

## Adam Kopczyk - Joel

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The topic today is Joel. It's a topic that's pretty hard to do justice to in 45 minutes. We studied the minor prophets many years ago in our class and it took us quite a few sort of sessions to get through them. You might say I bring you Christian greetings from my wife, sister Margaret, who's listening in with me and going to that title of Joel the prophet. Joel lived approximately 800 years before Christ in the early part of the reign of Uzziah, King of Judah.

He was a southerner whose prophecies cast against the background of Judea. He was obviously a countryman, as evidenced by his allusions to country life in the three short chapters of his prophecy that is nearly 3,000 years old. Repeat nearly 3,000 years ago. His prophecy illusions and symbols are taken when you look at go through it from vinedresses, husbandman vines, fig trees and pomegranates. Palms and orange trees stand in the background against the landscape of cornfields and pasture lands, nearly reminiscent of the what Brother Jeff Mezra is talking about before, Joel was one of the first of the minor prophets, ending with Malachi, who saw a vision of the glories to come and recorded it all for us.

Amos and Jonah lived a little later Hosea, approximately 20 years earlier. So Joel and his prophecies stand alone and do not lean on other prophets. Apostle Paul's greatest themes has its origin in Joel. The restoration of the earth in the times of restitution of all things is first hinted at by Joel. Then it is elaborated by Isaiah.

So the first man to be blessed by the Most High with visions of the last days nearly 2,800 years ago was Joel, and this sure prophecy is thus the fountain source of all subsequent revelations concerning the the time of the end. Interestingly, nothing is known of his family tree. We are only told he was the son of Pethuel, meaning God delivers. No one knows who Pethor was or what tribe he came from or where he lived.

So this message was all important and Joel's own identity was of no importance. The name Joel signifies Jehovah is God, or the contents of this book Jehovah the mighty God. The mighty judgments that are suggested will manifest that God is Jehovah. The book of Joel pertains to the last days of the present age with a partial fulfillment in the past. As a type he gives this short message, but from the heart and in their burning words, giving a real urgency and a fire, a bit like John the Baptist crying out his message with such intensity that the People were compelled to listen.

So let's get into our little time machine, buckle up, as we're going to be traveling fast in time to the past and to the Future, covering nearly 3,000 years. In verse two, chapter one, he has something important to say to them, unknown to past generations, to which they must give earnest heed. Verse 2. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear all the inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers?

Tell your children of it in verse three, and let your children tell their children and their children another generation. In verse three, he appears to be a master of psychology. First he captures the interest and attention of his hearers. Then he gives a subtle appeal to their knowledge of the Mosaic law that is described in Deuteronomy 4. 9.

It's a message not only for them, but for the future times, extending to all the earth, even to the end of the world. The first words appear to relate of a great plague of locusts in Judea, or although

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always a grievous calamity, hardly really needing the intervention of a prophet of God, that which the palmer worm had eaten had left eaten, and that which the cankerworm had left, had the caterpillar eaten. In verse 4, the Hebrew words refer to four varieties of different species of locusts the gazm, the abyth, the yellowk, and the chastil, and the first is noted for its voracity, and it's called a biter. The second is for swarming multitudes the third for a propensity of locusts, for licking up and consuming all in its path and what's left behind, and that's why it's called the liquor, and the fourth for its total and utter plain destructiveness.

But why four? Why the number four? And we recall there were four attributes of God in wisdom, justice, love, and power. There's a little lesson in this to note. Whether you see in Scriptures a number, a color, or a size.

Stop. Think. Ask yourself, why, Lord? Surprising how the number four is also associated with divine judgment. In the scriptures we have four horsemen, four wings of Revelation 7, we have four horses of Zechariah 1 and 18.

We recall the four beasts of Daniel in Daniel chapter 7, verses 1 to 12. In the latter two instances, symbols are like Joel's locust, that in their mission is to execute divine judgment upon Israel and will one day be turned back to God upon a chastened people. Ezekiel 14:21 22 are good on this. So here we have how the Heavenly Father uses forces to complete his mighty work. The opening verse gives a picture of the utter desolation of the land by a great plague of locusts.

A very similar scene to the people of Joel's day. Chapter one ends with people bow down in trouble and but not prepared to come to God for repentance so that he can heal them. In Joel chapter two, it's the second part of a prophecy, and Joel's spiritual vision in this chapter becomes much keener. He begins to see further into the future, and the language in the beginning is like the one of the locusts, but the words and terms are now much stronger, and there is no resisting the incoming hosts.

Even, we are told, the sun and the moon withdraw their light. Joel says it is so significant it should be passed on from one generation to the other. In verse 3, he appears to use this plague as a symbol of the great destruction to be visited upon the earth in the great time of trouble. In Joel 2:11, and Jehovah Uttereth his voice before his army, for his camp is very great, for he is strong that executeth his word.

For the day of Jehovah is great and very terrible, and who can abide in it? The same kind of pictorial language is used in Revelations to describe what happens when the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, and we read, and there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power, and the shapes of the locust were like horses prepared into battle, and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold. The Revelation verses do not refer to literal locusts.

Rather they symbolize a great destructive force. Note that Revelations 9 and 4 says that the locusts were not to hurt the grass, trees, or green things, which is the very object of literal locust activity. So Joel too uses locusts. It appears symbolically, I will remove the northerner far from you and drive him into a place parched and desolate land. In Joel 2 and verse 20, locusts do not come from the north.

In Middle Eastern lands they come from the south and the southeast. But in many places a destructive force comes against the nation of Israel in the great time of trouble, and is said to come

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from the North. In Jeremiah 1 and verses 14 and 15 we read, Then the Lord said unto me, out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord, and they shall come, and they shall set everyone on his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem and against all the walls thereof, around about and against all the tribes of Judah. In chapter three it is really divided in has four sections.

And it is a key chapter to all the scriptures that that deal with Armageddon. The vivid description of the nations feverishly arming themselves and coming together in that great final conflict, only to meet the might of the Lord that rises out of Zion to destroy them. It has no parallel in any other book of the Bible. There are more detailed explanations in the other prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah and of course John. In Revelations, Joel declares in the last verse the Lord dwells in Zion.

In verses 1 to 2, God asserts that a judgment is coming upon the people whose deeds merit judgment, and that judgment must surely come. Haven't got time to go there. Isaiah 66 and 16 and Jeremiah 25:31, Ezekiel 38:22 are good on this as well. Joel repeats his message and we read from verse one. For behold, in those days and that time when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them amongst the nations and have divided up my land.

The scattering of Israel among the nations and dividing up their land are understood by Bible students already that land has been repeatedly redivided as one Gentile empire has succeeded another. There's repeated captivity and scattering into far countries. First the Assyrians who took the 10 tribes captive and settled the aliens in Samaria and Galilee. Then the Babylonian under Nebuchadnezzar, driving Judah Jerusalem away and leaving the land desolate. The Persian restoration was never really a real restoration.

People were in subjection to a Gentile power and the land was politically divided. Then the Greeks came along and drew fresh lines of demarcation, and the Romans changed these in turn, bringing destruction and dismay on the people. After a great dispersion following the capture of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70, the Persians and Arabs and the Crusaders and the Turks made havoc of that holy land. As we know, really, the 20th century has seen no interruption of this continual process.

Today the land area promised to Jacob is divided between Arab states, so the land is still divided. So against this background, the prophet goes on to declare the sins for which the Gentile nations are being called. Now to account. Verses 3 to 8. Give us the second section of the chapter with a separate theme.

And the picture is that of a people taken into captivity, sold into slavery at the whim of the captors. They have done so carelessly, never ever dreaming of any retribution. But God has not been indifferent. He has taken note of all that has been done. Now through the prophet he says in verses 5 to 8 a symbolic these Gentiles have ruled over Jacob's seed.

They've spoiled their goods and occupied their land for many centuries, really unrighteously, and during all that time God has been planning for an earthly servant nation that is to rule on the earth at the end, like he is doing during this present gospel age in developing for himself a heavenly servant nation chosen from amongst mankind that shall rule them from the heavens at the end. When the time comes for the law of the Lord to go from Zion, it shall be that all mankind will find

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themselves brought under the righteous rule that is to be administered by the once despised slaves who were sold and scattered all over the earth. Isaiah 60:10 11 and Zechariah 8:23 are good on this as well. In verses 9 to 12 of chapter 3 God is not to be mocked.

And now he has suddenly risen up to judgment and the time of retribution has come. The nations are to gather together for the last time. After that day there will no longer be any nations. For the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and forever in Revelations 11 and 15.

This is Joel's final and most glorious vision. In verse nine he's giving us glimpses and a partial views of the time of trouble. All the pictures vowing locust marching and the terror stricken defenders, the weeping husbandman, the praying priest have suddenly fused altogether into a clear and future Charles. Caesar, regathered a repentant, is standing confident in the power of God, waiting for that last great conflict of this present evil world, waiting for God to their defense and anticipating the overthrow of all their enemies, and as they wait and the evil powers of the earth begin to gather for the final assault, an assault which according to Ezekiel chapter 38 is expected to be one on a helpless people and I quote to take spawn and to take a prey and the voice of the Lord out loud and clear, commanding the angry host to come to the valley of their judgment and their doom.

Joel is the only Bible writer to refer to the valley of Jehoshaphat in verse 12. So then, what is this meaning of these words? What are mighty hosts of the Gentiles to be gathered into that valley of Jehoshaphat and set the scene of their defeat and judgment. The word Jehoshaphat in verse 12 means Jehovah judged. There is no other reference valley except in the Job.

However, there are many other references to the great day of the Lord and the battle of that time, as we've had referenced in the early 20th talks, the Kidron Valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of sometimes this is not scripturally it's called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Both Jews and Muslim tradition has it as a place of last judgment. However, many Bible students feel it is the valley Emek, the broad valley of Beccara between Jerusalem and Hebron, where the forces of Jehoshaphat met in that battle with the combined enemies of Ammon Edom, or Mount Seir and Moab. So Joel was not thinking of the Kidron Valley. He was referring to the wilderness of Tekorah in Judea, which is about 12 miles south of Jerusalem down towards the Dead Sea and where there had been that memorable deliverance of Israel in the days of King Jotahit.

50 years before Joel's own time, the armies of Moab and Ammon or Mount Seir came in great numbers around or across the Dead Sea to enge past the Ziz and they invaded Israel. It seemed that they were all lost, but under the leadership of the God fearing king, the people placed their trust and faith in God for their deliverance and went out to meet their invaders. The whole story is recorded in Second Chronicles chapter 20, and it is one of those rare instances in which Israel did rise to the height of faith and reap the reward of their faith. King Jehoshaphat rightly looked unto Jehovah, we are told in 2 Chronicles 25:13 in an answer to an impassionate prayer by Jehoshaphat, he then was able to assure the people that the battle is not yours, but it's God's. In verse 15 of chapter 20 Jehovah also answered with Ye shall not fight in this battle set yourselves stand ye still and see the salvation of Jehovah with you.

In verse 17 the Hebrews were told to go with the priests of God, leading the way to play instruments, sing hymns and praises to God, and God would fight the battle for them. Interestingly, the method used by the Lord was to set ambushments against them. This probably means that the enemies had set up ambushments and became confused and they covered in the crossfire, or

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more likely the bands of local marauders and established ant. Many translations put it liars in wait in 2 Chronicles 20:22 so first the Amorites and the Moabites ganged together to utterly destroy them of Mount Seir, and then the Amorites and Moabites utterly destroyed each other.

No one escaped. We are told there was nothing then to do for Judah, but to come down take the abundant spoils. There are not many. It took them three days to carry it all back. So they named the place the Valley of Beccara or the Valley of Blessing, and they returned to Jerusalem with joy and thanksgiving at the temple, and then they had peace.

We are told in 2 Chronicles 20:26 to 30 and the parallels between this and Zechariah in both cases God is the one to fight the battle and victory in both instances, and the tool used was by causing anarchy amongst the enemies of the Lord's people. This also forms a striking parallel the battle of Gideon versus Midian back in judges 7:22. That was one of the few instances when Israel's faith rose to occasion and God delivered. So great was the impression left in the minds of those who witnessed this great event that the story was handed down from father to son, coming all the way down to Job description of the last conflict of this gospel age and Joel named it the Valley of Jehoshaphat's time. In prophetic vision he saw a far future day when confidence of divine protection at this time for the world to see there would be a reenactment of the miracle that took place with Jehoshaphat.

Israel's history has so many examples showing what God can do when the doors of trust and faith are open to him to intervene in human affairs. The crossing of the Red sea in Exodus 14, the Philistine invasion of the days of Samuel in 1 Samuel 7:3-12 we just heard of Sanhedrin's siege of Jerusalem in 2019 are all more than sufficient to show what God has done before he can do and will do again under second conditions in second chronicles chapter 25 to 13 and 17. It's a bit like brother Bob Goodman's comments yesterday. The catchphrase Follow God's rules, you'll be blessed. Break God's rules, you're going to get stressed what happened to Israel over and over again regarding the day of the lord in Revelation 16 and 16 and 18 and he gathered them together in a place called in a tongue and there were wonders and lightning.

There was a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth so mighty an earthquake, and so great and in Zechariah 12, 9, 11 it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem in that day. There shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem in the valley of Magiddon. This is where the expression the battle of Armageddon comes from. It is that great time of trouble that ends this Gospel age. Joel calls it the day of the Lord.

Interestingly, he uses this expression six times in his 73 verses of his three chapters. John uses a similar expression to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty in Revelation 16:14. This was a common theme among the Old Testament prophets, and nearly all of them talk about this period of time. In Joel, chapter three, verses 12 to 14, we read, Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is right come, tread for the wine press is full, the vats overflow 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. These multitudes constitute the Lord's great army. Although Joel in chapter two and 25 says the locusts are the Lord's great army, I believe he is using this plague as an allegory for the multitudes caught up in that final battle of Armageddon, and this is made quite clear in the second chapter in verses 2 and 11. A day of darkness and doom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as in the dawn is spreading over the mountains.

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There is a great and mighty people. There has never been anything like it, nor will there ever be again after it, to the years of many generations, and verse 11, the Lord utters his voice before his army. Surely his camp is very great, for strong is he who carries out his word. The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome.

Who can endure? Nearly reminds us of the words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:21. For then there will be great tribulation such as not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. When these multitudes come up against Jerusalem, it's not with the idea of serving God, it's to accomplish his purpose. The valley of Bechera or blessing.

Here we are enabled rightly to place these happenings in the times and the seasons of the divine plan of the ages. Verses 15 and 16 tell us that when the nations have gathered together together, and have been as it were, reaped and cast into the winepress, the sun and the moon and regarding Israel, the signs of the second advent and establishment of the kingdom in power. The gathering and reaping lead to this culmination. The incitement to war, the turning of all arts of peace to purposes of conflict, the federation of weak nations with allegedly strong unions, the framing of treaties and agreements and pacts of mutual aid against real and fancied aggressions, carried to the extent in recent years, constitutes a clear fulfillment of this very prophecy and an indication of the immense of that darkening of the sun and the moon and the shaking of the heavens which Matthew 24 is given as the immediate herald of the manifestation of the returned Lord and King in full glory to all of mankind. The gathering of the Church and its union with him takes place before this and before the nations have completed their assembly in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

This winepress feature, when the Lord will roar out of Zion is to result in the immediate deliverance of his people, people and almost commencement of the millennial work. As verse 18 seems to indicate, it logically follows that the Church will have been gathered sometime previously and therefore before Armageddon is fought out around the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy and strangers will pass through it no more. In verse 17 that is the outcome.

The Gentile hosts have come up for judgment. They've been judged. They have had undertaken their last assault against the citadel of God's righteousness. They've been repulsed. Their powers have been broken forever.

Israel has returned wholly and completely to the Lord her God, and the stage is set for the millennial kingdom. It appears from King Jehoshaphat's last encounter that Israel's last battle will be without them being at all armed. They are living. Meant to be living in unwallied cities is one of the prophecies preceding this. They have walls at the moment.

The blessings of the kingdom. God's plan does not end with the destruction of that great day. It's just the beginning. There is some great news. The united testimony of the prophets is that Israel will be restored to a condition of prosperity and blessing will flow to all the world of mankind in that kingdom arrangement.

It's a win win situation for all. The battle of Armageddon humbles the world and does away with human institution. I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel and rebuild them as they were at first, and this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and glory before all the nations of the earth who shall bear hair of all good that I do for them. In Jeremiah 33, 7, 9, Joel also speaks of the kingdom, and in that day the mountain shall drip sweet wine, and the hill shall flow with milk, and the stream beds of Judah shall flow with water, and a fountain shall come forth from

the house of the lord.

In verse 18, although Joel talks about the terrible punishments from the hand of the Lord, he holds out a hope of escape in verse 32, and it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered. Verse 18 is so full of millennial imagery. The wine and the milk of the kingdom and the river of life, and these symbols are found elsewhere in the Scriptures as separated, but they are combined here we have the authority to link them in point of dispensation and time, and proclaiming all in threat that day, that when the river of life commences to flow again from the sanctuary of God, there will be wine and milk. The deep truths and elementary truths of the divine plan, the things by which mankind approach unto God and enter communion with him, learning to love earthly lives acceptably, conforming with his laws, without money and without a price.

His eagle gives the clearest view of the millennial river in Ezekiel 47. There he saw a stream emerge, waters rapidly widening and deepening as they pursued their onward course until they became a mighty river, too wide, too deep to pass over. There's more there. But Zechariah, chapter 14, in latter days saw the same things. In verse 18.

The valley of Shaitan, as translators have it, is the valley of acacia. The word Shaitan in Hebrew means acacia. The valley of acacias was a name given to the terraces on either side of the Jordan for a considerable distance above its very entrance into the Dead Sea, which were thickly forested with acacias at the time. A most striking parallel with Zechariah's vision, he also sees the river of life issuing forth towards the east country, the same district, and thus finding its way by means of the Jordan into the Dead Sea. Both prophets saw the same thing in vision, and each described it in their own words.

The Hebrew word found, ma' an, means a collection of many springs, gushing forth a great quantity of water at one place. The rivers of Judah in verse 18 would result in abundant harvest of grapes, consequent wine, ample pasture for their flocks, and consequent milk. No wonder, Joel says, the mountains would drop down new wine, so heavily laden with prolific vines would they be, and the hills flow with milk, so rich in flocks and herds would there be in return, and this is due in the first place to the river of life flowing out of the house of the Lord. That is the call of the millennial age.

The work of that age is to offer symbolic wine and milk unto all mankind without money, without a price, exhorting them to listen and hear that their souls may live. It will become as common and free as the air we breathe and the sunshine which warms us. It will be the true of the wine and milk of the millennial age. The prophet in verse 19 turns his eyes away from the fear vision and looks upon the divine warfare against evil which has made that vision possible. Egypt will become a waste, and Edom will become a desolate wilderness because of the violence done to the sons of Judah in whose land they have shed innocent blood.

Verse 19 cannot be taken literally, and for neither Egypt and Edom now exist. The Egyptians of our time are a different race to the people altogether. Before both nations went to oblivion many centuries ago. In that day when Israel shines forth replenishment, purified, converted as God's earthly missionary virgin. The Egypt in Eden who persecuted them in the day of the weakness, will not be as nations there anymore.

The nations that tried to eliminate them from the face of the earth have themselves ceased to exist as nations. But Israel, whom they opposed, is enthroned forever. The last verse is a divine decree. But Judah will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem for all generations and 21 and I will avenge their

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blood, which I have not avenged. For the Lord dwells inside.

Just another summary of verses from Joel. Just a few thoughts I jotted down. The theme of the book of Joel is the day of the Lord and his great army. First there's punishment, then there's blessing. We see the preparations on every side of this great battle.

But afterward the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled. In Isaiah 2, 4, he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into ploughshells, their shears spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. Jehovah.

God gave victory to many kings of Judah when they went into battle. But Jehoshaphat and his army were given victory with never ever engaging in battle. So what's the prophetic significance? Food for thought. Jehovah's.

Jehoshaphat's encounter shows us something that the others do not. Namely, that two of the enemies vanquish the third before they destroy each other in the Battle of Armageddon. Many think these correspondent to the political papal and Protestant fractions. Those living in the 30s supposed the three would be communism, fascism, those considered progressive atheistic at the time, and possibly Christendom. Then turn the page.

In the 50s it could have been supposed to be Communism, Catholicism and Protestantism. Today it might be Communism and socialism, Islam and institutionalized Christianity. Let us watch and see what it will be as we approach Christianity. In Habakkuk 1, 2 and 4 the Prophet admits the Lord's people have sinned, but asks Jehovah why he will allow wicked to administer patience punishment on those who are more righteous than they in God's answer means the power of Christianity in the world will be broken by opposing ideologies. There will nevertheless be a consolation prize for the Christian.

The world will not ever be able to blame Christ for Armageddon, and dear brethren, how we all pray, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.