

JOEL THE PROPHET



***What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.***

Joel 1:4 (NKJV)

**WHAT DID JOEL SEE? FOUR KINDS OF LOCUSTS
OR FOUR KINDS OF HELICOPTERS?**

A study by Wayne McMorran
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INTRODUCTION

Most Old Testament prophecies have had or will have two fulfillments. A “near” and incomplete fulfillment which usually took place during the prophet’s lifetime and the “far” or “complete” fulfillment which came later or, has not even occurred yet. Joel was no exception. In fact, thjis short book is prophetic from Joel’s time all the way to the Millenium! Looking ahead, we find,

"So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

Joel 3:17 (NKJV)

This can only be FULLY explained, FULLY fulfilled, as stated by John

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

So this remarkable three chapters, overlooked by many is it lies hidden in the “Minor Prophets.” It is unfortunate that these twelve books were labeled “Minor Prophets.” They are only “Minor” in these sense of being shorter. Hosea being the longest with 14 chapters.

The first judgement he describes had already happened or was in progress.

THE DAY OF THE LORD IN PROPHETIC TYPE (CHAPTER ONE) THE PROPHET (1:1)

The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:

Joel 1:1 (NASB)

This is a rather common introduction to a Prophet.

That which came as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah in regard to the drought:

Jeremiah 14:1 (NASB)

The word of the Lord which came to Hosea the son of Beer, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Hosea 1:1 (NASB)

The word of the Lord which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Micah 1:1 (NASB)

The name “Joel” means “The LORD is God.” and there are nine other Joel’s in the Old Testament. With this introduction, let us dig into this prophetic message

THE LOCUST PLAGUE (1:2-7)

Hear this, O elders, And listen, all inhabitants of the land. Has anything like this happened in your days Or in your fathers' days? Tell your sons about it, And let your sons tell their sons, And their sons the next generation.

Joel 1:2-3 (NASB)

This is Joel's way of saying that something really extreme (good or bad) has happened. It is so important that it is to be passed on from generation to generation! So, now that Joel has your attention, what is this great thing?

What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten.

Joel 1:4 (NASB)

Joel is describing a great devastation which was created by the locust. Some say Joel is not describing different breeds of locusts but the four functions that locusts perform. Others claim that there were differences. We shall get to this a bit later. There have been a number of such plagues, some worse than others. The one you probably remember was back in Egypt.

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 'For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 'They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They will also eat the rest of what has escaped—what is left to you from the hail—and they will eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field. 'Then your houses shall be filled and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, **something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.**'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

Exodus 10:3-6 (NASB)

Moses used more or less the same phraseology here that Joel does. The Prophet Amos also described a plague of locusts.

"I smote you with scorching wind and mildew; And the caterpillar was devouring Your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord.

Amos 4:9 (NASB)

Nahum describes a devastation of locusts

There fire will consume you, The sword will cut you down; It will consume you as the **locust does. Multiply yourself like the creeping locust, Multiply yourself like the swarming locust.** You have increased your traders more than the stars of heaven— **The creeping locust strips and flies away. Your guardsmen are like the swarming locust. Your marshals are like hordes of grasshoppers** Settling in the stone walls on a cold day. The sun rises and they flee, And the place where they are is not known.

But, I have a question which we ought to seek the answer to as we study what the final fulfillment of this prophecy is. To introduce this, refer to the image on the cover. I have illustrated the four locusts on one side and four military helicopters on the other. Then I ask you this question. If you were Joel and you saw a squadron of helicopters coming up over the hillside and you had to describe them, how would you do it?

Take a look at John's description of a future event.

The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; **and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold**, and **their faces were like the faces of men**. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. **They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.**

Revelation 9:7-10 (NASB)

All of these could easily be applied to a helicopter. The rotor blades shining in the sun would look like crowns of gold. The front of some helicopters have two windows positioned like the eyes of a man. The helicopter certainly would be described as "being like iron." But, especially, the great noise that a helicopter makes would sound like "many horses running into battle." (I wonder what horse power a helicopter has!). Keep in mind that some of the future things we see are described in the knowledge of the day it was written.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (KJV)

Be that is it may, the Holy Spirit would not show them things other in the context which the prophet knew.

Getting back to the four types of locusts, or stages in a locust's life, we have the definitions below.

1. gāzām: A masculine noun indicating a palmerworm
2. 'arbeh: A masculine noun indicating locusts or grasshoppers. The word refers to a species of migrating or desert locusts
3. yeleq: A masculine noun referring to a young locust, a caterpillar; a creeping locust. This refers to the creeping, early stage in the life of a locust, an unwinged stage
4. ḥāsiyl: A masculine noun identifying a grasshopper, a locust, a caterpillar. This seems to identify a special stage in the development of these insects.

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

Whether they were different insects, or the same insect at different stages in its life. Dr. Ironside wrote,

The various forms of insect-life here spoken of are not generally supposed to be diverse, unrelated

creatures, but are probably the various stages assumed by the locust as it advances from the larvae form to that of maturity

Dr. Ironside, The Minor Prophets

In either case they would all look somewhat different. The four locusts and helicopters on the cover all look alike (these were the only pictures I could find). The military has many types of helicopters and hence it would make sense they they might all look different. The third one mentioned above might have been a tank. Obviously, there were more than four locusts or helicopters.

Locust swarms have been known to cover as many as four hundred square miles, and even one square mile could teem with over 100 million insects.

—Bible Background Commentary

Continuing on,

Awake, drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you wine drinkers, On account of the sweet wine That is cut off from your mouth.

Joel 1:5 (NASB)

Dr. McGee had an interesting observation here,

The locusts have gotten to the grapes first. They have stripped all the vineyards, and there will be no more wine for the drunkards. The man who was an alcoholic in that day found himself taking the cure before he intended to because there was no more wine to drink

—J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

For a nation has invaded my land, Mighty and without number; Its teeth are the teeth of a lion, And it has the fangs of a lioness.

Joel 1:6 (NASB)

It seems that, all of a sudden we have gone from locusts to lions. Why?

It is not uncommon in ancient Near Eastern literature for armies to be pictured as locusts. Such metaphors are found in Sumerian texts such as the curse of Akkad, in Ugaritic in the Tale of Aqhat, in Nineteenth-Dynasty Egyptian texts, and in Neo-Assyrian texts. Here it is the other way around as the locust swarm is metaphorically described as an invading army (as becomes clear in 2:4-5). The comparison to a lion is common in ancient Near Eastern literature because of the coloring of the locust and the shape of its face and mouth.

—Bible Background Commentary

So, the concept of an army rather than insects is furthered by this verse.

It has made my vine a waste And my fig tree splinters. It has stripped them bare and cast them away;

Their branches have become white.

Joel 1:7 (NASB)

I have never seen a plague of locusts but, several years ago, I was sitting on my patio and looking at a big oak tree the is fairly close to the patio. It looked rather strange so I went and looked closely at the tree. There were thousands of little caterpillars of some sort running up the tree, eating the leaves for dinner and crawling back down. Within a few days, three tree was nothing but bare branches. I considered getting my chain saw and cutting it down for firewood. But, it was one of those projects that you put off so, about a month later, I noticed some green on the tree. Close examination showed that new leaves were beginning to appear. Within a period of several weeks, the tree had regained its initial state (maybe better).

Looking at the passage above, it is not the same story. The locusts not only ate the leaves, they ate the bark (“their branches have become white). It was not a matter of waiting a few month for things to grow back. There would be a long wait for the land to grow fruit again because when the bark is stripped from a tree or bush, it will die. The bark is to a tree what our veins and arteries are to us!

qeṣāp-āh: A feminine noun referring to a splintering, a peeling of bark. It refers to wood that is cracking, breaking up into many small pieces. In Joel it is caused by a vicious attack of locusts

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

REPENTANCE AND PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED PEOPLE (1:8-20)

Wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the bridegroom of her youth.

Joel 1:8 (NASB)

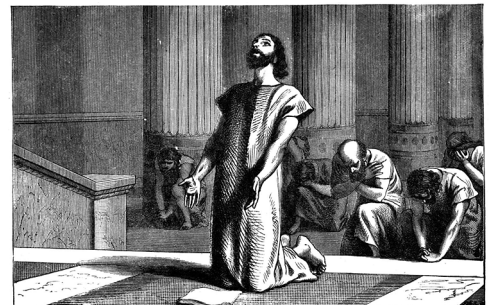
There are several Hebrew words that, at times, are translated “virgin” (in the sense we use the term) and in other places it simply refers to a young woman. There has been controversy over Isaiah 7:19,

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14 (NASB)

But a different word is used here which, from the context, refers to a young married woman. The photo to the right is (supposedly?) a man bowing in sackcloth. Today, there are a quite a few women who would just as soon get rid of their husbands. Being widowed at a young age was very difficult in those days.

“Bridegroom” is an interesting word as used here. It is not the usual word for “husband” but,



ba‘al: A masculine singular noun meaning lord, husband, owner, possessor, the title of a Canaanite deity (Baal). It can also denote rulers and leaders (Isa. 16:8). Commonly, it refers to legally owning something such as an ox or bull (Ex. 21:28); house (Ex. 22:8[7]; or land

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off From the house of the Lord. The priests mourn, The ministers of the Lord.

Joel 1:9 (NASB)

In commenting on this verse JFB has,

The greatest sorrow to the mind of a religious Jew, and what ought to impress the whole nation with a sense of God's displeasure, is the cessation of the usual temple-worship.

—Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

There would be a time in the future (relative to the time of Joel) that temple worship terminated - AD70. Since then and to this day, Israel has had no place to worship and **offer sacrifices**. As we proceed into this book, we will very quickly move to a distant time (relative to Joel). Disregarding calendar irregularities, there have be 1,937 year with no temple worship. There is a time when it will again come about. I have heard that Israel has all the materials for a new temple stashed away, waiting the time when the Masque of Omar is removed from the Temple Mount and the Temple rebuilt. Joel never lived to see either event.

The field is wasted, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, Wail, you vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered; The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also, And the apple tree--All the trees of the field are withered; Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

Joel 1:10-12 (NKJV)

This, indeed, was a bad time for Israel. It was, indeed, a time to mourn. As Solomon said, there is

A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance;

Ecclesiastes 3:4 (NKJV)

This was a time to weep and mourn.

The farmers and vine growers also had reason to mourn since the fruit of their labor had been destroyed. These included grains (wheat and barley) and five kinds of fruits (grapes, figs, pomegranates, dates from palm trees, and apples). Because of the destruction of their crops they did not experience the joy of the harvest (cf. Ps. 4:7).

—Bible Knowledge Commentary

You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

Psalms 4:7 (NKJV)

Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God; **For the grain offering and the drink offering** Are withheld from

the house of your God.

Joel 1:13 (NKJV)

The priests could not perform these offerings - there was no grain to offer, there was no wine to offer. So, God had another plan for the priests.

It is striking that Joel spoke of the priests as those who minister before “my God” and then called the temple the house of “your God.” In distinguishing the priests as those who “minister before my God,” Joel reminded them of their duty to bring the needs of the people (including himself) before God. In speaking of the temple as the “house of your God” (cf. “house of the Lord your God” in v. 14), similarly, Joel implied that the priests had a special relationship to temple worship. In short, he called on them to fulfill their designated responsibilities as intercessors and leaders in worship.

—New American Commentary

Joel continues this concept with,

Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD.

Joel 1:14 (NKJV)

The first thing they were to do is to “fast.” What does it mean to “fast?” There are a number of meanings. But,

In the biblical context, however, fasting carries a different meaning. It is not a way of asserting one’s will but a means of opening oneself to the work of God, expressing profound grief over sin and pointing to one’s ultimate dependence on God for all forms of sustenance. Fasting is the act of abstaining from food for spiritual reasons and primarily connotes an openness to divinity and a posture of humility. It involves prayer, grief, penance, seeking guidance and piety.

—Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

In this sense the act of fasting is designed as a process leading to purification and humbling oneself before God (Ps 69:10). In connection with the call to repentance, Joel calls for a fast in order to remove any sin or other obstacle that may have led to the devastation they have suffered.

—Bible Background Commentary

They were to call a “solemn assembly.” The Message translation has an interesting slant on this.

Declare a holy fast, call a special meeting, get the leaders together, Round up everyone in the country. Get them into God's Sanctuary for **serious prayer** to God.

Joel 1:14 (MSG)

How often do you pray “seriously.” I think we are all guilty, at times, of telling someone, “I’ll be praying for you.” but don’t! How often are our prayers of such a nature they do not rise above the ceiling? I think of the U.S. today. How good it would be if we could **really** devote a day for prayer as a nation. The President can proclaim such a day, but how many actually pray? What do they pray for?

Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty.
Joel 1:15 (NASB)

God, through Joel, proclaims that “the day of the Lord” is near. I have compiled a list of references where the term “day of the Lord” is found including how many times it appears per chapter. Isaiah, with sixty-six chapters would certainly contain more references than Joel with only three yet Joel has the same number of references as does Isaiah. Only Zephaniah has more references than Joe (6)

“THE DAY OF THE LORD” (Old Testament)				
Isaiah:	[66]	(4)	2:12, 13:6, 13:9, 34:8	0.06/chapter
Jeremiah	[52]	(1)	46:10	0.02/chapter
Lamentations	[5]	(1)	2:22	0.2/chapter
Ezekiel	[48]	(2)	13:5, 30:3	0.04/chapter
Joel	[3]	(4)	1:15, 2:1, 2:11, 3:14	1.33/chapter
Amos	[9]	(2)	5:18, 5:20	0.22/chapter
Obadiah	[21]	(1)	1:15	0.02/chapter
Zephaniah	[3]	(6)	1:7, 1:8, 1:14, 1:18, 2:2, 2:3, 14:1	2.00/chapter
“THE DAY OF THE LORD” (New Testament)				
1Corinthians	(1)	5:5		
2Corinthians	(1)	1:14		
1Thessalonians	(1)	5:2		
2Peter	(1)	3:10		

Note that, other than the book of Zephaniah, the term is found much more often than any other book of the Bible. It appears four times in only three chapters. Note also that its use is limited to the Major Prophets, 166 times and the Minor Prophets, 36 times. It is also found in the New Testament.

Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the **day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 (NASB)

According to Paul, the “Day of the Lord” will come when **they** are saying . . . Who does “they” refer to? It refers, in this passage and the next, a future date after the rapture of the church. But is the “day of the Lord” always the same “day” On the day of Pentacost, Peter stood up and spoke to the crowd.

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; 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 bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy. 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above And signs on the earth below, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. 'The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon

into blood, Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. 'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. "For David says of Him, 'I saw the Lord always in my presence; For he is at my right hand, so that i will not be shaken.

Acts 2:14-25 (NASB)

Here Peter quotes from Joel 2 and applies it to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentacost. So, now we have TWO “Days of the Lord.” Then, Peter speaks of this day being accompanied by the formation of a new heaven and a new earth.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:10-13 (NASB)

Consider the two passages below.

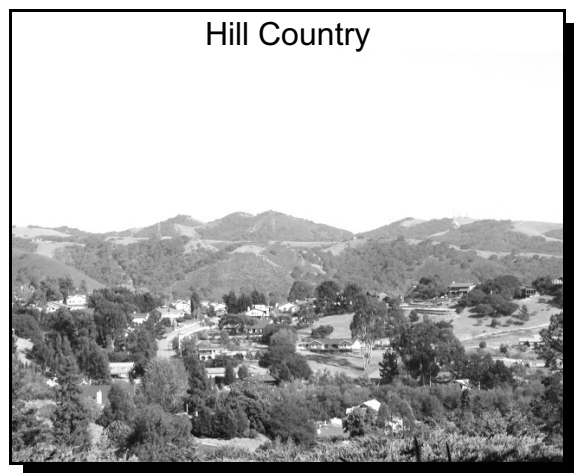
Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a **thousand years**; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the **thousand years** were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

Revelation 20:1-3 (NASB)

So here, Peter is speaking of the close of the Millennial Kingdom. This makes THREE “Days of the Lord.” Some people deny the fact that the Bible says anything about a “Millenium.” I suppose that is because they don’t know any Latin for “Millenium” comes from “Mille”=1000, and “Anum”=years.

Anyway John writes here about a “day of the Lord” that will come after the Millenium. Paul tells the church at Thessalonika about the “day of the Lord” which will occur right after the Rapture. Prophetic passages can be confusing because of ones viewpoint. Look at the photo to the right. It was taken from my patio. It shows a number of houses in front of several rows of hills. If you could see through hills, you could see “big ditch” (Arroyo Grande) that comes from Lopez Dam into Arroyo Grande. In that valley are many homes, ranches, etc.

If you go still further, you end up in another “ditch” which is



Huasna, again with homes and ranches. You can not see them from your vantage point. If you move forward to the next valley (the church age) you will be confronted with a view not seen before. If you go still further ahead to the next valley, (the Millenium) the view will change again.

Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty. Has not food been cut off before our eyes, Gladness and joy from the house of our God? The seeds shrivel under their clods; The storehouses are desolate, The barns are torn down, For the grain is dried up. How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle wander aimlessly Because there is no pasture for them; Even the flocks of sheep suffer.

Joel 1:15-18 (NASB)

Joel continues with the current judgement God has brought upon them. They have no more food, no more gladness and joy, no pasture for the animals. The situation is bleak. What should be done? "Quick, let's form a committee and figure out what to do!" That seems to be the approach today. There is the prevailing philosophy that, if all else fails, try prayer!

To You, O Lord, I cry; For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness And the flame has burned up all the trees of the field. Even the beasts of the field pant for You; For the water brooks are dried up And fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Joel 1:19-20 (NASB)

So we end this chapter and this section with Israel in a miserable state.

THE DAY OF THE LORD ITSELF IN PROPHECY (2:1-32) CHAPTER TWO
THE INVADERS (2:1-10)

Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the Lord is coming; Surely it is near,

Joel 2:1 (NASB)

We now come to the “day of the Lord.

In some American cities there are sirens to alert people of a coming tornado. On the California central Coast we have sirens to warn us when the reactor at Diablo Canyon has a melt down (I’ve always wondered if the sirens run off the power from Diablo Canyon!). In Israel they “blow the trumpet.”

šōp-ār: A masculine noun referring to a trumpet, a ram’s horn. It refers to a trumpet or horn made out of a curved ram’s horn. It was used to signal a time of meeting together or a significant event, especially at Sinai

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

In addition to the ram’s horn, they used a lot of shouting (sound of alarm)

rûa’: A verb meaning to shout, to sound a blast. The term occurs thirty-three times in the Old Testament and was utilized fundamentally to convey the action of shouting or the making of a loud noise. Shouting often took place just before a people or army rushed into battle against opposition; sometimes the war cry became the very signal used to commence engagement with the enemy

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

For the day of the Lord is coming! Which “day” is Joel referring to? Peter applied it to Pentecost (as noted above). But the description does not fit Pentecost. After noting it’s “nearness,” Joel begins the description of this “day.”

A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations. A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run. With a noise as of chariots They leap on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people arranged for battle. Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale. They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths. They do not crowd each other, They march everyone in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks. They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief. Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.

Joel 2:2-10 (NASB)

A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness

Near is the great day of the Lord, Near and **coming very quickly**; Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, **A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness**, A day of trumpet and battle cry Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers.

Zephaniah 1:14-16 (NASB)

The prophecy in Zephaniah sounds very similar to what we have here in Joel. The date that Joel wrote this prophecy is not really known but many believe (for a number of technical reasons) that it was about 600BC. Zephaniah, on the other hand was written, probably around 400 BC so, if any quoting is done here, Zephaniah would have quoted from Joel.

Which “day” is this? This prophecy is fulfilled, in part at Calvary.

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

Luke 23:44-45 (NASB)

The darkness was as Joel described, but the destruction described did not occur then. Was Peter wrong when he referred to Joel at Pentecost? You must remember that most prophecies have (at least) two fulfillments. The final one is the complete fulfillment. So in this chapter we are really considering an event yet to come. Does it refer to the Great Tribulation or does it apply to the end to the Millennial reign of Christ? There is an interesting answer to this that is quite direct!

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that **with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day**. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:3-9 (NASB)

If you take this literally, the “Day of the Lord” lasts a thousand years. This means we can say it applies to both events. I believe, however, that it applies primarily to the Great Tribulation more specially.

As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people;

Both locusts and human armies advance swiftly. (3) The locusts’ buzzing wings resemble the sound of chariot wheels (for accounts of the sounds made by locusts, see Driver, The Books of Joel and Amos, p. 52).

—The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The comparison of “buzzing wings” to “chariot wheels” was made quite some time ago (in the reference cited). We have already noted that comparison between the locusts to modern machines of war and, in particular, the helicopter.

There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations. A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them

When I was in Junior High School, in an art class we were assigned to make posters regarding the fact that atomic engorge had to be used for peaceful purposes and not wars. This was prior to 1950, over fifty years ago. For years we lived under the threat of nuclear warfare - then the Communist Block fell in shambles and the treat was gone, or so we thought. Now Muslin and Asian nations are posing Nuclear threats. The passage above could certainly be a description of some nuclear devices going off!

Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run.

The description Joel gives of the invading army are amazing to behold.

- 1 With a noise as of chariots Tanks, Humvees, Helicopters, etc.
- 2 They leap on the tops of the mountains, Definitely helicopters
- 3 Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Nuclear devices, Flame Throwers
- 4 Like a mighty people arranged for battle. Today we would say they were in “rank.”
- 5 Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale. No need to speak further
- 6 They run like mighty men, from here on down it greatly resembles our “Special Forces.”
- 7 They climb the wall like soldiers;
- 8 They each march in line,
- 9 Nor do they deviate from their paths.
- 10 They do not crowd each other,
- 11 They march everyone in his path;
- 12 When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks.
- 13 They rush on the city,
- 14 They run on the wall;
- 15 They climb into the houses,
- 16 They enter through the windows like a thief

These sixteen descriptions sound very much like what I have seen of modern warfare on TV.

THE LORD'S HOST AT ARMAGEDDON (2:11)

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, And who can endure it?**

Joel 2:11 (NASB)

This description can only apply to one battlefield in the Bible.

ARMAGED'DON (ar-ma-ged'on; Gk. Armageddon, from Heb. har Megiddô, “hill or city of Megiddo,” Rev. 16:16, see marg.). Megiddo occupied a marked position on the southern rim of the plain of Esdraelon,

the great battlefield of Palestine. It was famous for two great victories: of Barak over the Canaanites (Judges 4:15) and of Gideon over the Midianites (Judges 7); and for two great disasters: the deaths of Saul (1 Samuel 31:8) and Josiah (2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chron. 35:22). Armageddon became a poetical expression for terrible and final conflict. To John the Revelator the ancient plain of Megiddo, the battleground of the centuries, furnished a type of the great battle in which the Lord, at His advent of glory, will deliver the Jewish remnant besieged by the Gentile world powers under the Beast (Rev. 13:1-10) and the false prophet (Rev. 13:11-18).

—New Unger's Bible Dictionary

REPENTANT REMNANT IN PALESTINE (2:12-27)

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; **And rend your heart and not your garments.**" Now return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness And relenting of evil.

Joel 2:12-13 (NASB)

The Lord always gives us a chance to repent. His statement to rend their hearts not their garments is significant. Religious ritual is not the way to God's heart. It is our inward thoughts and feelings that matter.

Bring no more futile sacrifices; **Incense is an abomination to Me.** The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies--I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. **Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates;** They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; **Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear.** Your hands are full of blood. "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1:13-17 (NKJV)

The Lord made this similar plea through Isaiah. I do not like to make a practice of criticizing others so, at least, I will not name them. I have been in churches where, when the "music?" is sung, people will stand and wave their arms and the like. I have no idea how genuine their feelings are but to meet it seems like "rending one garments rather than the heart." The Lord does not care about how much you wave your arms when you sing, He cares about how many of your friends and neighbors you share His salvation with. He cares about how real He is in your life. Do you look like the world's greatest saint on Sunday and then, on Monday, go to work and act like the Devil?

Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him--A grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?

Joel 2:14 (NKJV)

This verse reminds me of one in Esther, the greatest verse in the whole book. One of the greatest in the Old Testament.

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews

from another place and you and your father's house will perish. **And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?**"

Esther 4:13-14 (NASB)

The Lord has put you into a special position (at least if you are walk with Him) and only you can do what He put you there for!

Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber. Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, Weep between the porch and the altar, And let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not make Your inheritance a reproach, A byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?' "

Joel 2:15-17 (NASB)

First, let us look at some terms in the above passage.

And the laver was **between the porch and the altar**, and inclined nearer towards the south. Between the porch and the altar were 22 cubits —Sketches of Jewish Social Life

Every priest in attendance on the altar of Yahweh was required to wash his hands and his feet before entering upon his official duties (Exodus 30:19ff). **To this end a laver was ordered to be made** as part of the tabernacle equipment (Exodus 30:17-21; Exodus 38:8). Its composition was of brass (bronze), and it consisted of two parts, the bowl and its pedestal or foot (Exodus 30:18, etc.).

—International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

The Lord commanded, "*Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning*" and this would be done at the level "between the porch and the altar."

If you are a disgrace in your Christian walk, you not only disgrace yourselves, you make people wonder about this "God" that you speak about. I wonder what would happen if the President of the U.S. (While we still have one with some Christian convictions and some spunk) would get congress to "proclaim a solemn assembly" on a certain day or week and have people really get down on their knees and pray for THIS nation! We may be past the point where that would be possible. The ICLU, the Muslim groups in this country, and others would raise too high a protest.

Then the Lord will be zealous for His land And will have pity on His people. The Lord will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied in full with them; And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations. "But I will remove the northern army far from you, And I will drive it into a parched and desolate land, And its vanguard into the eastern sea, **And its rear guard into the western sea**. And its stench will arise and its foul smell will come up, For it has done great things."

Joel 2:18-20 (NASB)

I do not know about the U.S., but this passage indicates what will happen when the priests stand before

the laver in the Temple. What Temple? It **will** be rebuilt. Israel already has the materials. But there will be a bloody battle first. The deliverance will come because the Lord drives out three invading armies. The "Northern" army has always (in this century) been considered to be Russia and its allies. This may well be because Russia has been inching ever closer to its previous state as the USSR. There are those who refer to the "Eastern Army" as China. In this prophecy, I see the entire Muslim world which is, primarily east of Israel. But what will this "rear guard" be? I must confess I have never done a study on Joel before and have wondered where the U.S. fits into prophecy. This may be the place, as the "rear guard" from the "western sea." Who can know for sure?

Do not fear, O land, rejoice and be glad, For the Lord has done great things. Do not fear, beasts of the field, For the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, For the tree has borne its fruit, **The fig tree and the vine have yielded in full.** So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the Lord your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before. The threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil. "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame. "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the Lord your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.

Joel 2:21-27 (NASB)

Here is the Lord's answer for Israel. I have always wondered what Bible scholars in the 18th century and earlier said about prophecies like this.. God, through Joel, says *"Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame. "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel* How could that be? Prior to 1948 there was no more nation of Israel. I suppose in the years prior to 1948 there was speculation about it. But going further back in time, how could there ever be a nation of Israel again? Never in the pages of history has a nation been scattered over the face of the earth, slaughtered by the Germans, rejected by others. I may be wrong but I have a feeling about the Lord's statement,

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. "May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, "May peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

Psalms 122:6-9 (NASB)

I believe two things here:

- 1: Israel may not be a nation today if it were not for the U.S.
- 2: The U.S. may not be in the position of power it is today if it were not for the help and prayer for Israel.

You may not know it, but everyday there are Jews from countries all over the globe that fly into Ben Gurion Airport to take up residency in Israel. Considering that state that Israel is in today, I find that really unbelievable. In addition, we have no idea how much financial aid goes to Israel from the U.S. today - not through the government but from Jews (and people who love the Jews) in the form of individual gifts.

There is an interesting passage in the New Testament that has to do with this.

"Now learn the **parable from the fig tree**: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

Matthew 24:32-41 (NASB)

"But of that day and hour no one knows." I have heard of people (and you must have also) that say "Well, we do not know the day or hour, but the Bible doesn't say anything about the month and year!" Of course, they have all been wrong. I would say that the "day and year" will be coming soon, judging the way things are building up in the Near East, but then I, too, may be wrong.

THE LORD'S RESPONSE TO THE REMNANT (3:1-2 HEBREW) (2:28-29)

NOTE: The five verses which follow make up Chapter three in the Hebrew text and what we have as "Chapter 3 is really Chapter four.

No one will be inclined to doubt that the disclosure of truth in Joel 2:28-32 is of sufficient importance to warrant its appearing in a separate chapter." I certainly agree that these five verses are important enough to make them a separate chapter.

—J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

It is also significant that these verses that make up chapter three in the Hebrew text are the exact verses that Peter cited at Pentecost.

"It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Joel 2:28-29 (NASB) (3:1-2 Hebrew)

The outline (Unger's Outlines") I have been using breaks chapter three (Hebrew) into two parts and I believe it is an appropriate division. Peter addressed the crowds at Pentecost using these words to explain why the disciples were speaking in languages of other people who were, at that time, in Jerusalem. As a note, the disciples were speaking "in tongues." According to my dictionary, a tongue is "a particular language." It is a language that at least two people know, otherwise it is not a "tongue" The KJV in 1 Corinthians 14 refers to an "unknown tongue" which is a poor translation. It would be alright if it said "A tongue unknown to the speaker."

After these two verses, the words in the text no longer refer to Pentecost.

SIGNS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD (3:3-4 HEBREW) (2:30-32)

"I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.

Joel 2:30-32 (NASB)

Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

The Hebrew word translated "great" here is first used below.

There were **giants** on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Genesis 6:4 (NKJV)

The word is defined below.

hagged-ôliym: An adjective meaning great. The word emphasizes the importance, size, and significance of something or someone. It is used to attribute theological importance in various ways to things of great significance: God's great acts of redemption are emphasized, His great and awesome things
—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

Awesome.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" is a famous use of the noun (Prov. 1:7 niv);
—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

That day will be accompanied with the sun turning to darkness and the moon to blood. How are we to take this statement? It could be used of a solar eclipse in which the moon covers the sun and becomes a dark red. It can also be due to things in the air (for, smog, smoke, etc.)

And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered. Who is the "whoever" spoken of here? We are speaking of the Great Tribulation. So, then, what does this mean in view of the fact that the church will have been raptured? I may be sticking my neck out here but I would like to answer this in context. By what name were YOU saved. You are a believer in Jesus Christ, are you not? But the name used here is YHWH (Yahwah, Jehovah, God (the father's) name. It is not in the name of Jesus Christ (Yeshua Messiah). This may be seen below.

At that time, whoever calls on the name of **Adonai** will be saved. For in Mount Tziyon and Yerushalayim there will be those who escape, as **Adonai** has promised; among the survivors will be those whom **Adonai** has called.

Joel 2:32 (Complete Jewish Bible)

who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in **Christ Jesus** from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our **Savior Christ Jesus**, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

2 Timothy 1:9-10 (NASB)

Let's look at the verse again. **"whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered."**

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**" For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; **for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.**"

Revelation 7:9-17 (NASB)

To properly interpret this, we must look at what came before.

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed, **one hundred and forty-four thousand** sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

Revelation 7:1-8 (NASB)

There will be (at least) 144,000 Jews saved during the tribulation. They are not saved by believing in Jesus Christ but by being sealed by angels and selected. In addition to Jews who will be saved during the tribulation, there will be Gentiles who will **be taken out of the great tribulation.** It does not say "saved

during the tribulation. Note the underscored words in Revelation 7:17. "The Lamb . . . will be their shepherd and will guide them. Going back to Joel, the text does not say they will be "saved," it says they will "be delivered from it."

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS IN PROPHECY (4:1-12 HEBREW) (3:1-16) ISRAEL REINSTATED (4:1) HEBREW) (3:1)

"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,
Joel 3:1 (NASB)

The chapter begins with a promise from God. God would once again regard Israel as His people. An incredible time table is given us for all this by Daniel.

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Daniel 9:24-27 (NASB)

How many days are in a week? Yes, there are seven. Literally, the Lord told Daniel that "Seventy Sevens" had been decreed. According to my calculator, $70 \times 7 = 490$. Daniel is given a calendar for the next 490 years. He was also give a few specific dates on that calendar.

Seven weeks and sixty-two weeks = 69 "weeks" or 483 years. This was the first event on this calendar. 483 years after Daniel's vision, "the Messiah will be cut off." This event happened at Calvary. So, after the crucifixion, there would just be one more "week" (7 years). What happened seven years after Christ was crucified? Nothing! The last seven years which, according to this passage, are divided into two periods of $3 \frac{1}{2}$ yeas each are still to come. You see, this is Daniel's "time clock." Daniel was, of course, Jewish. When God shut the Jews off, Daniel's clock stopped. It stopped at the beginning of the Church Age which Paul says was kept a secret to those in Old Testament times. The time clock will not start ticking again until God again turns to the Jews - after the Church is taken out of this world at the Rapture.

The seven years are generally referred to as the Tribulation. The last $3 \frac{1}{2}$ years are called "The Great Tribulation." It is this technicality that causes differences in church's statements of faith. Some are called "pretrib" churches, believing that the rapture will take place before the seventieth week. There are other churches, however, that are "midtrib" churches. They base this on the idea that the church will be raptured before the "Great Tribulation" (the last $3 \frac{1}{2}$ years). I would not want to argue for one point or the other although I take the pretrib position. In recent years there are those who have come up with a "latetrib" doctrine which means the church will not be raptured until just before the Battle of Armageddon. I can not see any justification in that at all. And, of course, there are other theologies (which are all

wrong!).

THE NATIONS JUDGED (4:2-3 HEBREW) (3:2-3)

I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land. "They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a harlot And sold a girl for wine that they may drink.

Joel 3:2-3 (NASB)

There are three valleys mentioned in this chapter.

1. The valley of Jehoshaphat (here)
2. The valley of decision! (Verses 12 & 14)
3. The valley of Shittim (Verse 18)

We are immediately face with a problem! There was no such valley in Israel, not until sometime in the centuries following Pentecost. It was probably given that name from this Scripture. What's in a name? If there was no such valley, then the name itself must be significant.

yehôšāp-āṭ: A proper noun designating Jehoshaphat:

A. A good king of Judah, son of Asa. His name means "the Lord has judged." He ruled twenty-five years (872–852 b.c.). He tried to keep Judah and Israel united as one people (1 Ki. 22:4, 5). He kept peace (1 Ki. 22:44) and followed the Lord in every way (1 Ki. 22:41–43), consulting the true prophet of God for leadership (1 Ki. 22:7; 2 Ki. 3:11–25). He had the Law of God taught throughout Judah

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

When you consider that Joel may have written this prophecy during the reign of this king, there may be some connection. Jehoshaphat was a good king (a rarity in Israel). When Joel writes that God will gather the nations together in the valley of Jehosaphat, it is probably a statement meaning that He will call them for Judgement. Probably? What does it say next? *Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations.* What will He judge them for? *"They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a harlot And sold a girl for wine that they may drink.* The idea of selling children for the gain of prostitution and drink is vile. Today, many of the nations around Israel are attempting to do just that. I imagine Joel had no idea of how literal this might be. The Palestinians will take a child for a suicide bomber and give the parents food in exchange! So, if you think Joel exaggerates here, if anything, he under estimates the cruelty that will take place.

PHOENICIA AND PHILISTIA CONDEMNED (4:4-8 HEBREW) (3:4-8)

"Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head. "Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory, behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head. "Also I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of

Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a distant nation," for the Lord has spoken.

Joel 3:4-8 (NASB)

God is going to turn the tables on them. Here He names three specific regions; Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia. Where are these cities or countries?

Sidon and Tyre are North of Israel (today's Israel). Philistia is in the vicinity of the West Bank. Do these areas seem significant to you today? Who is sending missiles and suicide bombers and other such things into Israel? Is it not the Muslims living North of Israel and along the Mediterranean?

Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head. God is going to turn the tables on these people. It would appear that He had better do so soon - how long can Israel maintain itself?

Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory.

THE CALL TO ARMS AND THE JUDGMENT (4:9-16 HEBREW) (3:9-16)

Proclaim this among the nations:

Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men!

Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up!

Beat your plowshares into swords

And your pruning hooks into spears;

Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."

Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations,
And gather yourselves there.

Bring down, O Lord, Your mighty ones.

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 ripe.

Come, tread, for the wine press is full;

The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!

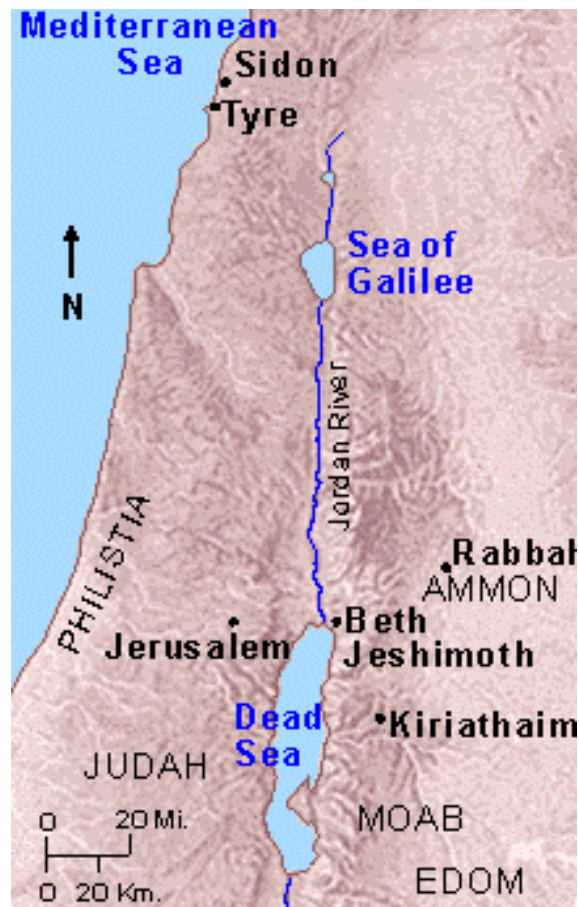
For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and moon grow dark

And the stars lose their brightness.

The Lord roars from Zion

And utters His voice from Jerusalem,



And the heavens and the earth tremble.
 But the Lord is a refuge for His people
 And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.

Joel 3:9-16 (NASB)

From here to the end of the book, the writing is in poetic form, as indicated by the format above.

Proclaim this among the nations:
 Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men!
 Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up!
 Beat your plowshares into swords
 And your pruning hooks into spears;

The beginning words (after the introduction) in Isaiah are:

The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it will come about that **In the last days** The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; **And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.** Nation will not lift up sword against nation, **And never again will they learn war.**

Isaiah 2:1-4 (NASB)

This is the only place in Isaiah that refers to “the last days.” Before Armageddon, Joel says they will need to make implements of war. After it, Isaiah says they can convert them back to peaceful uses. As a side note, it would sure be great if we could switch weapons of war to useful things and back again!.

MILLENNIAL BLESSING IN PROPHECY (4:17-21 HEBREW) (3:17-21) JERUSALEM'S ASCENDANCY (4:17 HEBREW) (3:17)

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.

Joel 3:17 (NASB)

The term “My holy mountain” is used 14 times in the Old Testament Prophets (there are a few in Psalms)

- Psalms 2:6 (NASB)
- Isaiah 11:9; 56:7; 57:13,10; 65:11,:25; 66:20 (NASB)
- Ezekiel 20:40 (NASB)
- Joel 2:1, 3:17 (NASB)
- Obadiah 1:16 (NASB)
- Zephaniah 3:11 (NASB)

Other than Isaiah with 66 chapters, only Joel mentions it more than once! When you add “zion”

NASB

Joel 2:1

Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the Lord is coming; Surely it is near,

Joel 2:1

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.

Joel 3:17

"Thus says the Lord, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.'

Zec 8:3

There is significance in these terms. As for Zion,

Theological Use. Zion has a threefold significance in the Bible apart from its original historical significance.

David's City. In the OT Zion refers to Jerusalem, the city that David conquered and made a capital of the united kingdom of Israel (1 Chron. 11:5; Psalm 2:6; Isaiah 2:3).

The Millennial City. In a prophetic sense, Zion has reference to Jerusalem as the future capital city of the nation Israel in the Kingdom age (Isaiah 1:27; Isaiah 2:3; Isaiah 4:1-6; Joel 3:16; Zech. 1:16-17; Zech. 8:3-8; Romans 11:26). Amillennial theologians spiritualize, rather "mysticalize," the term to mean the Christian church of this age.

The Heavenly City. The NT also refers to Zion as the New Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24), the eternal city into which the church will be received (cf. Rev. 21-22).

— New Unger's Bible Dictionary

Apocalyptic Mountains. If Psalms is one main locus of mountain imagery, the visionary books are the other. In a sense all the motifs converge here. Given the way the physical elements become actors in apocalyptic visions, it is no surprise that the mountains figure prominently in the prophetic books (Is 5:25; Jer 4:24; Ezek 38:20; Rev 6:14; 8:8; 16:20). Being poetic in style, these visions naturally take mountains and hills as sources for figurative language (Is 5:1; 10:23; 40:4; 41:15; Jer 51:25; Mic 1:4). And in visions of God's transformation of the world, mountains are participants in God's judgment against an evil world (Is 17:13; Ezek 32:5-6; 33:28; Hag 1:11) and the locus of his blessing on a renewed world (Is 11:9; 25:6; 30:29; 42:11; Jer 31:5; Ezek 20:40; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13; Zech 8:3).

— Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

What mountain is there in Israel? There is a mountain called Mount Hermon, but that does not figure in here. There is, of course, the Mount of Olives, just East of Jerusalem where Jesus often went to pray. One day Jesus is going to descend on that mountain and it will be split in two (I am told that there is a North-South earthquake fault under the Mount of Olives).

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Zechariah 14:3-4 (NASB)

It would hardly seem that *the Lord your God, Dwelling in Zion* would be in a destroyed mountain. No, the Holy Mount is what the Jews would love to get their hands on today, the temple mount.

And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. All the **land will be changed into a plain** from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but **Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site** from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

Zechariah 14:9-11 (NASB)

Zion and "holy Mountain refer to Jerusalem - the present day Jerusalem, and the "New Jerusalem."

JUDAH'S PROSPERITY (4:18 HEBREW) (3:18)

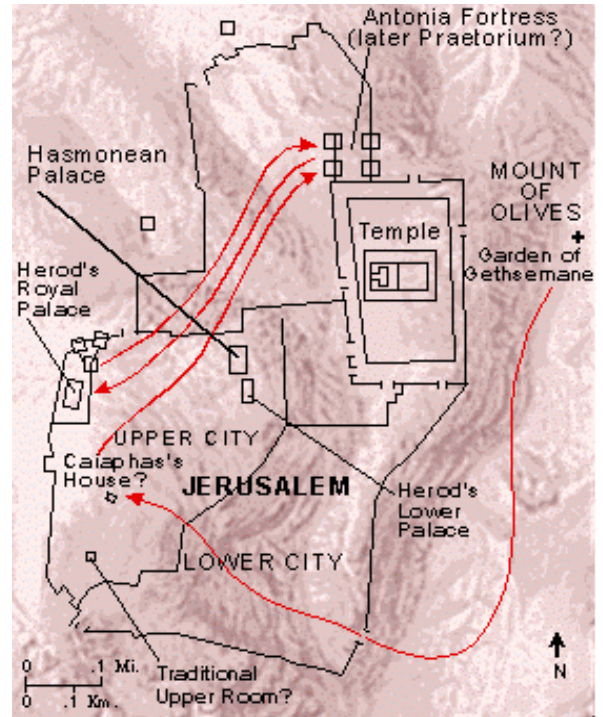
And in that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine,
 And the hills will flow with milk,
 And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water;
 And a spring will go out from the house of the Lord To water the valley of Shittim.

Joel 3:18 (NASB)

"And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim." This is interesting because the valley of Shittim is on the other side of the Jordan River. **How could these waters flow from Jerusalem across the Jordan?** Zechariah tells us that the mountain will be split in that day. Instead of the great rift running from north of Byblos in Lebanon, down through the Sea of Galilee, through the Jordan valley, through the Dead Sea and into Africa, it is going to run the opposite direction -- it is going to run east and west.

—J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

As we have already noted, when the Mount of Olives is split in two, the whole geography of the region will be changed. Take note of the fact that water is to flow from Jerusalem to water **the valley of Shittim**. Do you know where that is? It is about 30 miles east of Jerusalem. Thirty miles? That puts it well on the



other side of the ~~Jordan River~~. Remember, the land will be flattened except for Jerusalem. Therefore the water would not flow into the Jordan but all the way over to Shittim. Is this actual water or is it figurative. I can tell you it is figurative, but it may be actual as well.

EGYPT AND EDOM'S DESOLATION (4:19 HEBREW) (3:19)

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.
Joel 3:19 (NASB)

Edom is south of the Dead Sea on the eastern side of the Jordan. Egypt, and its lands, is south west. This who part of the area east of the Mediterranean Sea will become a wasteland.

EXPLANATION OF JERUSALEM'S EXALTATION (4:20-21 HEBREW) (3:20-21)

But Judah will be inhabited forever And Jerusalem for all generations.
And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the Lord dwells in Zion.
Joel 3:20-21 (NASB)

For the Lord dwells in Zion! The Lord has no birth, no death, He is eternal and hence Judah and Jerusalem, where He will one day dwell will be inhabited forever. What does "forever" mean? Well, you know what that means. It does not mean 1000 years. If that were the case, there have been three "forevers" since Joel wrote this. The conclusion is that this picture is the same as painted by Exekiel in the end of his prophetic discourse.

"These are the exits of the city: on the north side, 4,500 cubits by measurement, shall be the gates of the city, named for the tribes of Israel, three gates toward the north: the gate of Reuben, one; the gate of Judah, one; the gate of Levi, one. "On the east side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one. "On the south side, 4,500 cubits by measurement, shall be three gates: the gate of Simeon, one; the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one. "On the west side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Gad, one; the gate of Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one. "The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The Lord is there.' "

Ezekiel 48:30-35 (NASB)

This is the New Jerusalem on the New Earth. In three chapters (4 in the Hebrew) Joel has covered about least 4000 years - nearly a 1000 until the First Coming of Christ, 2000 years since and, assuming the Lord were to come today, another 1000 year "millennium."

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WORDS USED MORE THAN TWICE IN JOEL

33 LORD	3 PRIESTS
18 PEOPLE	3 DRIED
14 LAND	3 OIL
13 COME	3 SONS
12 GOD	3 CALL
10 LOCUST	3 CRY
9 DAY	3 HAND
8 NATIONS	3 OPEN
7 CHILDREN	3 PASTURES
7 WINE	3 WATER
7 TREE	3 HOLY
7 MEN	3 DARKNESS
7 ZION	3 NEVER
7 GREAT	3 BEHIND
6 BECAUSE	3 DESOLATE
6 GRAIN	3 MIGHTY
6 OFFERING	3 WAR
6 FIELD	3 EARTH
6 JERUSALEM	3 HEAVENS
6 JUDAH	3 SUN
5 NEW	3 MOON
5 STRONG	3 ARMY
5 HOUSE	3 RETURN
5 GATHER	3 GO
5 O	3 BEHOLD
5 FIRE	3 FAR
5 VALLEY	3 ISRAEL
4 DAYS	3 SPIRIT
4 EATEN	3 BLOOD
4 CUT	3 SOLD
4 OFF	
4 AGAINST	
4 DRINK	
4 MINISTER	
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3 LEFT	
3 SWARMING	
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3 WAIL	
3 VINE	
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3 AWAY	