song of David regarding the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul (2 Sam 22:8).

Biblical language often uses extreme colorful exaggeration to highlight the story, the message, the moral, the teaching, God's mighty power or the event.

For further information see the title: -

- Lofty Language and Figurative Language of the Bible.
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Day of the LORD is Awesome who can Endure It?

Joel 2:11 ----- ¹¹The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he (Babylon) who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

NOTICE: God calls Babylon His great army, He says Babylon will execute God's word, referring to all the Old Testament prophets telling and warning Judah to repent and turn from their rebellion and gross sins or God will judge them. God through the Old Testament prophets had constantly been warning Judah to repent and turn from their pagan practices and their rebellion.

Sins in the land of Judah and Jerusalem at this time: were gross idolatry, astrology and occultism. They not only had altars for worshiping the host of heaven (the sun, moon, stars and planets) in the court of the temple and worshipped at the altars of Baal, but were even sacrificing their sons on the altars of Molech in the Hinnom Valley. Added to these abominations they were shedding innocent blood, cheating the innocent out of justice, not helping the less fortunate and oppressing the poor for their own gain all of these gross wickedness's permeated the land of Judah and Israel.

NOTICE: Babylon is the one who is about to execute God's word (v11).

Blow the Trumpet in Zion; consecrate a Fast; call a Solemn Assembly.

Joel 2:12-15 ----- 12"Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 13and 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. 14Who knows whether he (God) will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? 15Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly.

This verse shows the extreme mercy of God. The inhabitants of Judah are in a state of rebellion and gross sin, yet God says, even though they have turned away from Him, if they repent and turn to Him, He will relent and turn Babylon away from the destruction their armies are about to bring upon Jerusalem and Judah.

Rend your hearts and not your garments: means God is not interested in outward religious works or ceremonial rites if a person's life style is totally contrary to His will and their heart is not toward Him. Joel is calling the entire nation of Judah to set themselves apart and fast before God.

Let the Bridegroom Leave His Room.

Joel 2:16-17 ----- 16gather the people. Consecrate (set apart) the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. 17Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Chamber: (room in ESV) comes from the Hebrew word (cheder) and refers to an enclosed room such as a bed chamber or private room.

Closet: (chamber in ESV) comes from the Hebrew word (chuppah) and refers to a canopy or chamber as a place of defence and protection.

Porch: (vestibule in ESV) comes from the Hebrew word ('uwlam) and refers to a vestibule or porch bound to the main building.

Let the bridegroom leave his room: Joel calls the people of Judah to gather together and set themselves apart for God, forsake their evil and make themselves clean. Then he says, "Let the bridegroom come out of his chamber and the bride out of her closet." The priest's had access to the inner most place of the temple of God (the Holy Place) whereas the congregation never did. Chamber carries the idea of the private or the inner most place therefore the bridegroom in this context refers to the priests, while the bride refers to the congregation.

Joel is basically telling the priest and the congregation to gather together at the altar, repent and re-dedicate themselves to God, then have the priests pray that God would spare the nation from the impending destruction and doom that Joel in his vision sees coming upon Jerusalem and the land of Judah. This prophetic message of Joel's also echoes a message to the church (the true bride), warning her to make herself ready for when Christ (the true Bridegroom) returns out of his chamber (heaven) to gather together all the faithful who confess his name.

John in the book of Revelations wrote: -

- Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has *made herself ready*; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints (Revelation 19:1-21).

Jesus said: -

- While they (the foolish) were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and *those who were ready* went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you' (Matt. 25:10-12).

The foolish missed out because they did not make themselves ready meaning though they may have strictly adhered to ceremonial rites, holy days and legalistically kept religious Jewish customs and traditions their heart was far from the LORD and they lived indifferently to God and without any concern that their lifestyle was bringing dishonour upon the name of the Lord.

NOTE: the events prophesied in the following verses are all future. This is a vision that Joel is seeing in his mind in the present moment, but the events are still to happen at least seventy years later.

The LORD will no more make Israel a Reproach among the Nations.

Joel 2:18-20 ----- ¹⁸Then the LORD became jealous for his land and had pity on his people. ¹⁹The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. ²⁰"I will remove the northerner (Babylon) 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 smell of him (Babylon) will rise, for he has done great things.

The LORD gives His people the following future promises saying He will: -

- Restore the grain, wine and oil in their land (Joel 2:19).
- No longer make His people a reproach among the nations. (Joel 2:19).
- Remove the northern nation (Babylon) from them. (Joel 2:20).

At the end of the seventy years the LORD used Cyrus King of Persia to fulfil these promises. When the surrounding nations mock and treat God's people cruelly He then judges those nations accordingly.

The History of Judah and Israel: the Old Testament prophets under God's inspiration had previously told Judah if they surrendered to King Nebuchadnezzar and to go into captivity for seventy-years God would look after them while they were in captivity. This seventy year captivity was to be God's punishment upon Judah for their gross sin and rebellion.

Judah did not listen to the prophets so God allowed Babylon to invade Jerusalem and take its inhabitants (Judah) into captivity. Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (in the land of Samaria) captive. Israel and Judah were under Babylonian rule for seventy-years. They went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods, but while in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar. They went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods, but came out as one nation solely devoted to the Lord their God.

During the seventy-year captivity King Nebuchadnezzar died and three kings, one of whom was the Evil-Merodach occupied the throne until Nabonidus came to power, but after a short rule he made his son Bel-sharur (Belshazzar) regent while he retired. Foolishly these kings abused the people of Judah and Israel so God then turned his focus on Judging Babylon, thus at the end of seventy-years God used Cyrus king of Persia to conquer the kingdom of Babylon.

The LORD called Cyrus the king of Persia, "His shepherd" (Isaiah 44:28) and used him to set Israel free from their Babylonian captivity. Cyrus gave written permission to Israel to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their beloved city and the temple of God. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to pagan gods again).

The following verse show Cyrus was called the LORD'S anointed shepherd.

- God says, '*Cyrus is my shepherd*, and shall fulfil all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' (Isaiah 44:28).

Now go to chapter forty-five: -

- Thus says the LORD to *his anointed, to Cyrus*, whose *right hand I have grasped*, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed (Isaiah 45:1)

The LORD calls Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) God's anointed shepherd. Isaiah pictures the LORD holding Cyrus's right hand while Cyrus opens all doors that no man can shut and subdues all nations. The LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing that the LORD had charged him to let His people go and build the LORD a House in Jerusalem.

(2 Chron. 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-2) (Ezra 5:13-17) (Ezra 6:3) (Ezra 6:14).

The LORD has Poured Down the Early and the Latter Rain.

Joel 2:21-24 ----- ²¹"Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! ²²Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and vine give their full yield. ²³"Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. ²⁴"The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

The events prophesied in these verses are all future. This is a vision that Joel is seeing in his mind in the present moment, but the events are still to happen at least seventy-years later.

For your vindication: means that the people of Judah will be justified before the eyes of the nations for having faith in the Lord their God while the words, "Poured down for you the early and the latter rain as before," literally refers to the summer and winter rain, but in the context of these verses it refers to the prosperity the land of Judah had prior to the invasion of Babylon and their seventy-year-captivity and to the abundance of the grain, wine and oil that will once again overflow their vats and barns at harvest time once their captivity has ended and they return to their homeland.

God will Restore the Years that the Locust has Eaten, His Great Army.

Joel 2:25-27 ----- ²⁵I (God) will restore to you (Judah) the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. ²⁶"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. ²⁷You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

Locusts and God's Great Army: God calls Babylon, His great army; the swarming locust; the hopper; the destroyer and the cutter and my great army which I sent among you (Joel 2:25). All these titles refer to the armies of Babylon and the nations associated with them. In the book of Jeremiah God refers to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as "His servant" (Jer. 25:9). The locusts are the armies and nations of the following verses: -

- The great and powerful people spread upon God's Holy Mountain on the day that the LORD is near (Joel 2:1-2).
- The powerful army drawn up for battle like warriors and soldiers that come up against Jerusalem (Joel 1:5-9).
- God's exceeding great and powerful army that executes His word (Joel 2:11).
- The northern army (Joel 2:20).
- The swarming locust the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, God's great army, which He sent among amongst Judah (Joel 2:25).

The characteristics of the locust: the locust is one of over five thousand species of grasshopper specially adapted for long migratory flights. They must flap their wings and jump high to get airborne, because of the weight of their bodies, but once in flight they are able to fly long distances. There are numberless swarms of locust, particularly the species that infests oriental countries. The locust will eat almost anything; they travel in huge numbers capable of destroying entire fields of cultivated plants and any nearby vegetation. Their wings make a clattering sound as they travel and in approaching swarms they create an ominous hum. There are times when the swarms are so large they block out the sunlight.

Locusts are normally shy, solitary creatures, but in a swarm they are an unstoppable moving cloud of millions of flying grasshoppers capable of stripping fields of crops in a matter of hours. For these reasons the locust is a fitting symbol for the power and destructive might of Babylon's armies and her allies. The Oxford team has found that "hot-spots" on the hind legs of the locusts are stimulated when they group together turning the relatively harmless insects into destructive pests. Even today millions of locusts have swarmed across several countries presenting major problems in the Middle East and many South African Nations. In the town of Eilat (a popular place with British tourists) thousands of dead locusts were found piled up in swimming pools.

Sins of Israel: at the time of Joel the land of Judah was full of gross idolatry they worshipped the sun, the moon and stars, pagan gods and were sacrificing their sons to them. Added to this they were cheating the innocent out of justice and oppressing the poor for their own gain. The LORD punished Judah for their rebellion and gross sin by using His servant Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and his great armies (see Jeremiah chapter 49, 50, 51, 52).

You shall know I am the LORD: the words, "You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else" (v27) means that Israel will know that there is only one true God and will never again turn to idols or pagans gods. After the seventy-year captivity when Judah and Israel returned to rebuild Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah as one united nation they never again turned to idols or pagan gods, sadly they eventually fell to sins of pride power greed and legalism etc., but never to false gods.

God will Pour Out His Spirit on all Flesh.

Joel 2:28-29 ----- ²⁸"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Remember though some of the events prophesied in these verses are spoken in the present tense the actual events in real life are still to take place in the future. This is a vision that Joel is seeing in his mind in the present moment, but the events are still to be fulfilled in real life in the future. The events Joel is speaking of now transcend time and take up wings travel hundreds of years through history and time until they arrive at the day of Pentecost (Acts chapter 2) when God poured out His Spirit on all flesh (meaning Jews and Gentiles alike) (Gentiles embraces everyone who is not a Jew or Hebrew). The following verses show that God poured out His Spirit on all flesh on the Day of Pentecost.

- When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place and suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (God's Spirit) and began to speak in other tongues (foreign languages and dialects) as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

Now go to verse sixteen: -

- Peter stood up and said this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" (meaning Jews and Gentiles) (Acts 2:16-17).

From this time forward Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ.

The Commonwealth of Israel: it is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God). The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. This means if you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

The Sun shall be Turned to Darkness before the Day of the LORD Comes.

Joel 2:30-32 ----- ³⁰"And I (the LORD) will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome Day of the LORD comes. ³²And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

The words, "God will show wonders in the heavens and on earth before the great and awesome Day of the LORD comes", does not necessarily need to apply to the day the Lord Jesus Christ returns. It does not say before the LORD returns, but before God's judgment of wrath comes, there will be wonders in heaven and on earth.

NOTICE.

- In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape and survive.
- Joel's focus is upon Jerusalem and Judah.
- Saved in this context refers to those who escape and survive Babylon's invasion of Jerusalem and the seventy-year captivity.

The expression, "Blood fire and columns of smoke, the sun turned to darkness, the moon to blood," is biblical lofty language used to depict the extreme terror and the horror of an event.

The battle is so great, the fear so intense, the destruction so enormous and the thousands of human bodies that are left on the surface of the earth for birds to feast on is so vast that the only way to describe the alarm, panic, terror, horror and magnitude of the battle and the widespread destruction of the land and its cities is to say, there will be blood, fire and columns of smoke, the sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood.

God through Joel is using biblical lofty language to convey to the people of Judah the magnitude and enormity of the awful events and the overwhelming killing, bloodshed and incalculable and gigantic number of deaths that take place on this horrific day (See Joel 2:10).

In the context of this chapter the expression, "There will be blood, fire and columns of smoke, the sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood before the Great and awesome Day of the LORD comes," refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple being pillaged, the land of Judah laying waste and the people of Judah being taken captive to Babylon for seventy-years. Joel is saying, the Great and awesome day when the LORD pours out His Spirit on all flesh will not come until the above events have taken place.

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up and quoted what Joel said saying: -

- In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit (the Holy Spirit) on all flesh (meaning Jews and Gentiles) and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:17-18).

All of this happened in the New Testament at the time of the apostles during the beginning of the church age, but Peter does not stop here he continues to quote the following words of Joel: -

- I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day (Acts 2:19-20).

When Joel was prophesying these words in the Old Testament they referred to, the day the armies of Babylon destroyed the city of Jerusalem, burned the people's houses, pillaged the temple and took the people of Judah captive for seventy-years, but now in the New Testament history has changed and the prophetic words Joel spoke transcend the age of Joel and Babylon and through the following words of Peter: -

- It shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and

foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it (Acts 2:21-24).

Set the focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the words, "It shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved," refers to both Jews and Gentiles being saved to everlasting life and eternal glory. In this context Peter is saying that the great and awesome Day of the LORD was the day the Lord Jesus Christ came, but Joel's statement, "There will be blood, fire and columns of smoke, the sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood" and Peter's quote of it, now transcends the age of Joel and Babylon and the Day of Pentecost and carries and echo of the Lord Jesus Christ returning as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

When Christ returns there will be great upheaval, natural disasters, financial collapse, earthquakes, seas roaring, plagues of all sorts, enormous strife, trouble and death, thus another way of describing such horror and terror is to say, "There will be blood, fire and columns of smoke, the sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood." Nevertheless after this time of trouble Christ will rule in steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, peace will prevail and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever, and will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth, or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the lion and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

End.