

Scripture reading: Joel 1:13, 14; 2:1, 12, 13, 15

Introduction: JOEL, his name: "*Yahweh is God*"

his background: "*son of Pe-thu-el*"

his dating: not known, no timing re Israel or Judah kingdom,  
could be 700BC, locusts plague not yet discovered  
in history.

his source: "*The word of the Lord that came to Joel*"

his reason: an unprecedented devastation, desolation and total  
ruin or wasteland.

his aim: to call attention to return to God, be ready.

his promise: restoration and peace for ever.

Important issues in Joel's message:

1. A destruction and desolation as never seen or heard of, physical and/or spiritual, caused by 4+1 forces.(Joel 1:4 & 6)
2. No particular sins are mentioned, but a deep apostasy has taken place from which the people are called to return.(Joel 1:14;2:13,)
3. The northern army will be removed, which had much to do with the situation.(Joel 2:20)
4. Signs in the heavens are mentioned.(ib.2:10,31;3:15)
5. Former and latter rain is promised.(ib.2:23)..
6. The gospel call is sounded, deliverance.(ib.2:32)
7. The final battle, Valley of Jehoshaphat (ib.3:12} .(Berachah that is *blessing*, 2Chron.20:26)

How do we deal with such a prophetic message, "*The word of the Lord*"?

Ellen White borrows **many** times from Joel, 72x ;( see EGW comprehensive index)

10x: 1:10-12; 1:12; 1:15-18; 1:17-20 for last days illustrations,  
including the period of the 7 plagues.

53x: 2:1, 2; 11, 12-13; 12-17; 13; 15-17; 16, 17, 23,26,28,29,28-32  
for revival and to wake-up.

9x: 3:14, 16, time of decision making and final victory.

Joel 2:17 EGW uses in connection with the threat against God's  
people in the time of the Coming Crisis re Sunday Law.  
See 5T452

Joel 2:23 EGW links with Rev.18:1 "*It is the latter rain which  
revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will  
shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.*" SDABC 7:984

Joel 2:28, 29 are linked with the Pentecost event: "*If this prophecy of  
Joel met a partial fulfilment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it  
is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. He will so bestow His  
Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness, and  
great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be  
increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people.*" ib.4:1175

**Q.: If the above mentioned part of Joel's prophecy is taken from Joel's time to the**

**apostle's time,**

**a. by Peter, Acts 2:16,17 and**

**b. by EGW to the end time,**

**would we be justified to take all of Joel's message and apply this to our day of deep moral darkness?**

**Would it be right to use Joel's message apocalyptic eschatological?**

The answer depends on what we do with the locusts plague!

Different viewpoints since Joel's time.

Locusts in Moses' time, divine punishment upon wicked Egypt, Ex.10:12

Locusts in the Apocalypse, illustrations for destructive forces, Rev.9:3

What about Joel's locusts?

The SDABC v1.4, p.939 suggests two views. The literal and the allegorical one

For the literal one is no historical background

For the allegorical one we found some statements in a few Bible commentaries of the past.

The full statements are found here below

Matthew Henry: *The judgment it self; it is an invasion of the country of Judea by a great army. Many interpreters both ancient and modern understand it of armies of men, the forces of the Assyrians, which under Sennacherib took all the defenced cities of Judah, and then no doubt made havoc of the country and destroyed the products of it; nay, some make the four sorts of animals here named(v.4) to signify the four monarchies which in their turns, were oppressive to the people of the Jews, one destroying what had escaped the fury of the other. Many of the Jewish expositors think it is a parabolical expression of the coming of enemies, and their multitude, to lay all waste. So the Chaldee paraphrast mentions these animals (v.4); but afterwards (ch.2:25) puts instead of them, nations, peoples, tongues, languages, potentates and revenging kingdoms. But it seems much rather to be understood literally of armies of insects coming upon the land and eating up the fruits of it."* Vol...IV, p.1203 in AD 1712

Matthew Poole(17th AD): Joel 1:4 = 4 locusts.

a. Literal, but not found in history.

b. *"yet, it is likely it was done, as here told and as so done was a figure of some greater devastation made by foreign powers, as by Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar.*

c. Joel 2:6 'teeth of a lion' = literal and Assyrians or Babylonians.

Further from Matthew Poole: *Whether historical or not, literal or prefiguring nations, we may well rest ourselves contented in the undisputable things of greater moment, such as are the divine authority with he came attested by himself, ch.1:1 and confirmed to us by the apostle Acts 2:17; Rom.10:13, and by Christ Himself Matth.24:29, Mark 13:24, Luke 21:25, all he spake is the word of God. The pernicious consequences of national sins, such as were visible on God's own people at this very time in parching drought devouring locusts and famine, the only method for removing these judgments fasting, prayer, amendments of our life, the successive suffering of the church under several monarchies till the coming of the Messiah with the wonderful preservation of the good during those times, the just and final decisions God will make for his against their oppressors in those kingdoms doing it by raising the succeeding empires to punish and overthrow the precedent; the conversion of the Jews, the calling of the gentiles, the advancement of the kingdom of the Messiah and communications of the gifts and graces to the church, the final and universal decision of all things that concerns God and His church on the one side and their enemies on the other; the general judgment of quick and dead are the great subjects he doth in plainer or darker terms set before us."*

Adam Clarke: *"That real locusts are intended there can be little doubt; but it is thought that this may be a double prophecy, and that the destruction by the Chaldeans may also be intended, and that the four kinds of locusts mentioned above may mean the four several attackers made on Judea by them.....Others say that they mean four powers which have been the*

enemies of the Jews. Assyrians/Chaldeans, Persians and Medes, Greeks in particular Antiochus Epiphanies and the Romans.

Jamiesons, Fausset and David Brown (Eerdmans Publ. Co. 1945) *The Hebrews make the first species refer to Assyria/Babylon; the second to Med. Persia; the third to Greco-Macedonia and Antiochus Epiphanies and the fourth to the Romans. Though the primary reference be to literal locusts, the Holy Spirit doubtless had in view the four successive empires which assailed Judea, each worse than its predecessor, Rome being the climax.*"

The New Bible Commentary Revised. Inter-Varsity Press, 1953.

*"Few commentators today would follow the older view that here we have a veiled picture of four foreign empires who would oppress Israel (usually Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome; c.f. visions of Daniel in ch.2) This would involve an unduly apocalyptic approach to an historical event"*

## BUT THE HISTORICAL EVENT WAS NEVER FOUND.

SDA Bible Commentary, 1955 *"In general two views have been held with regard to this description of the plague of locusts.*

*1. The literal view which holds that Joel is describing a particularly devastating scourge of locusts and that the prophet makes the disaster the occasion of a call to repentance; the deliverance from the natural scourge is then made an occasion for a discourse on the future day of the Lord, when God's people will be delivered from all their enemies.*

*2. The allegorical view which holds that the description of the plague was merely a figure of coming judgments. For example in the time of Jerome the four destructive insects were taken as symbols of (a) Babylonians/Assyrians, (b) the Medes and Persians, (c) the Macedonians and Antiochus Epiphanies, (d) the Romans. No serious Bible student accepts this view today.*

*Inasmuch as locust infestation were rather common occurrences in Palestine, it would be difficult to prove that one such plague may not have formed the occasion of Joel's prophecy. The arguments that have been presented against this view, such as the fact that the habits of the locusts are not accurately described, tend to fall down when it is remembered that the language is highly figurative and poetical. On the other hand it is impossible to prove that Joel was not employing the description of the insect infestation merely as a figure to represent the invasion of hostile armies"*

Based on the last sentence the door is still left open to consider the allegorical view, which we will use in this study .

Signs in the heavens and on Earth, three times in Joel.

Joel 2:10 & 30, 31; 3:15. see also: Isa.13:9,10; Ezech.32:7

Matthew 24:29 & Rev.6:12, 13

These SIGNS are of an eschatological nature; 18th & 19th century fulfilments.

Dark day of May 19, 1780; "rain" of stars November 1833.; check SDABC vl.4.p943 & 950

The result of the "LOCUSTS" invasions described as a wasteland,  
depriving the nation of the most essentials, Joel 1:10-12 corn-bread(wheat, barley)  
wine  
oil  
fruit of all kinds

Temple service, ministry and worship is disturbed: 1:9, 13

Holding back of rain-(drought), and fire is added, Joel 1:19, 20

The whole devastated desolation is more than just the  
result of a usual locust plague.

### **It's extraordinary, unusual.**

#### **APPLYING THE IMAGE OF DANIEL 2 , and ITS 4 EMPIRES.**

Four devaluating world powers: Babylon, Med. Persia, Greece, Rome  
The fourth one, Secular Rome, evolves into Ecclesiastical Rome, (iron & clay)  
Ecclesiastical Rome has something of a lion in its composition, Joel 1:6; Rev.13:2.  
and is also identified as King of the North, Dan.11, will be taken or coming to  
his end without a helper, Joel 2:20; Job 34:20; Dan.7:11; 11:40-45. (see study  
on Dan.11:40-45)  
it is the same power which as Daniel's little horn in chapter 8 disturbs the  
temple/sanctuary service, introducing a false style of worship, which  
is called *the transgression of desolation* ,Dan.8:13 or *the transgression that  
causes horror*, NASB; also called *the abomination that maketh desolate*,  
Dan.11:31;12:11. The taking away of the "daily", TAMID. (see my study  
Sanctuary Obscured and Restored)

This power came temporarily to an end by the outburst of the French  
Revolution, the world moving deeper into what is known in history as  
THE ENLIGHTENMENT  
which gave birth to Darwinism, evolutionism, atheism, the teachings of  
Marx and Lenin and modernism with its contemporary "child" called:  
POST-MODERNISM

#### **BATTLE FOR THE MIND.**

**Ever since the flood Satan has been busy to create different ideas and  
world views to confuse the human mind, starting with the tower of Babel  
moving through the four world powers/kingdoms and ending with  
secular/ecclesiastical Rome.**

**It could well be that post modernism is the end of the line, when at the  
same time ecclesiastical Rome has re-established herself on the world  
stage as an influential political/religious world power.**

What has this done to the world as we know it today, in particular  
to western society, which has a strong global influence.

- 1.The authority of the Word of God, made subject to the human mind.  
Historical-critical method of dealing with the Bible. HUMANISM.  
Corn-bread taken away.  
The Bible, the most translated and sold book, but the least read.
2. Salvation by faith in the blood of Christ in exchange for salvation by  
human development and effort; result of evolution. Wine dried up.  
Sin has become a dirty word; God does not punish, because He is love.
- 3.Bible spirituality, demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit, replaced by the fruits  
of the human mind, demonstration of human power instead of divine power.  
The oil is languishing.

Christ-the bread of life John 6:36

Christ's blood for our salvation, Matthew 26:26, 27

Christ the Supplier of oil-Holy Spirit, John 16:7, 8

These three have been taken out of society, a Christmas without Christ, a new generation not knowing the essentials of "Christmas", "Easter" or any other Christian tradition or festival.

It appears that human wisdom of the contemporary world is influencing Christianity and is taking over the church.

"...historically conservative denominations, mission agencies and burgeoning Para church ministries are changing as post-modern influences shape them more and more" (The Coming Evang.Crisis,p.18)

*"This doctrine of Christ's penal substitutionary sacrifice is not popular today. Even in churches that joyfully and fruitfully affirmed and disseminated this doctrine far and wide in earlier centuries, the loss is quite noticeable." ib.122*

*"There seems to be vast numerical strength in the churches, yet an appalling ignorance and superficiality at the same time" ib.157*

Dr.Peter Jensen in his inauguration speech as archbishop of Sydney:

*"What they (fundamentalists) say to us is that if we keep compromising with the world, the church will disappear, for no one will want to belong to it. And in this, at least they have been proved right. Modernised Christianity is so anaemic that the denominations that embraced it are in danger of disappearing."*

Dr.Peter Jensen in his book THE REVELATION OF GOD,

P.93 *The loss of scriptural authority in the church has been a calamity for the Christian cause, not least in the missionary-founded churches.*

*p.229 When our culture abandoned the Bible as its standard of life it may have done far more damage to its roots than it could have imagined. The way back will be through a commitment to the widespread knowledge of God in His word.*

*p274 It is the tragedy of much modern theology and of whatever church life is influenced by such theology, that it has chosen to follow its culture rather than the word of God. It has accepted the negative verdict on the Bible of movements such as the Enlightenment, and has tried to substitute other revelations or other versions of revelation. These must be doomed to failure.*

Dr.Norman Gulley in his book CHRIST IS COMING explains our time as follows,p.29 *"Postmodernity is also antimodernity. The modern worldview included the acceptance of humanity's inevitable progress, often based on evolutionary progress. We have now come to a generation that for the first time does not see any inevitable better future. The optimism of the Enlightenment, with its vaunted belief in human reason, has given way to pessimism and meaninglessness."*

Joel's description of desolation can now be seen as a wasteland of mind, soul and spirit. The four world powers have done their work

properly and thoroughly. The BATTLE FOR THE MIND has been quite successful.

Dr. John Fowler in his book DUNGEON & THE LIGHT writes about our time, p.14:  
*"Something has destroyed the faith, the hope and meaningful existence of millions of people today"*

p.15 *"Enlightenment turns out the Light."*

p.16 *"There are no absolutes and everything is relative. My way is as good as yours. If it feels good, do it."*

#### Q. HAS ADVENTISM ESCAPED THE INFLUENCE OF THE TIMES?

The following statements are from MINISTRY December 2002 and from an article entitled CAN DYING CHURCHES BE RESUSCITATED? By Russell Burrill.

*"Eighty percent of all Christian churches in North America, including those of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, have plateaued or are in a state of decline"*

*"The problem is that churches on the plateau of decline usually have lost their sense of mission"*

*"Seventh-day Adventist churches are not much of an exception to these scenarios. Many of them have lost their sense of mission. The ultimate result is that the churches become virtual country clubs for the saints. The more one caters for them, the worse they seem to get spiritually, and the more they seem to require."*

#### Q. IF SOMEHOW SOME OF IT HAS RUBBED OFF ON ADVENTISM, WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

*"What is needed is a radical refreshment from the fountainhead - God's Word on God's Word - specifically, the Word in preaching, the Holy Spirit in preaching, Christ in preaching and the hearer in preaching"* p.92 Evang.Crisis

In other words, we need a return of the CORN, the WINE and the OIL, which has been laid waste.

Or in the words of MINISTRY ib. *"The church must be immersed in spiritual revival"*

*"The most basic step in helping a church move of the plateau or stop the decline is to help it rebirth its dream for the future". ibid.*

#### Q. HOW WILL THAT TAKE PLACE?

**We must go to Joel, the one who tells us YAHWEH IS GOD.**

FIRST, consider God's promises:

1. The Northern Army and its aftermath which seem to have completed this wasteland, will not last for ever, it will be removed, Joel 2:20
2. The Lord shall utter His voice, the Lord shall not keep quiet, ib. 11
3. He will be gracious, merciful and of great kindness, ib. 13
4. The Lord will be jealous for His land and pity His people, ib. 18
5. He will do great things, ib. 21

6. Former and latter rain are promised, ib.23
7. A restoration of what has been destroyed, ib.19,25
8. Deliverance will take place, ib.32
9. A great decisive victory, as in the days of Jehoshaphat, ib.3:2,12
10. Dwelling for ever in the New Earth, ib.20

SECOND, Consider Joel's wake-up calls in order to enjoy these promises individually but also corporately.

1. Gird yourselves and lament, a humbling before God, Joel 1:13  
Could this be similar to the sigh and cry of Ezech.9:4?
2. Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, Joel 1:14  
The fast of Isa.58 would be most applicable.  
Sanctification of spirit, soul and body not to be ignored, 1Thess.5:23
3. Turn to Me with all your heart, Joel 2:12  
A total re-conversion or a renewal of the born-again-experience.  
*"a rebirth of its dream"* see MINISTRY above.
4. Rend your heart not your garments, inward, not outward, ib.2:13
5. Gather all of church/family for this spiritual revival activity, ib.2:16
6. A weeping and crying to the Lord, Joel 2:17  
Intensifying prayer life; individual and corporate.
7. Call upon the name of the Lord, ib.2:32  
Sound the Gospel call.  
See 2Tim.2:19 Who calls upon the name of the Lord must depart from iniquity. But notice Jesus' statement in Matth.7:23 NASB (iniquity in KJV)

All this in view of the fact of what the Lord will do with the nations, which will be similar to what happened in the days of Jehoshaphat, Joel 2:2,12-14  
As in Jehoshaphat's day, we will not need to fight the unbelieving nations, the Lord will smite them, 2Chron.20:22 *they were smitten* (margin in KJV: *they smote one another*, see Rev.17:16)

We must put **our house** in order, 2Chron.20:20

*"In view of that great day, the word of God, in the most solemn and impressive language, calls upon His people to arouse from their spiritual lethargy, and to seek His face with repentance and humiliation."* GC311

**IN CLOSING:** no reason to have fear, doubt, apprehensive feelings or act weak:

Joel 3:16 *"The Lord will be the hope of His people and the strength of the children of Israel"* KJV

*"The Lord is a refuge for His people a stronghold for the people of Israel."* ib.NRSV

Hope, as an anchor (Hebr.6:19), in solid ground,  
Refuge, to know where to go for safety.  
Strength, to be able to go through the coming crisis.

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