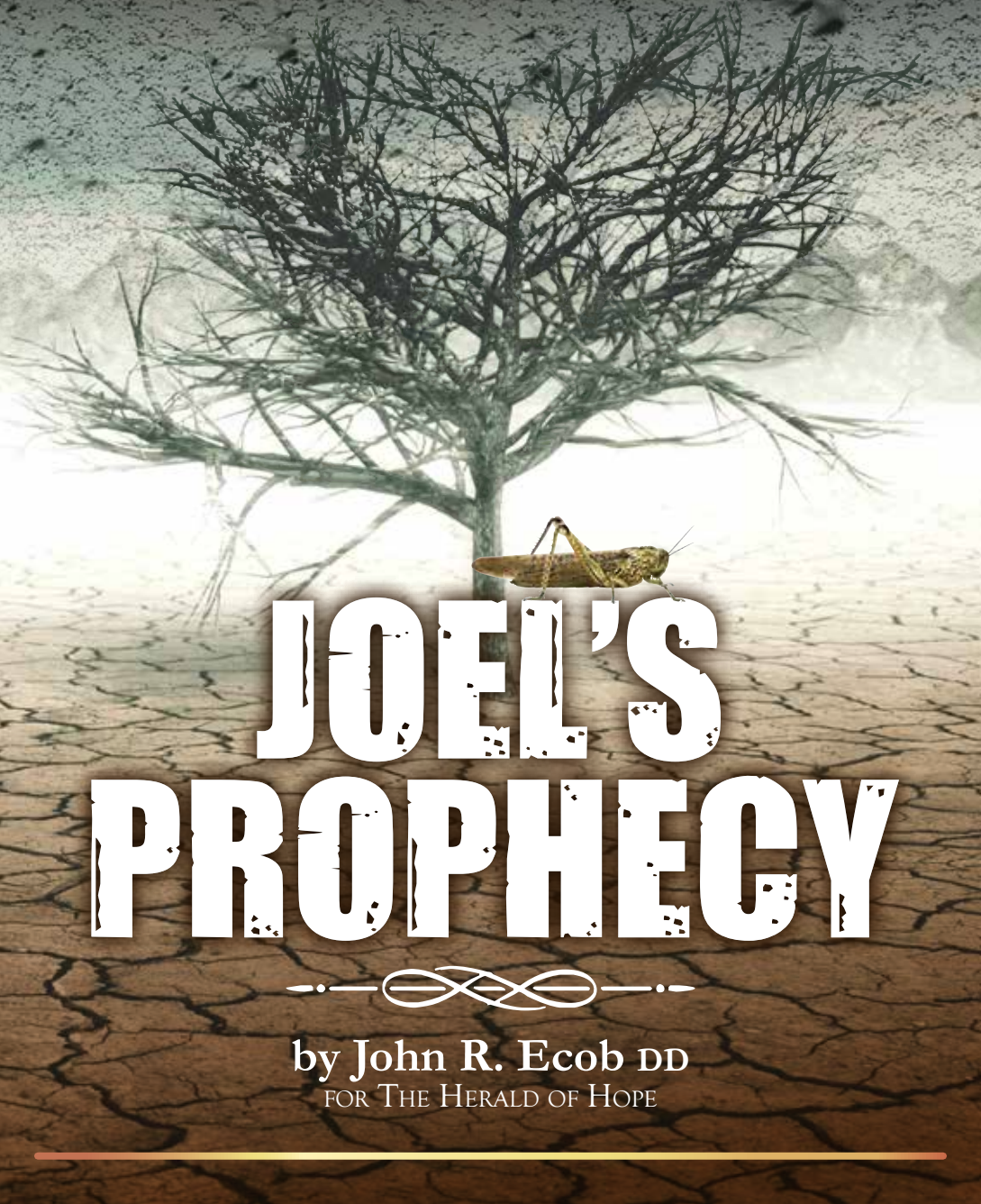




The Day Of The Lord

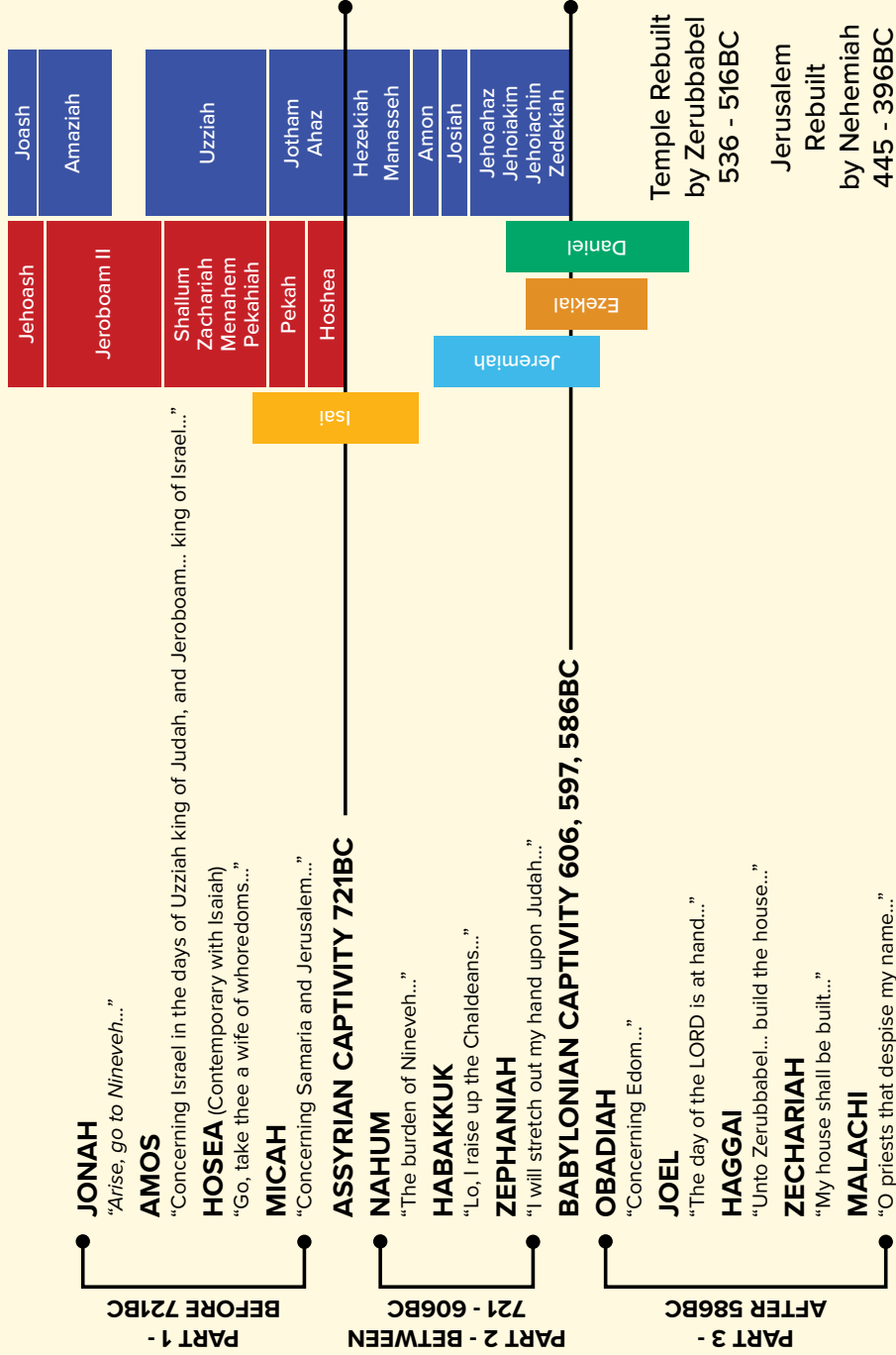



JOEL'S PROPHECY



by John R. Ecob DD
FOR THE HERALD OF HOPE


Chronology of the Minor Prophets





The Day Of The Lord

JOEL'S PROPHECY



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Preface

THE Bible teaches that Jesus Christ will return at the end of the age immediately after a seven-year period of great tribulation and that the Tribulation will begin after the born-again believers of the Church age have been removed at the Rapture.

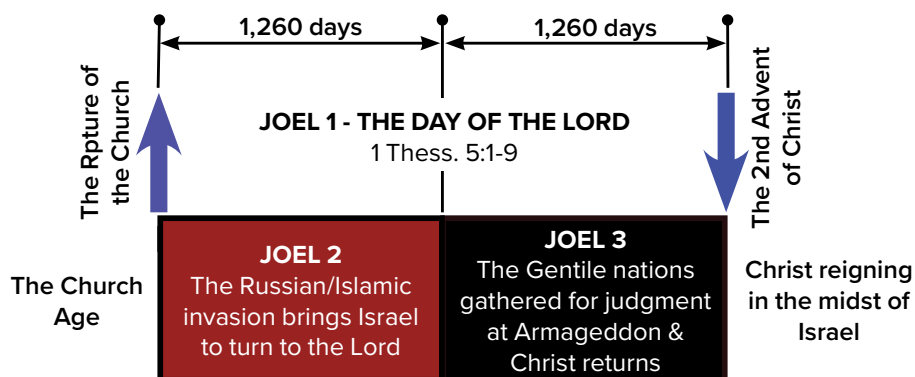
The Tribulation is divided into two periods of 1,260 days. During the first of these periods, Israel will turn to the Lord as Gog, the leader of Russia, brings an Islamic army from the north to devastate the land. When Israel turns to the Lord the invading army will be destroyed by Divine intervention.

During the second 1,260 days of the Tribulation, Antichrist, as the head of the Revived Roman Empire, will gather all nations to the final conflict of Armageddon. Then Christ will return and judge the nations and bring the “times of the Gentiles” to an end. The Lord will rescue His believing people and re-establish the throne of David at Jerusalem (Amos 9:11).

The prophet Joel, graphically described both of these great wars of the Tribulation:

- First, to bring His chosen people Israel to repentance (Ch. 1) and
- Second, to judge the Gentile nations for their treatment of Israel and for dividing the land that God gave to Abraham and his seed.

The prophecy of Joel describes both of these Tribulation conflicts, the Second Advent of Christ, and the millennial kingdom that follows.



The Prophecy of Joel

Theme: The Day of the LORD

Chapter 1 - The Locust Plague

The Greatest Locust Plague and Drought on record is used as an illustration of the Day of the LORD.

Locusts are likened to invaders and the drought to the 42 month drought in the first half of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:6).

The calamity is used to call Israel to repentance

Chapter 2 - First Half of the Tribulation The Russian/Islamic Invasion

The Day of the LORD has no equal in history

"There hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it."

The invading army is described in terms of modern warfare;
fire before them, great noise, explosions that shake the earth.

Smoke darkens the land.

First invasion is from the north and this brings Israel to turn to the Lord and then God removes the remnant of the invading army to Siberia. Israel is reassured, rejoices, and is restored.

Afterward, in the kingdom, the Spirit is poured out on
"all flesh" ie. the Gentile nations.

Chapter 3 - Second Half of the Tribulation Antichrist Sends All Nations against Israel

"In those days" - after the *"northern"* army is judged,
"all nations" will come. This is the *"winepress of the wrath of God"*
(Rev. 14:19) ie. the battle of Armageddon organized by Antichrist.

The Lord will come, destroy Antichrist and his armies,
and rescue His people Israel:

*"the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the
strength of the children of Israel"* .

The Lord will dwell in Zion, in His holy mount, in Jerusalem.

Egypt and Edom will be desolate.

*"Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to
generation... cleansed... for the LORD dwelleth in Zion"* (Joel 3:20-21).

Introduction

THE prophecy of Joel brings together the events of the *Day of the LORD* in the Old Testament, just as the Book of Revelation does in the New Testament. With the benefit of all the prophets of the Old Testament before him, Joel gives us a chronological account of **the two major conflicts: the Russian/Islamic invasion of Israel from the north and Armageddon, when ALL nations invade Israel.** These conflicts will occur during the first and second halves of the Great Tribulation respectively.

The major events of the *Day of the Lord* are foretold separately by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. They are brought together by Joel **in their chronological sequence.**

Daniel foretold the “*times of the Gentiles*” (Luke 21:24) beginning with Gentile occupation of Jerusalem in 606 BC and ending with the judgment of Antichrist at the coming of the Lord (Dan. 2 & 7). He also outlined Israel’s progress from the command to “*restore and build Jerusalem*” in 445B.C. to the time of Israel’s millennial blessing (Dan. 9:24-27). There is a summation of the events of **the first half** of the Tribulation in Daniel Chapter 11 verses 36 to 45 and of the **second half** of the Tribulation in Daniel Chapter 12.

Ezekiel prophesied to the “*house of Israel*” (Ezek. 3:1-11) and traces the departure of the glory of God from the Temple at the time of the Babylonian captivity to the return of the glory of God after Israel repents and seeks the Lord during the first half of the Tribulation. The return of Israel in unbelief and the conversion of Israel in the last days is described in Chapters 34 to 39 while the millennial Temple and the division of the land is described in Chapters 40 to 48. The Millennial Temple is described as the “place of God’s throne” (Ezek. 43:1-7) where the glory of God will again be seen in the promised kingdom of Christ on earth.

Isaiah wrote prophecies, now fulfilled, of conflicts with Assyria and Babylon, of Christ’s first advent, of the future Great Tribulation, the return of Christ in glory, and the unspeakable blessing that will be poured out on both Israel and the Gentiles in the coming kingdom.

Zechariah prophesied of the return of Israel to the land after the Babylonian captivity and of the final struggle that Israel will endure during the Great Tribulation in the last days. He brings his prophecy to a climax in his final chapter with the second advent of Christ, the judgment of the nations and the Lord’s millennial reign on earth.

Joel vividly describes both the conversion of Israel in the first half of the seven-year Tribulation when the **Russian/Islamic Alliance** storms into the land (as described by Ezekiel in Ezek. 38/39), and the final battle of Armageddon when **ALL nations** will be gathered against Jerusalem by Antichrist. Chapters 1 and 2 describe the first half of the Tribulation while Chapter 3 describes the second half of the Tribulation. The coming of the Lord in glory and the judgment of the nations is described in Chapter 3, followed by details of God's blessing on Israel in the millennial kingdom when the Lord reigns in Zion. Thus Joel prophesies of the climactic events that will bring Israel to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Messiah, and the judgment of the Gentiles at the coming of the Lord. The blessing of Israel and the universal peace that will follow the Lord's return bring his prophecy to a conclusion.

Only the **book of Revelation** gives a more complete sequential account of the events of the last days because John had the benefit of all the prophecies in the Old and New Testaments. The Spirit of God thus gathered up the entire volume of Divine revelation in a fitting conclusion including an outline of the prophetic history:

- The Church age in Chapters 2 and 3,
- the Rapture of the Church in Chapters 4 and 5,
- the events of the Tribulation (Daniel's 70th week) (chs. 6 to 18) concluding with the return of Christ in Chapter 19,
- the millennial kingdom in ch. 20 and the new heaven and earth in Chapters. 21 and 22.

WHEN DID JOEL WRITE?

It is important to determine the time when Joel wrote his prophecy. Men have differed in their views on when Joel lived and wrote, largely because Joel, unlike most of the prophets, did not specifically state that he prophesied in the reign of any king of Israel or Judah. However this fact alone is evidence as to when the prophecy was penned. Walter K. Price places the book as early as the reign of Athaliah (about 836BC) largely because it was before the rise of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. The **absence** of any mention of Assyria, Babylon or Persia which feature prominently in other Books of the Bible such as Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, Nahum, Zechariah etc. is remarkable and can only mean that Joel either wrote **BEFORE** these nations impacted on Israel or **AFTER** they had passed.

The throne of David had ceased in 586B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem (Ezek. 21:25-27) and the absence of any mention of a king in Israel is also significant. Joel addresses “*elders*” (Joel 1:14 and 2:16) as the rulers which suggests that he lived **after 586BC** when the throne had ceased. Joel also mentions priests and the Temple so obviously it was either before the Temple was destroyed or **after Zerubbabel had rebuilt the Temple** in 516BC. Joel quotes extensively, or uses phrases from, other books of the prophets which suggests that he wrote **after them**.

Walter Price argues for an early date for the book of Joel. His main reason is that he thinks Joel should not be quoting other prophecies. He even thinks it would have been plagiarism for Joel to use passages from other writings.

This argument is very weak since throughout Scripture many writers quoted earlier writings. Jesus quoted the prophets. The New Testament frequently quotes the Old Testament and says “*that it might be fulfilled as spoken by the prophet...*”

Micah quoted Isaiah without acknowledging Isaiah’s original authorship (cp. Isa. 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-7). When we remember that the Holy Spirit is the author of **ALL the inspired writings** then there is no reason why He should not use the same expressions or even quote the same prophecy verbatim.

A late date after the Babylonian captivity for the book of Joel has been criticized on the grounds that **critics** have given it a late date. The critics gave the **Book of Daniel** a late date because they refused to believe that the fulfilled prophecies could have possibly been given to Daniel. So amazing are the details of the prophecies of the Grecian period from Alexander the Great to Antiochus Epiphanes, revealed to Daniel in Chapter 11:1-35, that the critics have said the book of Daniel **must** have been written after the event. These critics were unbelievers. **Joel is not dealing with prophecies that even resemble Daniel Chapter 11:1-35** and a late date is therefore not evidence of unbelief in fulfilled prophecies, but evidence of sound exegesis based on the text of Scripture.

Everything about the prophecy of Joel **points to a late date** and suggests that it could not have been written in 836B.C. In fact if we accept an early date, and if we agree there was no king at the time, then we would be compelled to place the prophecy before the first king of Israel, King Saul, which is out of the question. Also, if we used Walter Price’s reasoning for a very early date, we would have to say that the twenty “literary parallels” appearing in Joel

were evidence that all later writers plagiarized Joel's writings! Every prophet was entitled to quote earlier scripture.

Joel evidently wrote at a **time of declension** and we know from Malachi's prophecy that similar conditions prevailed about 400BC.

The evidence for a late date is as follows:

- The place that Joel occupies among the books of the Old Testament has no historic relevance to the date of the authorship.
- Joel wrote when there was **no king** on the throne of David but when **elders** ruled **after the Babylonian captivity** ie. after 536BC.
- The twenty similarities between Joel's words and those of other prophets indicate that he was familiar with their writings and **they therefore preceded him**. He was quoting the Scripture!
- The spiritual condition of the nation was consistent with that existing **after the second Temple was built**.
- The absence of any reference to Assyria (destroyed 612BC), Egypt (destroyed 590BC) or Babylon (destroyed 538BC) would indicate that these empires **had passed**.
- Greece and the Grecians are mentioned in the Old Testament in Joel 3:6; Daniel 8:21; 10:20; 11:2; Zechariah 9:13. Zechariah prophesied **after** the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity. Tyre and Zidon existed at the same time, so this places Joel **before Alexander the Great had destroyed them**. Alexander destroyed those cities in 332BC and this suggests that Joel prophesied between the Babylonian captivity and the time of Alexander the Great.
- Joel states that Tyre had sold the children of **Judah** as slaves to the Grecians (Joel 3:6). Ezekiel 27:13 states that Tyre "*traded the persons of men*" with Javan (Greece). Tyre was the great trading centre in the Mediterranean and Judah was overrun in the time of Sennacherib (680BC) and Pharaoh-necho (607BC). Nebuchadnezzar shut Tyre down for 70 years in 586BC when he conquered the coastal city (Isa. 23:15-17).
- At the end of Joel's prophecy he mentions **Judah** "*dwelling safely*" and "*for ever*" in the future (Joel 3:19-20) and that the Edomites had been violent against the **children of Judah**. Ezekiel says this Edomite violence was a reason for Divine judgment and Psalm 137:7 specifically places this violence at the time the Babylonians destroyed the Temple in 586BC. The captives in Babylon sang:

“Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.”

Joel could therefore only be writing after the nation had been divided into **Israel and Judah**, after the Babylonian captivity, and **before** Alexander destroyed Tyre. Furthermore, since God was chastening Israel with a drought and plague it must also have been a time of declension ie. in Malachi's day.

There are strong grounds for placing Joel **between 516BC when the Second Temple was completed, and 332BC** when Tyre was destroyed. Allowing some time for declension to set in after the Temple was rebuilt, we can conclude that Joel wrote about the time of Malachi - about 400BC.

WHY IS THE DATE OF WRITING IMPORTANT?

The date of authorship is important because if the book was written at an early date then we would have to consider the prophecies in their historical context which would involve invasions from Assyria and Babylon, just as other books of the Bible have done.

If Joel is written **AFTER** these nations had passed, then the message applies to **prophecies of the last days** and we therefore look for **future fulfilments**. Since Joel wrote of the conversion of Israel, the second advent of Christ and of His millennial kingdom, and **these are future events**, we conclude that a late date around 400BC is correct.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

There are only three chapters in the book of Joel and the theme is clearly *“the Day of the LORD.”* Joel's prophecy relates to the **conversion of Israel** in the first half of the Tribulation and the **judgment of God on the nations** at the end of the Tribulation (Isa. 2:12). The expression the *“Day of the LORD”* appears in each of the three chapters (Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14) and if we are to understand the prophecy of Joel we must focus our attention on it. In the Old Testament this expression occurs 26 times but only three times in the New Testament (Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Each time the *“Day of the LORD”* is mentioned it refers to a time of God's wrath. The context determines the circumstances of that wrath and upon whom it will fall.

Isaiah is the first to use the expression, the *“Day of the LORD.”* On one occasion the expression refers primarily to the judgment of **Babylon** (Isa. 13:9), but on two other occasions it refers to God's wrath on the nations in **the last days** (Isa. 2:12; 34:1).

Jeremiah Chapter 46 and Ezekiel Chapter 30 refer to the wrath of God on **Egypt** which was executed in 570 BC by Nebuchadnezzar.

The time of God's wrath on **Jerusalem** is described as the "*Day of the LORD*" by Ezekiel (Ezek. 13:5), Jeremiah (Lam. 2:22) and Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:7-8,14,18; 2:3). Amos uses the expression, "*The Day of the LORD*" to refer to God's wrath on the **northern kingdom of Israel** (Amos 5:20).

Obadiah applies the expression to the time of wrath on **Edom** (Obed. 1:15).

Zechariah indicates the "*Day of the LORD*" will be a time of great trouble on earth **just before Christ returns** (Zech. 14:1), as does Malachi (Mal. 4:5).

Joel mentions "*the Day of the LORD*" five times in relation to God's wrath on Israel and the nations during the **Great Tribulation**. He states that it is "*destruction from the Almighty*" (1:15), that it will cause "*all the inhabitants of the land to tremble*" (2:1), and that it is "*great and terrible*" (2:11). The sun will be "*turned into darkness*" and the moon turned "*into blood*" (2:31) when a "*northern army*" (2:20) invades the land. Later, in the "*Day of the LORD*", the LORD will come in glory and "*all the heathen*" will be judged (3:14). At this time,

"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:15-16).

There is no mention in Joel's prophecy of Assyria or Babylon as God's instrument of judgment and the description accords with those that will characterize the Great Tribulation **in the last days**. The sun will be darkened and the moon turned to blood when the **sixth seal is broken** in the Tribulation (Rev. 6:12) and the same thing will occur when the **northern army** descends on the land of Israel. We read:

"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE the great and terrible day of the LORD come" (Joel 2:30-31).

The most intense time of judgment will occur in the **second half** of the Tribulation and Jesus called it "*great tribulation*" (Matt. 24:21). He called the first half of the Tribulation "*the beginning of sorrows (travail)*" (Matt. 24:8). Isaiah wrote: "*As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth*" (Isa. 66:8) and it is in the first half of the Tribulation that Israel is saved.

When Christ returns in glory "*immediately after the tribulation...the sun shall*

be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light...and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. 24:29).

Thus there are **two occasions** when the sun is darkened; first, when a northern army invades the land, and second, when the Lord returns at the end of the "*Day of the LORD*." On the first occasion the moon is turned red and on the second occasion it is darkened.

The three references to the "*Day of the LORD*" in the New Testament refer to the wrath of God on the ungodly in **the last days** (Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). In every instance the "*Day of the LORD*" is a time of deep distress; the outpouring of God's wrath when God's longsuffering has expired.



Chapter 1 - The Locust Plague and Drought

JOEL commences his prophecy with a description of a locust plague that exceeds anything in living memory and he asked the aged men and all the inhabitants of the land:

"Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?" (Joel 1:2).

The plague is of such proportions that it is used to illustrate **a future time of great trouble** that would come into the land from the north and it also would have no equal:

*"Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: **A GREAT PEOPLE** and a strong; **there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations**"* (Joel 2:1-2).

We immediately think of the words of the Lord Jesus:

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21).

Daniel made a similar statement about the days immediately before Christ returns:

*"There shall be a time of trouble, **such as never was** since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered"* (Dan. 12:1).

The plague of locusts is clearly not the main subject of the prophecy for it is only used as an illustration of **an army** that will invade the land of Israel in the time of the *"Day of the LORD."* This time of trouble will have no equal either in the past or in the future. We read:

*“For A NATION is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and HE hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. HE hath laid **my vine** waste, and barked **my fig tree**: HE hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white”* (Joel 1:6-7).

Locusts would not be referred to as “HE”, but some ruler whose army came into the land would. The object of this invasion is identified in symbolic language as God’s “vine” and God’s “fig tree.” Symbols in Scripture can be identified elsewhere in the Word of God and there is no doubt who is meant by **God’s vine and fig tree**. There is no need for us to invent an interpretation. Isaiah described Israel as God’s vine which He planted in “a fruitful hill” (Isa. 5:1); Mount Zion, and he states that “the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is **the house of Israel**” (Isa. 5:7).

Psalms 80 uses the same symbolism to describe the nation of Israel:

*“Thou hast brought **a vine out of Egypt**: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it... Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and **visit this vine**; And the vineyard which thy right hand hath **planted**, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.”* (Ps. 80:8,14-15).

When Isaiah described the Great Tribulation he wrote of God’s protection for repentant Israel:

*“In that day sing ye unto her, **A vineyard of red wine**. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day”* (Isa. 27:2-3).

In Jeremiah’s prophecy Israel is described as a “degenerate plant of a strange vine” and “many pastors” are charged with the destruction of God’s “vineyard”:

*“Yet I had planted thee **a noble vine**, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the **degenerate plant of a strange vine** unto me?”* (Jer. 2:21). See also Jer. 12:10, Ezek. 15:2,6, Hos. 10:1.

When Joel states that the invading army “laid my vine waste” he foresees an army stripping the land of Israel bare in the last days.

A second symbol is used to identify Israel as the object of the attack and it is “My fig tree.” Israel is not only God’s vine but also God’s fig tree.



Jeremiah described the Jews who were taken captive to Babylon in the first two Babylonian invasions as “*good figs*” and those taken captive in the last invasion as “*evil figs*” (Jer. 24:1-10).



When Jesus saw a fig tree with leaves He went to see if there was any fruit but found none, and so He cursed the fig tree which immediately withered up and died. It was a symbolic act to indicate that He, as the Son of God, had come to Israel seeking fruit but only found the leaves of profession (Matt. 21:19). The fig tree was symbolic of the nation of Israel and it should have had fruit, for fig trees have fruit **before** they have leaves. In this regard the fig tree is a lesson for us; the fruits of righteousness should come before our testimony otherwise our testimony is false.

The Lord said through Hosea:

*“I found **Israel like grapes** in the wilderness; I saw **your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree** at her first time”* (Hosea 9:10).

The vine and the fig tree are frequently used in Scripture to speak of the nation of Israel, either under the chastening of God or blessed by God, so that when Joel writes, “*HE hath laid **my vine** waste, and barked **my fig tree**,*” he is undoubtedly referring to a time when **a nation - and nations** - will invade God’s land of Israel. That time will be the “*day of the LORD.*”

ISRAEL TO BE DEVASTATED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD

The invasion foretold in the “*Day of the LORD*” will evidently devastate the land of Israel for it is likened to the land stripped bare by a plague of locusts and left dry by a drought. We read:

“The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth...the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men”
(Joel 1:10-12).

Today we look back over 2,000 years to the time when Christ came to “*His own*” land of Israel. He was rejected by His own people and in fulfilment

of Jesus' words, the Jews have been scattered among the nations, suffering greatly.

Since 1881 and the rise of Zionism, Jews have been returning to the land in unbelief. In 1948 the nation of Israel was reborn but still the Jews reject Jesus Christ as Messiah.

During this age the Church has been given the task of witnessing to *"the Jew first,"* but the time of Gentile witness will come to an end with the rapture of the Church before the *"Day of the LORD"* comes on Israel and the Nations. The signs are indicating that the Rapture is drawing near when Antichrist confirms a seven-year covenant with Israel. Then 144,000 Jewish men will turn to Christ and preach the *"Gospel of the kingdom"* in *"all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then will the end come"* (Matt. 24:14).

Since 1948, Israel has been under attack from her Arab neighbours but has survived and expanded her borders. Israel's military is powerful and her economy strong. She has become an oil and gas producer with vast resources of natural gas and she is one of the few nations that possess nuclear weapons. Yet the Bible indicates that Israel is to be invaded by vast forces that will devastate the country and only **one third** of the Jewish people in the land will survive (Zech. 13:8-9).

Three of the prophets provide details of invasions of Israel in the last days; Zechariah, Ezekiel and Joel.

Zechariah Chapters 12 to 14 describe a nation under attack fighting for its survival. Connected with this attack is the conversion of the nation of Israel for we read:

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

Ezekiel describes an Islamic invasion of enormous proportions led by Russia and it results in the conversion of Israel:

"So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward" (Ezek. 39:22).

Joel describes two invasions of Israel in the last days, and after the first, which is described as a *"northern army"* (Joel 2:20), the Spirit of God is poured out upon the nation as they turn to the Lord.

"And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed" (Joel 2:27).

In each of these prophecies it takes great devastation to bring Israel to her

knees and acknowledge the Lord. Joel describes this devastation in very graphic language:

*"For **a nation** is come up upon my land, strong, and without number... Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and **as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come**. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?... the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture... for the rivers of waters are dried up... the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: **a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations**" (Joel 1:6-16; 2:2).*

The devastation caused by the invading army is likened to conditions during a drought and a locust plague and matches the description of modern warfare:

*"**A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth**: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. **Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array**" (Joel 2:3-5).*

God's plan is to bring Israel to repentance and the Tribulation is designed to do just that, for the world cannot be blessed in the millennial kingdom without a redeemed and serving nation of Israel. Joel makes this clear:

*"And it shall come to pass **AFTERWARD**, that I will pour out my spirit upon **ALL FLESH**; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel 2:28).*

God has promised to make a "*new covenant*" with Israel in the last days (Jer. 31:31-34) when they "*shall **ALL** know me, **FROM THE LEAST OF THEM UNTO THE GREATEST OF THEM***" (Jer. 31:34).

Paul confirms this covenant and indicates it will be made "*when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*" and "*so **all Israel shall be saved**...for **this is my covenant unto them**, when I shall take away their sins*" (Rom. 11:25-27). The completion of the Church at the Rapture will precede the new covenant with Israel but Israel will have to first suffer and be humbled before her Messiah and King, the Lord Jesus.

A TRIBULATION TEMPLE MUST BE BUILT

Throughout Joel's prophecy it is clear that a Temple will exist at Jerusalem and sacrifices will be reinstated. Since the prophecy concerns the "*Day of the*



LORD” in the **last days**, and the second Temple was totally destroyed by the Romans in AD70, there must be a Tribulation Temple built before the Lord returns. We read:

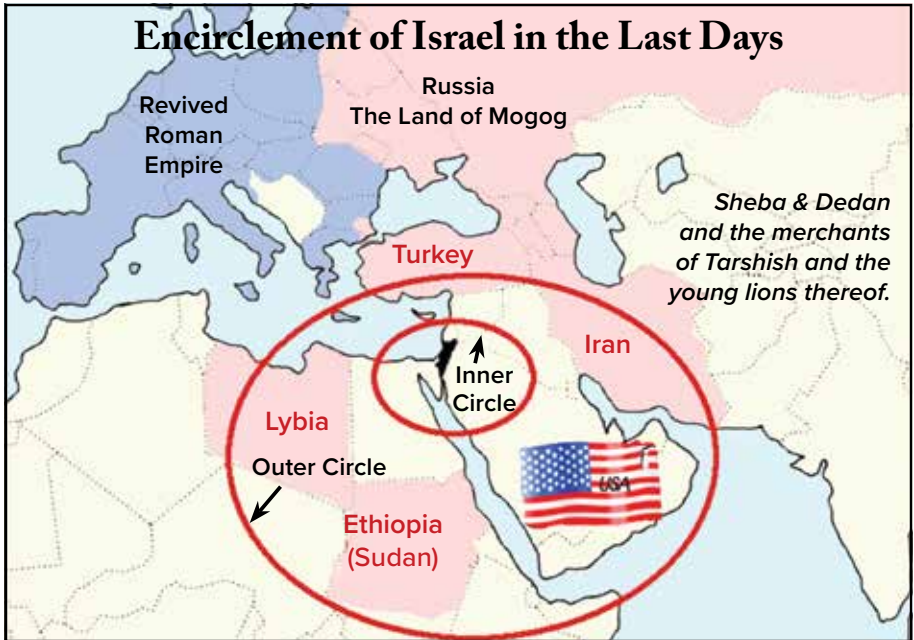
*“The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from **the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD’s ministers, mourn...** Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into **the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD**” (Joel 1:9-14).*

Daniel indicates that sacrifices in a rebuilt Temple must be offered BEFORE the mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation for a future Roman prince must “*cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease*” (Dan. 9:27). This occurs “*in the midst of the week (seven years).*”

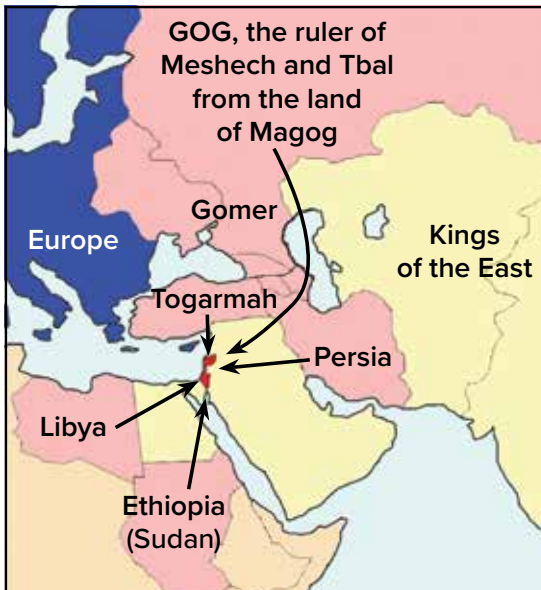
Joel indicates that the Temple must be built BEFORE Israel repents because he calls the nation to the Temple to seek the Lord:

*“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, **turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning...** Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep **between the porch and the altar**, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” (Joel 2:12,17).*

In the Revelation John wrote of two witnesses who will be located at the Temple in Jerusalem and both of these are slain by Antichrist at the mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation (Rev. 11:1-12). The Temple must therefore be built **at the beginning** of the seven years of Tribulation by Jews who make a covenant with Antichrist. Godly Jews will continue to worship at the Temple after Israel turns to the Lord.



Since the War of Liberation in 1947 Israel has been attacked by Arab neighbours - by the inner circle of Muslims. When the Temple is built the outer circle of Muslim nations will invade, supported by Russia. When Israel turns to the Lord, God will destroy those armies.



Tribulation Wars

1. Egypt: The "king of the South" will invade Israel and be destroyed by Israel & Antichrist (Dan. 11:40-43; Isa. 19).
2. Gog (Russia) and Islamic armies invade Israel. Israel repents. (Ezek. 38/39; Joel 2; Rev 6:12-17).
3. Asian war involving 200 million (Rev. 9:13-21).
4. Armageddon, when the Beast gathers "all nations" in attempt to destroy Israel (Joel 3; Isa. 24:21-23; Zech. 14:2; Rev. 16:12-16).

Chapter 2 - The First half of the Tribulation

THE RUSSIAN/ISLAMIC INVASION & ISRAEL'S CONVERSION

HAVING announced the “*Day of the LORD*” and called the nation to repentance, Joel declares:

*“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and **sound an alarm** in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble”* (Joel 2:1).

And again,

*“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, **call a solemn assembly**: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation”* (Joel 2:15-16).

Israel was commanded to make two silver trumpets and these were blown to sound **an alarm** in the event of war or to **gather the people** to the Tabernacle (Numbers 10:1-6). In the “*Day of the LORD*” an alarm is sounded first because the nation will be invaded by a “*northern army*” (Joel 2:20). This invasion is not Armageddon but an invasion from the north **before** the battle of Armageddon. Ezekiel speaks of this invasion in Chapters 38 and 39 of his prophecy. God addresses Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

*“And thou shalt come from **THY PLACE OUT OF THE NORTH PARTS**, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; **it shall be in the latter days**, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes”* (Ezek. 38:15-16).

The northern army is led by Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal from the land of Magog. The land of Magog, according to Josephus the Jewish historian, was the land of Scythia on the northern shore of the Black Sea. Today we know this land as Russia.

Tobolsk is a Russian city east of the Ural Mountains located on the Tobol River in Siberia while Moscow (Moshva) is the capitol of Russia to the west of the Ural Mountains.

The countries that are in an alliance with Russia are Persia (Iran), the House of Togarmah (Turkey), Libya and Ethiopia (Sudan). Gomer is also mentioned; the descendants of Gomer settled around the shores of the Black Sea.

The descendants of Togarmah, the grandson of Japheth, settled in **eastern Turkey** and in Biblical times, Ethiopia was the land beyond Egypt's southern border - **Sudan** as we know it today. All of these countries are now Islamic and opposed to Israel.

The alarm that will be sounded in Israel in the *Day of the LORD* therefore signals an invasion **from the north by Russia** and her **Islamic allies**. **Today Russia is aligning with Islamic countries such as Iran, Syria and Turkey.**

A **second conflict** is described in Joel Chapter 3 when **ALL nations** are gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. God says:

*"I will **ALSO GATHER ALL NATIONS**, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land" (Joel 3:2).*

These **two** conflicts should not be confused; the first brings Israel to repentance in the first half of the Tribulation and the second brings **all nations** to Jerusalem for judgment.

MODERN WARFARE

The description of the invading army from the north is just as we would expect from someone living 2,500 years ago and who saw tank, rocket, and missile warfare in a vision. Modern weapons are described in terms of ancient warfare but the great difference is that modern weapons produce **fire and smoke** and have a greatly increased **noise** level. Both ancient and modern armies leave behind them burning cities. Thus we read:

*"A fire devoureth **before them; and behind them** a flame burneth". They are like "the **noise** of chariots on the tops of mountains", "**they leap** like the like the noise of a flame of fire", "they shall run like mighty men... they shall not break ranks... the **earth shall quake** before them" (Joel 2:3-10).*

ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE

Israel's losses during this northern invasion will be great. We must bear in mind that when the invasion begins Israel is still rejecting Messiah and therefore still under the chastening of God.

Throughout Israel's long history we have seen that the Lord fought for Israel when the nation obeyed the Lord. At Jericho God sent an earthquake and brought the walls down before them, but when Achan trespassed against the

Lord Israel fled before the small town of Ai.

Zechariah describes the **final** conflict of the Tribulation which is AFTER Israel has repented and says:

*“**THEN** shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle”* (Zech. 14:3).

However, when the northern army descends from the north, Israel will be a Christ-rejecting nation and must be called to repentance. The book of Revelation points out that there will be 144,000 Jewish men who will be saved immediately **after the Rapture and before the seal judgments** begin. Some of these men will be persecuted in Israel by ungodly Jews, others will be persecuted by Gentile nations:

*“And ye (Israel) shall be hated of **all men** for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the **cities of Israel**, till the Son of man be come”* (Matt. 10:22-23).

Ezekiel points out that God is going to judge the ungodly Jews in the last days before He becomes their shepherd.

*“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; **Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves!**”* (Ezek. 34:2).

*“O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I am against the shepherds;** and I will require my flock at their hand”* (Ezek. 34:9-10).

*“As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered **in the cloudy and dark day**... I will feed them in a good pasture... upon the mountains of Israel”* (Ezek. 34:12-14).

Zechariah indicates that **two thirds** of the Jews in the land will perish and only **one third will survive** but the one third that survives will be refined:

*“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but **the third** shall be left therein. And I will bring **the third part** through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: **they shall call on my name**, and I will hear them: I will say, **It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God**”* (Zech. 13:8-9).

If these words mean anything they plainly say that only one-third of the Jews **in the land** will be “refined” and say, “*The LORD is my God.*” This must therefore occur at the time of the Russian invasion when the nation turns to the Lord, as described in Joel Chapter 2. Ezekiel states:

*“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God **from that day and forward**”* (Ezek. 39:22).

The Jewish population of Israel in 2019 was 6.6 million. For two thirds of the Jews were to die this means that 4.4 million must perish in another holocaust before the remnant 2.2 million turn and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Messiah. However, this remnant will see Divine intervention against the Russian/Islamic alliance on a scale never seen before. God says:

*“At the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that **my fury shall come up in my face**. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel”* (Ezek. 38:18-19).

An infuriated God will pour out His wrath upon the northern army. There will be a global earthquake, great hail stones, fire and brimstone, pestilence (disease), and “*every man's sword shall be against his brother*” (Ezek. 38:21) so that only one sixth of this vast army will escape (Ezek. 39:2).

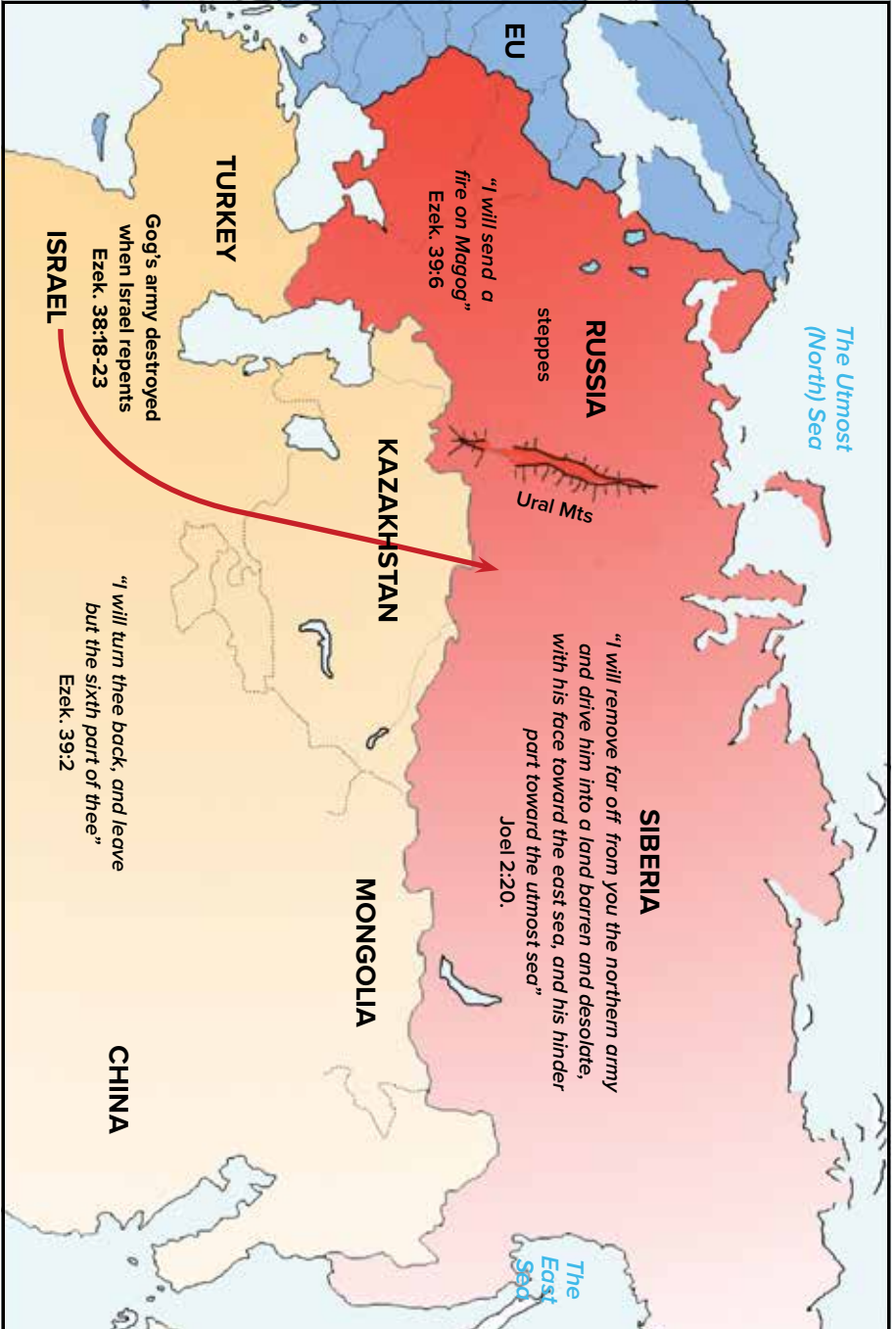
Joel tells us **where** this one sixth will retreat to - **Siberia**.

*“But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the **east sea**, and his hinder part toward the **utmost sea**, and **his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up**, because he hath done great things. Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things”* (Joel 2:20-21).

Ezekiel tells us that the stench of dead bodies will be so great that everyone will wear masks to “*stop the noses*” of people (Ezek. 39:11). It will take seven months to bury the dead and a valley on the east of the Dead Sea will be used; it will be called, Hamongog which means, “*the multitude of Gog.*”

GOD'S INTERVENTION IS IN RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S CRY

All of the above actions from God on behalf of Israel are only because the remnant of Israel cry unto the Lord, just as they cried to the Lord in Egypt and God sent Moses to deliver them. God is bound by the Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 28 to 30) to respond when the wayward nation will “*return unto the Lord*” (Deut. 30:2).



Joel makes it clear that when this northern army sweeps through the land the remnant will cry out and cast themselves on the mercy of God:

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him"
(Joel 2:12-14).

There is a close parallel here with Hezekiah's experience when faced with the threats of Sennacherib's servant, Rabshakeh. All the cities of Judah had been overrun by the Assyrians and Hezekiah went into the house of the LORD and prayed unto the Lord and sent a message to Isaiah asking him to intercede with God. Just as the remnant in Hezekiah's day turned to the Lord, so the remnant that survive the invasion by the Russian/Islamic army will pray:

"Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people" (Joel 2:17-18).

God responds with, "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. Be not afraid..." (Joel 2:21-22) and this is followed by promises that the devastation caused by the invading army would be restored, Israel would have abundance of food, would praise the Lord and never be ashamed. The words of Romans 11:26 will be fulfilled: "So all Israel shall be saved."

RUSSIA TO BURN

Why will the invading armies retreat to Siberia? Because the land of Magog (Russia), will be burned and they will not be able to return to the land north of the Black Sea. The *East Sea* is the Pacific and the *Utmost Sea* is the Arctic Sea or the utmost North Sea. The East Sea cannot be the Dead Sea for it is "far off from you" (Joel 2:20). We read:

"And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 39:6).

Lance Endersbee, former Pro-Vice Chancellor of Monash University in Melbourne, has written in his book, *Voyage of Discovery*, about the mud

volcanoes under the Black Sea. He points out that there are **100 mud volcanoes** under the Black Sea and these are continually releasing methane gas into the water. The *European Commission* is funding a team of scientists to monitor the release of gas into the atmosphere from the Black Sea and conservatively estimate 10,000 cu.m./sq. km are currently released annually. The program is called CRIMEA.

Methane gas is soluble in water and remains there while under pressure. This means that as the saturated waters rise to the surface and pressure is reduced, methane gas is released into the atmosphere. There are about 1,000 methane seepages in the floor of the Black Sea and he writes:

“Occasionally, huge outbursts of gas reach the surface of the Black Sea accompanied by fire flashes and explosions. During thunderstorms, lightning may cause the sea to burn” (Page 166).

The Black Sea is 2,200 meters deep and the water below 650 meters has become saturated with methane. It is so toxic that fish can't live in it. The deeper water that is saturated totals “well over 300,000 cu.km” according to Endersbee. Should volcanic action or an earthquake disturb the saturated water and bring it to the surface, vast amounts of methane gas would be released, up to seven times the volume of the water! A great cloud of methane would then float across the shores of the Black Sea in whatever direction the wind was blowing. Methane gas is lighter than air but butane and propane gas which are by-products of natural gas, are heavier than air.

Two things could cause the toxic saturated water to rise to the surface; an increase in temperature caused by volcanic action or an earthquake. The volcanoes are already active and there is an active earthquake zone along the north coast of Turkey.

Since there will be a massive global earthquake at the time of the Russian/ Islamic invasion of Israel (Ezek. 38:19-20; Rev. 6:14-16) we can see how Russia, the land of Magog, could be burned with fire necessitating the one sixth of her army going to Siberia east of the Ural Mountains. Russia will be wiped out, the Islamic countries will be deprived of their source of military supplies and will cease to be a major force.

The destruction of 185,000 Assyrians outside Jerusalem at the time of Hezekiah is a ‘type’ of the destruction of the “*northern army*” during the

Tribulation. At that time the Assyrians, led by Sennacherib, overran all of Israel except Jerusalem, but when the remnant of Israel called on the Lord the angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army in one night.

A NEW COVENANT - THE SPIRIT OF GOD POURED OUT ON ISRAEL

When the remnant of Israel call upon the Lord and acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King, God will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. There are many references in the Old Testament to this new covenant that God will make in the last days. Sometimes it is called “*a covenant of peace*” and other times an “*everlasting covenant*.” Jeremiah wrote:

*“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But **this shall be the covenant that I will make** with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people”* (Jer. 31:31-33).

Ezekiel wrote:

*“Moreover I will make **a covenant of peace** with them; it shall be an **everlasting covenant** with them...”* (Ezek. 37:26).

*“Neither will I hide my face any more from them: **for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel**, saith the Lord GOD”* (Ezek. 39:29).

Isaiah wrote:

*“Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left...**UNTIL the spirit be poured upon us from on high**, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then...the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places”* (Isa. 32:13-18).

Joel adds his voice to these prophets:

*"And ye shall know that **I am in the midst of Israel**, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass AFTERWARD, that **I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy**, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:27-29).*

The new covenant is accompanied by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will be made with Israel when the nation seeks the Lord during the Tribulation.

The new covenant is based on the finished work of Christ on the cross. When Jesus kept the passover with His disciples before He went to the cross He took the cup and said, *"this cup is the **new covenant** in my blood which is shed for you"*(Luke22:20).

The old covenant was based on the sacrifice of animals but the new covenant is based on the blood of the *"Lamb of God."* The Holy Spirit could not be given until Christ had died and rose and was glorified. However, although Christ died and has been glorified, it was not possible for the new covenant to be made **with Israel** while the nation was in unbelief.

On the day of Pentecost Peter quoted a portion of Joel's prophecy but left out some vital parts that are **yet to be fulfilled**. When the disciples were baptized with the Spirit and began to speak in other (Gentile) languages the Jews asked, *"What meaneth this?"* (Acts2:12).

Peter began to answer the question by quoting Joel:

*"It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit on **ALL FLESH**...(on Gentiles)"* (Acts 2:17).

He concluded the quotation with the words,

"WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"
(Acts 2:21).

Peter quoted the words that speak of

"wonders in the heavens and earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel 2:30-31).

But these signs will appear in the Day of the Lord. They certainly did not appear at Pentecost. Since the Church is Raptured BEFORE the Tribulation and is not appointed to the wrath of the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:9), these

words did not apply to the Church. The Church, which had its beginning at Pentecost, is saved under the **new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)** that will be made with Israel in the last days, and has tapped into the spiritual blessings of that covenant. Paul wrote that the Gentile Church has been made **partaker** of the "*root and fatness of the olive tree*" (Rom. 11:17). **Israel is the olive tree.**

The new covenant that God will make **with Israel** provides more than spiritual blessings. It includes security from enemies, rain upon the land, fruitful fields and many more material blessings in **addition** to the spiritual blessings (Deut. 30:1-9).

The Church has a **heavenly** character and is "*blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" (Eph. 1: 3). Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). The Church is not promised material prosperity in this world but Israel is an earthly nation and inherits earthly blessings under the new covenant when she seeks the Lord.

Peter answered the question, "*What meaneth this?*" ie. the Word of God spoken in **Gentile languages?** He was pointing out that "*all flesh,*" and "*whosoever shall call,*" included Gentiles in the new covenant that God will make with Israel in the last days.

Joel's prophecy is about **Israel in the last days** and the former and **latter rains** that God will send **have nothing to do with a spiritual revival in the end of the Church age.** The Church age ends in apostasy. Former rains come to make the seed germinate and latter rains make the grain form in the head. God promised Israel that the rains would come in their proper season if they obeyed Him. Deut. 11:13-14 states:

*"if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments... I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the **first rain and the latter rain**, that thou mayest gather in thy corn."*

GLOBAL EARTHQUAKES AND SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

Joel's prophecy describes two distinctly separate occasions during the Tribulation when God will bring upon men a global earthquake accompanied by signs in the heavens and it is of the utmost importance that we recognize them as separate events.

The first of these global shakings of the earth's crust and darkening of the sun,

moon and stars will occur when the “northern” army is judged as Israel cries out to the Lord in the first half of the Tribulation. Joel mentions it twice in the second chapter of his prophecy.

*“The **earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?”** (Joel 2:10-11).*

This statement describes God’s response to the approaching “northern” army in the first half of the 7-year Tribulation. It is this approaching “northern” army that causes Israel to cry out to the Lord and obtain mercy. Then after Israel calls on the Lord God graciously removes the “northern” army with the earthquake which He promised, and will pour out His Spirit on the nation of repentant Jews. When Joel describes this outpouring of the Spirit of God he again mentions the wonders that God will do in the earth and in the heavens.

*“And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and **in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come”***

(Joel 2:29-31).

Peter included these signs and wonders when he preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:19-20). The signs and wonders did not occur at Pentecost because Peter was only making the point that Gentiles could call on the name of the Lord and “*all flesh*”; “*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Acts 2:17-21). This explained why the apostles spoke in **Gentile** languages.

Chapter 2 of Joel has nothing to do with Armageddon at the end of the 7-year Tribulation but everything to do with the Russian invasion in the first half of the Tribulation.

Chapter 3 of Joel’s prophecy describes the **second half** of the Tribulation when “*all nations*” are brought up to the valley of Jehoshaphat and Joel distinctly states that this is NOT the same “northern” army as is described in chapter 2; he says,

*“I will **ALSO** gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people...”* (Joel 3:2).

Chapter 3 of Joel's prophecy ends with Armageddon, the coming of the Lord to rescue redeemed Israel, and to reign over the earth when "*Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation*" (Joel 3:20).

The **second** global earthquake accompanied by signs and wonders in the heavens will occur at the end of the Tribulation during the battle of Armageddon. Joel states:

"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:15-16).

There are two distinctly different earthquakes and signs in the heavens; one in the first half of the Day of the Lord and the other at the end of the second half of the day of the Lord. The first is when Israel turns to the Lord and the second when the Lord returns to rescue Israel from the Beast (Antichrist).

EZEKIEL'S TESTIMONY TO A GLOBAL EARTHQUAKE

Ezekiel makes no mention of Armageddon in his prophecy. Ezekiel is only concerned with the conversion of Israel in the last days. Thus he mentions the destruction of the "northern" army (Ezek. 38:15;39:2) when Israel turns to the Lord and how the Lord will send a global earthquake accompanied by signs from heaven. He wrote:

"Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground ... and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezek. 38:19-22).

Ezekiel is NOT writing about Armageddon but about the conversion of Israel in the first half of the 7-year Tribulation when the "northern" army, led by Gog, the "chief prince" from the land of Magog (Russia) storms into Israel with his Islamic associates. This cannot be Armageddon for **one sixth of his army escapes** to Siberia (Ezek. 39:2; Joel 2:20). The Antichrist's army will not escape from Armageddon when Christ returns. They will be slain with the sword that proceeds out of His mouth!

This earthquake in the first half of the Tribulation is clearly global; it causes “*all the men that are upon the face of the earth*” to shake. It destroys the “*northern*” army but it is not confined to the land of Israel.

JOHN’S TESTIMONY TO TWO GLOBAL EARTHQUAKES

The Book of the Revelation is a chronological outline of events occurring in the last days. It outlines the course of the history of Christendom in seven stages seen in seven letters to seven churches (Chapters 2 and 3). Then at the end of the Church age John foresaw the Rapture through the door into heaven (Rev. 4:1-2) and immediately he saw Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God taking the seven-sealed scroll containing the judgments of the Tribulation (Rev.ch. 5). As the seals are broken the judgments of God are released on earth and the **sixth seal** revealed a global earthquake. We read:

*“I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the **sun became black** as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and **every mountain and island were moved out of their places**” (Rev. 6:12-14).*

Some commentators assume that this is Armageddon but they are entirely wrong. Immediately after the sixth seal is opened we read of 144,000 “*servants of our God*”; Jewish men who are sealed for protection from the judgments yet to fall.

The 144,000 Jewish witnesses are seen **in heaven** at the **mid-point** of the Tribulation **before** the “*seven last plagues*” are released (Rev.chs14 & 15). The global earthquake in Revelation chapter 6 is the one that occurs when Russia and her Islamic confederates enter the land. When the 2nd seal is broken **peace is taken from the earth** and this could well be global terrorism by Islamic terrorist cells using weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. One quarter of men perish as a result.

However the global earthquake that occurs at Armageddon comes later. It is describe by John when the **7th Vial Judgment** is poured out. It is the **last** of the “*last seven plagues*”:

*“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon**. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into **the air**; and there*

came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great” (Rev. 16:16-18).

This will be the mother of all earthquakes. Zechariah describes it at Jerusalem as the Lord returns and stands on the Mount of Olives

“and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zech. 14:4).

There can be no doubt that there will be **two global earthquakes** accompanied by signs and wonders in the heavens during the 7-year Tribulation. To confuse these occasions and interpret them as the same event will only lead to greater confusion and a total inability to arrive at a true understanding of the sequence of events that will occur in the Tribulation.

The **first** global earthquake destroys the “northern” army led by Gog and the **second** global earthquake destroys the armies of the Beast at the coming of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord

The day of God's anger is the day of the Lord;
A day of thick darkness when wrath is outpoured;
A day of dark clouds and infinite gloom;
A day of remorse and terrible doom.

The day of the Lord has been in the past,
When the patience of God had run out at last.
The Babylonians and Romans came like a cloud;
The Temple and city were levelled and ploughed.

But worse is to come in days just ahead;
The horsemen are mounted, white, black and red;
The pale horse too will introduce death,
In the day of the Lord; the words of God's breath.

The Great Tribulation is what we are told,
Is poured out by heaven as judgments unfold.
The Lamb on the throne has taken the book;
The seals are now broken and heaven can look.

The day of God's anger is the wrath of the Lamb,
When into the caves and holes men will cram
And cry to the rocks, Fall down on us now!
Every mouth must confess Him and every knee bow!

Oh, enter the door of God's mercy and love,
Be ready for Jesus who comes from above,
Repent and believe His mercy is free;
He paid all your debt on mount Cal-vary

But can I be sure of God's marvellous grace?
That one day I'll look on His glorious face?
Yes, Yes you can know, be certain and sure;
His Word gives His promise of life evermore.

Chapter 3 - The Second Half of the Tribulation

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

CHAPTER 3 begins with the words, “*In those days, and at **that time** when I shall bring **again** the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*” which links it to the events of the previous chapter. The expression, “*the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*” refers to a former state or relationship that is restored and that restoration is the conversion of Israel. *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* states that it can figuratively mean “a former state of prosperity” and that is how it is used in this case.

The events that are described in chapter three therefore occur **following** the Russian/Islamic invasion and the conversion of the remnant of Israel; in the days when the Spirit of God is poured out on a repentant nation with whom God has made a new covenant.

At the mid-point of the Tribulation God changes His attitude to Israel **from chastening to protection**, but when Israel is saved Israel experiences great wrath from Satan and Antichrist. While Israel was led by false and ungodly shepherds who had signed a covenant with Antichrist, she has no fear of Antichrist, but when all Israel suddenly turns to Jesus Christ at the time of the Russian/Islamic invasion, Antichrist finds himself in a covenant relationship with a born-again nation which, to him, is intolerable.

At this juncture Daniel describes the situation:

“Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him (Antichrist): therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. 11:44-45).

The Russian/Islamic invasion comes out of the east (Iran) and north (Russia, Turkey) and this greatly concerns Antichrist who will not be in a position to intervene. Perhaps Russia will use the threat to cut off oil and gas supplies to Europe.

Also Sheba and Dedan (Arabia), the merchants of Tarshish (Britain) and “*the young lions thereof*” (USA, Australia, NZ, Canada) will raise a protest but will be unable to prevent the northern army coming into Israel (Ezek. 38:13).

However, when God destroys the “*northern army*” and the land of Magog is burned, after seven months, the land of Israel will be cleared of bodies and Antichrist will move in with great fury to “*destroy and utterly make away many.*” He will move into the Temple at Jerusalem and “*plant the tabernacle of his palace*” between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean and cause the Jewish “*sacrifice and oblation to cease*” (Dan. 9:27). This is clearly **the middle** of the Tribulation when John says the remnant of her (Israel’s) seed, “*keep the commandments of God, and **have the testimony of Jesus Christ***” (Rev. 12:17).

It is also the time when God fights for Israel and protects them from Antichrist. During the second half of the Tribulation God has a place prepared where the believing remnant of Israel will be hid and protected for the final 1,260 days (Rev. 12:6 and 14). Israel will be fighting the armies of Antichrist. Zechariah says, “*Judah shall fight at Jerusalem*” (Zech. 14:14) but with the Lord on their side:

*“In that day I will make the governors of Judah **like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf**; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.*

***In that day** shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem”* (Zech. 12:5-9).

When God brings again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem and all Israel turns to Christ, Antichrist will feel the full force of Israel’s military might as God fights for His people.

THE NATIONS GATHERED FOR JUDGMENT

The second half of the Tribulation is the time when God judges the Gentile nations. He gathers their armies to Jerusalem for the final slaughter - the judgment of the living nations:

*“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will **plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land**”* (Joel 3:2).

It is only after Israel is redeemed that God can deal with the nations. After describing Israel’s disobedience Zephaniah wrote:

*"Therefore wait ye upon (for) me, saith the LORD, **UNTIL THE DAY** that I rise up to the prey: for **my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.** For **THEN** will I turn to the people a pure language (Israel), that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent"* (Zeph. 3:8-9).

Zephaniah thus indicates that the nations will be gathered for judgment **at the same time** as Israel calls upon the Lord. It is God who gathers the nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. In Revelation 16:12-14 we read that *"three unclean spirits like frogs"* go forth to gather the kings of the whole world to Armageddon but they are going because God has put it in their hearts to fulfil His will.

We read a similar statement in Revelation Chapter 17 where the ten kings who serve Antichrist burn Mystery Babylon, *"For God hath put it in their hearts to fulfil his will"* (Rev. 17:17).

As we watch the unrest among the nations, especially in the Middle East, we are witnessing the preparation for the day when God will gather the nations to Israel to destroy them for their treatment of His people Israel and for dividing up God's land which He gave to Abraham and His seed for an everlasting possession.

The anti-Semitism that is rife today will be fully repaid for even though Israel is now blinded and is rejecting her King, God says that she is the apple of His eye and *"he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye"* (Zech. 2:8).

PREPARE WAR, WAKE UP THE MIGHTY MEN

Once Israel is a saved nation the call will go out for the nations to prepare for the final war. Joel writes:

*"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: **Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong**"* (Joel 3:9-10).

A massive arms race is predicted by Joel when nations spend money allocated for peaceful purposes in order to purchase military equipment and that is what we are witnessing in our day. The expenditure on arms by the top 16 nations was 1. 47 trillion dollars in 2019. Expenditure by the top 16 nations was as follows:

Country Expenditure in US\$:

USA	716,000,000,000
CHINA	224,000,000,000
SAUDI ARABIA	70,000,000,000
INDIA	55,200,000,000
GERMANY	49,100,000,000
UNITED KINGDOM	47,500,000,000
JAPAN	47,000,000,000
RUSSIA	44,000,000,000
FRANCE	40,500,000,000
SOUTH KOREA	38,300,000,000
BRAZIL	29,300,000,000
ITALY	29,200,000,000
AUSTRALIA	26,300,000,000
CANADA	21,200,000,000
ISRAEL	19,600,000,000
UAR	14,375,000,000

This level of expenditure is only likely to increase as the Middle East continues to boil over with Russia becoming more involved and Asian nations arming.

The final battle before Christ returns will be fought in the *“place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”* according to Revelation 16:16, but where is Armageddon? and how will the final conflict be fought?

Halfway through the seven years Tribulation, Antichrist will occupy the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem and install his idol image there. Many Jews from Jerusalem will flee into the mountains of Judea (Matt. 24:16) to a *“place prepared of God, that they should feed her (Israel) there a thousand two hundred and threescore days”* (Rev. 12:6).

The mountains referred to by the Lord are no doubt the mountainous country east of Jerusalem known as the Judean wilderness but may include other mountainous areas in the land. Israel has much limestone country which abounds with caves. David and his 600 men hid in one of these caves and King Saul slept in it without knowing David and his men were there. It must have been very large. The escarpment west of Jericho is pock-marked with

caves and has an ancient monastery built on the side of the cliff. Abraham was buried in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron.

It has been reported that the Israeli military is building an underground control centre in the Judean wilderness estimated to cost nearly one billion dollars.

It would appear that not all Jews will flee from Jerusalem when Antichrist sets up his idol in the Temple and special mention is made of those who are with child or have young children. It may be that the women and children will flee and many men will remain to carry on a guerilla war.

Jerusalem has been divided before and we well remember the conflict when Jordanian troops occupied the Arab part of the city including the Temple Mount until it was liberated in the 1967 six-day war.

We know the Jews will continue to have a presence in Jerusalem because Zechariah tells us that "*Judah also shall fight **at Jerusalem***" (Zech. 14:14). God also says that,

"In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left" (Zech. 12:6).

Also,

*"In that day shall the LORD defend the **inhabitants of Jerusalem**; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be **as David**; and the house of David shall be as God, **as the angel of the LORD** before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem"* (Zech. 12:8-9).

It is clear that Jerusalem and Judea will be in a **state of siege** because Zechariah states:

*"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be **in THE SIEGE both against Judah and against Jerusalem**"* (Zech. 12:2).

From these verses we may deduce that though Antichrist will be in control of the Temple site the land will be in a state of war.

In order to resolve the issue Antichrist will gather an army from the entire world and, using demonic delusion (Rev. 16:14), bring them to Jerusalem. Joel states:

*"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, **I will ALSO gather all nations, and will***

bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land” (Joel 3:1-2).

Zechariah has similar words:

*“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For **I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle**; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and **HALF OF THE CITY shall go forth into captivity**, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. THEN shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives...” (Zech. 14:1-4).*

From these two Scriptures we can see that the conflict known as the battle of Armageddon will rage from the valley of Esdralon where Megiddo is situated in central Israel, to Jerusalem and south to the “*valley of Jehoshaphat*” called “*the valley of Berachah*.”

THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT - THE WINEPRESS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is generally assumed to be the brook Kidron between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives but those who have been to Jerusalem will instantly know that this could not be the case.

There is no place called the Valley of Jehoshaphat in the Old Testament but we know that in the days of Jehoshaphat, Moab, Ammon and Seir (Edom) sent their armies to attack Judah. They assembled at En-Gedi on the western coast of the Dead Sea where there is a plentiful supply of fresh water. They then proceeded up a long valley that rises in a N-W direction to the wilderness of Tekoa.

Meanwhile, Jehoshaphat sought counsel from the Lord and went out with his army to the wilderness of Tekoa; Tekoa is about 17 km S-E of Jerusalem.

As the invading armies approached the wilderness of Tekoa, a journey of 25 km, the Lord caused them to turn against each other and by the time Jehoshaphat arrived on the scene they were all dead corpses on the ground.

It took three days for Jehoshaphat's men to gather the spoils of battle and on the fourth day they gathered in the valley and named it Barachah, meaning “blessing.” It has continued to be called by that name and there is no doubt that this is the **Valley of Jehoshaphat** mentioned by Joel located about 20 km S-E of Jerusalem on the way to En-Gedi.

Fresh water at En-gedi



It will therefore be natural for some of the invading armies that come to the final battle of Armageddon to approach Jerusalem along this valley as part of a multi-pronged attack on the city. When Isaiah described the second advent in the Book of Isaiah Chapter 63 he asked,

*"Who is this **that cometh from Edom**, with dyed garments **from Bozrah**? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? **I have trodden the winepress alone**; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (Isa. 63:1-3).*

If we were to draw a line on the map from Jerusalem through En-Gedi and extend it across the Dead Sea we would come to Edom. But even more amazing, the line would pass through Bozrah!

So Isaiah foresaw the scene when Christ returns. He will appear in the heavens over Edom and destroy the armies gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat as He approaches Jerusalem. Zechariah states that “His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives” (Zech. 14:4).

Meanwhile the battle will be raging in the north of the land. Joel writes:

*“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. **The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem;** and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel”* (Joel 3:14-16).

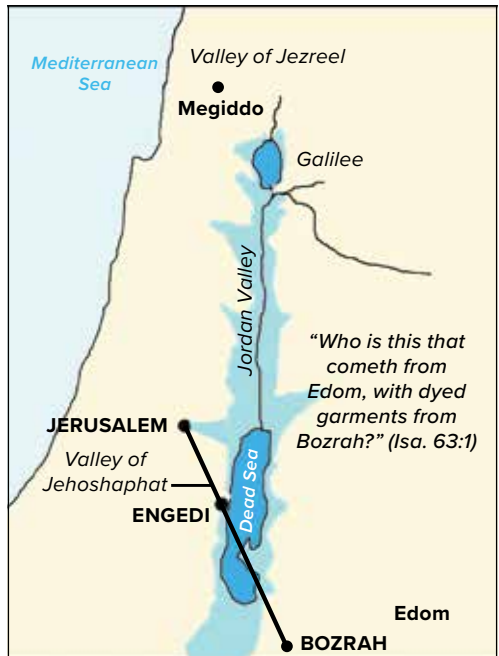
Having come to Jerusalem and rescued the besieged remnant, the Lord will then deal with the other invading armies **from Jerusalem**. He will roar **out of Zion** and it is then that the great battle will be fought in the Valley of Jezreel near Megiddo. Perhaps this is the decisive battle where the vast majority of Antichrist’s forces will be gathered and for that reason it is called, “*The Valley of Decision*” (Joel 3:14).

The vast army from all nations including the Kings of the East, will cover the land but the object of the attack will be Jerusalem. It is there, “*outside the city,*” that the

winepress is trodden by the Lord Himself and the blood will flow “*even unto the horses bridles*” (Rev. 14:19-20).

The scene will not be pleasant, for just as the wine splashes on the garments of those who tread out the grapes, so we read:

*“I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; **and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment**”* (Isa. 63:3).



Fearful days lie ahead for this world and we sound out the warning to those who have not yet received Christ as Saviour and Lord. Once the Rapture has taken place these things will come upon men and will culminate in what we have described. Take heed to the appeal from God's Word:

*"Seek ye the Lord **while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon**"* (Isa. 55:6-7).

THE JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING NATIONS

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is mentioned twice in Joel Chapter 3; the first time in Verse 2 and the second time in Verse 12.

In verse 2 the reason for gathering all nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat is that God might *"plead with them there **for my people and for my heritage Israel whom they have scattered and parted my land.**"*

Verse 12 says He will **"SIT TO JUDGE all the heathen round about"** in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The name Jehoshaphat means, "Jehovah judged."

In His Olivet Discourse, Jesus said that after He returns in glory and power He will *"sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered **all nations**"* (Matt. 25:31-32). All the Gentile nations that survive the Tribulation must appear before the Lord at this throne of His glory where He will separate the *"sheep from the goats"* (Matt. 25:32).

The Jews, the Lord's *"brethren,"* will not appear before this throne for they are His *"elect"* nation who are gathered separately immediately after the Lord returns (Matt. 24:31).

The criteria for judgment at the throne of Christ's glory will be the attitude of Gentile nations to Israel; God will plead with them there for *"My people"* Israel.

At the judgment of the living nations Jesus will recall the way saved Gentiles heeded the Gospel preached by the 144,000 Jews and how they stood with the redeemed nation when Antichrist tried to destroy them. He will say to the *"sheep"* (saved Gentiles) *"Inherit the kingdom...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these **my brethren**, ye have done it unto me"* (Matt. 25:40).

The *"goats"* will be judged because they followed Antichrist and opposed both the Lord's brethren AND the *"sheep"*; they will go away into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41,45).

The location of this judgment would appear to be the Valley of Jehoshaphat where the surviving nations will be “Jehovah judged.”

The question arises as to how so many will be transported to Jerusalem for this judgment. Will every individual appear or will representatives of nations appear? How will they be transported?

We know from Isaiah 60:8-9 that the Jews will be brought back to the land by **plane and ship** so there will be some transport that will survive the Tribulation. Every surviving Jew will be saved and will be returned to the land. Ezekiel wrote:

*“Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and **have left none of them any more there**” (Ezek. 39:28).*

We also know that world population will be drastically reduced for in two judgments alone **one half** of world population will perish (Rev. 6:8; 9:18) and these are slain in the **first half** of the Tribulation. When Jesus spoke about the **second half** of the Tribulation He said that *“except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved”* (Matt. 24:22).

Isaiah wrote of the Tribulation:

*“The earth is burned with fire and **few men left**” (Isa. 24:6).*

The Silk Road is a maze of highways and railroads stretching from Asia to Europe and is being developed to incorporate fast trains. In 2017 trains run twice weekly from Central China to Spain and plans are to begin a service to London. Freight trains take about 18 days but a fast train could make the journey in two or three days.

Daniel concludes his prophecy with the statement that there will be a period of **75 days beyond the end of the 1,260 days** of the second half of the Tribulation and that those who come to the 75 days are “*blessed*” (Dan. 12:12). It would therefore seem that the judgment of the living nations will occur **during the 75-day period after Christ returns** and the throne of judgment will be set up south of Jerusalem in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

THE COMING OF THE LORD TO REIGN FROM JERUSALEM

The coming of the Lord is clearly seen in Joel 3:15-17.

*“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. **The LORD also shall roar out of Zion**, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the*

hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain."

When Christ returns His people Israel will in great danger. Daniel says that Antichrist will "go forth with great fury to make away many" (Dan. 11:44) but the Lord will preserve His believing remnant and "be the hope of His people."

Isaiah wrote of this time of Tribulation and assured the suffering remnant that,

*"**Thy dead men shall live**, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and **shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast**. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. 26:19-21).*

Those who are martyred will be raised to reign with Christ when He returns (Rev. 20:4) and those who survive are encouraged to hide from Antichrist's fury for the **short while** until the Tribulation is finished.

The coming of the Lord in glory will be a spectacular event. "The Lord will roar of Zion!" He will be coming in great anger and wrath;

"in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8).

*"Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced him: and **all kindreds of the earth shall wail** because of him" (Rev. 1:7).*

This appearing - "immediately after the Tribulation" (Matt. 24:29) - stands in sharp contrast with the Rapture of the Church when the Lord will come into the clouds to receive His Bride. The Rapture will happen in a **split second** of time and it will all be over:

*"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **changed, in a moment**, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).*

The world will only know the Rapture has taken place because "one has been taken and the other left" but the second advent of Christ men **will see** the Lord descend to the earth, the heavens and earth will be shaken and all mankind will wail.

The following Scriptures in the Old Testament give a similar message: Psalms 46-48; 96-99; Isa. 24:19-23; 26:20-21; 35:4-5; 40:10-11; 59:19-20; 66:15-16; Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14:3-4.

A MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

*“So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God **dwelling in Zion**, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more” (Joel 3:17).*

The major denominations, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Presbyterian etc, all deny that there will be an earthly kingdom after Christ returns. The general view of Christendom is that there will be a “general resurrection” when Christ returns, at which time all the dead, saved and unsaved, will be raised and judged before the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). They are judged according to their works. Sadly, even Spurgeon held this view early in his ministry but may have changed later in his ministry.

To defend this unBiblical view, theologians confuse the judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25:31) with the Great White Throne judgment and deny any future for Israel in God’s prophetic plan. This leads them to spiritualize all the promises of the millennial kingdom and apply them to the Church.

Joel clearly states that the Lord will return and **dwelt in Zion**, and just in case we might think that this is the “*heavenly mount Sion*” (Heb. 12:22), he says it is in “*my holy mountain*” and that Jerusalem will then be holy and no strangers will pass through he any more!

The heavenly Zion was never unholy nor did ungodly “*strangers*” ever pass through it. This passage simply cannot be spiritualized and must be taken literally.

Ezekiel concludes his prophecy with a description of the millennial Temple and “*the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there*” (Ezek. 48:35).

Zephaniah states:

*“The king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil **any more**” (Zeph. 3:15).*

Zechariah stated:

*“The LORD shall be king over **all the earth**” (Zech. 14:9).*

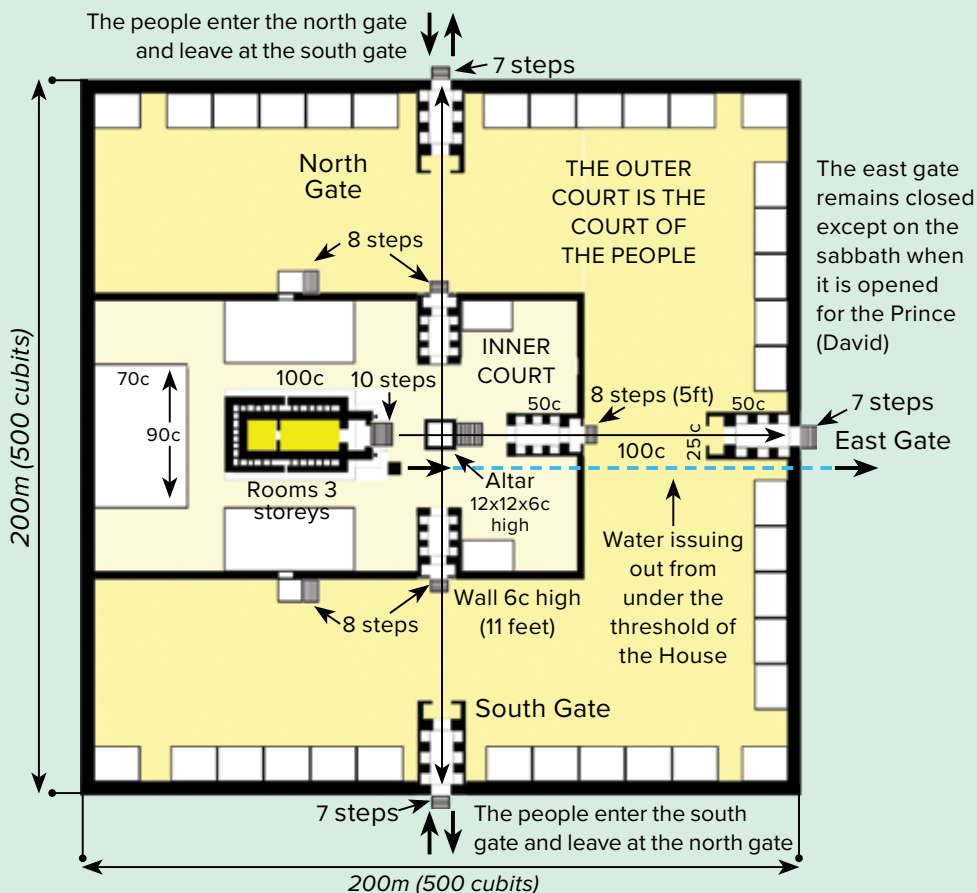
The book of Revelation states that Christ will reign on the earth for “1,000 years” (Rev. 20:1-7; Rev. 5:10).

Just as God reigned from His Temple at Jerusalem in ancient times, so Christ will reign from a glorious Temple at Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom. The details of this Temple and the allocation of land to the twelve tribes and priests are all described in Ezekiel’s prophecy, Chapters 40 to 48.

Isaiah gives additional information about the return of redeemed Israel after the Lord returns and of the glory of God that will light the Holy City as evidence of Christ's presence among His people (See Isaiah Chs. 60-66).

During the millennial kingdom the Jews will be the “*priests of the Lord*” and the “*ministers of our God*” (Isa. 61:6). Sacrifices will be offered in memorial of Christ’s sacrifice. The sacrifices in the Old Testament days could “*never take away sins*” (Heb. 10:11) but looked forward to Christ’s death. Millennial sacrifices look back to Christ’s sacrifice.

Ezekial's Millennial Temple - Ezek. chs. 40-42



We call the denial of Christ's earthly reign "amillennialism" meaning "no millennium." This teaching can be traced back to the writings of Augustine of Hippo (AD413 - 426) who wrote his book, *The City of God*, in which he taught that the Catholic Church was the kingdom of God on earth. Unfortunately, although the Reformation saw the truth of justification by faith, it followed Augustine's errors of infant baptism, amillennialism and other doctrines. These errors have been carried across into the Westminster Confession and into doctrinal statements of most churches.

When God created the earth He intended it to be where He would dwell with man whom He made in His own image. God walked with Adam in Eden and His presence was in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle and Temple. He told Moses, "*Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them (Israel)*" (Exod. 25:8).

The glory of God that filled Solomon's Temple was the presence of God among His people Israel. When Christ returns, the glory of God will **visibly** be seen at Jerusalem (Isa. 60:1, 19-20).

Ezekiel wrote of the presence of God on earth in the kingdom:

"And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever" (Ezek. 43:7).

When the millennial (1,000-year) kingdom is finished the kingdom of Christ will continue ON EARTH on a new renovated earth for Christ's "*dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away*" (Dan. 7:14). We read:

*"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, **Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God**"* (Rev. 21:3).

The New Jerusalem, now in heaven, will finally be relocated **to earth** and will be the eternal abode of the Church, while the redeemed of the nation of Israel will occupy the new earth close to the New Jerusalem, perhaps inside the walls that surround the city, and the nations of them that are saved will occupy the new earth.

The eternal new earth will see all the redeemed, Jews, Gentiles and Church, dwelling on a PURIFIED earth in resurrected bodies: the spirits of justified mankind made perfect (complete) (Heb. 12:23). Humanity will be fully restored from the fall; body, soul and spirit.

MATERIAL BLESSINGS IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Joel concludes his prophecy with a few details of changes that will take place and transform the land of Israel after Christ returns.

*"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and **all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters**, and a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim" (Joel 3:18).*

Today much of the land of Israel is barren desert. The Judean wilderness and the Negev desert can be productive but only if water is available. The present rainfall is inadequate and during a seven-year drought that began in 2004 the nation depended heavily on desalinated water. The Sea of Galilee fell to dangerously low levels during the drought. Fortunately, rains restored Galilee to almost full by 2013 but the ever increasing population and the demands of agriculture leave no grounds for complacency. In 2014 the population exceeded 8 million and the Jordanians also depend on water from the Jordan River. The flow of water down the Jordan River has been so drastically reduced that the level of the water in the Dead Sea has fallen dramatically.

According to *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, in 2014 Israel produced 40% of its water from desalinated sea water.

One of the blessings that God has promised Israel under the New Covenant is abundance of rain. The Palestinian Covenant also promised rain if Israel obeyed the voice of the Lord:

*"The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give **the rain unto thy land in his season**, and to bless all the work of thine hand"*
(Deut. 28:12).

In the millennial kingdom Jerusalem will be **holy** unto the Lord and God has bound Himself to send rain upon the land.

Ezekiel also prophesied of renewed rains in the last days:

*"And **I will make with them a covenant of peace**... And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; **there shall be showers of blessing**. And **the tree of the field shall yield her fruit**, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek. 34:25-27).*

Prior to the construction of desalination plants, 30% of Israel's water was supplied from aquifers; a mountain aquifer and a coastal aquifer. The mountain aquifer is quite extraordinary for it surges out of the ground at Jerusalem, through Hezekiah's tunnel to the pool of Siloam.

Jerusalem is one of the **highest points** in the land and it is believed the source of the aquifer is in the mountains of eastern Turkey which rise to more than 5,000 meters above sea level near Mount Ararat.

During the millennial kingdom water from this aquifer will be released in such volume that Joel says it will “*water the valley of Shittim*” on the north east of the Dead Sea.

Zechariah tells us that when Christ returns, the Mount of Olives will split and there will be a great valley formed from Jerusalem for the 20 kilometers to the Dead Sea. Great volumes of fresh water will flow from under the Temple so that the level of water in the Dead Sea will rise and fishermen will spread their nets from Engedi to Eneglaim (Ezek. 47:10):

“And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.”



The name Eneglaim means in Hebrew, *"the fountain of two calves"* and this could give us a clue as to where it is located. The "two calves" no doubt refers to the two golden calves made by Jeroboam for the ten tribes of Israel when they separated from Judah. One golden calf was placed at **Dan in the north** of Israel and the other was placed at Bethel on the southern border of the ten tribes.

Dan, where one of the golden calves was located, was south of Mount Hermon where the Jordan River is known as the "fountains of Jordan." Eneglaim can rightly be described as the "fountain of the two calves." Lake Hula south of Mount Hermon, is about seven meters above sea-level and Jordan drops to about **214 meters below sea-level at Galilee. The Dead Sea is about 400 meters below sea-level** and falling each year. In the millennium the waters will therefore extend **from north of Galilee, all the way to the Gulf of Aqaba in the south.**

The Dead Sea is saturated with salt and other chemicals at the present time and for it to be so radically changed to support life would require a very great increase in the water level. It is currently about 1,200 feet below sea level and the Sea of Galilee is about 600 feet below sea-level. One would expect that for fish to be able to live in the Dead Sea, the level would have to rise to the level of Galilee as shown on the map. Ezekiel gives much more detail of this in Chapter 47 of his prophecy and Zechariah makes reference to it in Zech. 14:8.

When Joel says, *"the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk"* he is using an expression that is similar to the way Canaan was described when Israel entered the land under the leadership of Joshua. Then it was called a *"land flowing with milk and honey."* Milk represents grassy pastures that support cattle and the production of milk, while honey is collected by bees from the flowering trees. Joel uses the expression:

"the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk."

The vines represent agriculture and the milk represents pastures for cattle.

ISRAEL'S ENEMIES WILL BE DESTROYED

"Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land" (Joel 3:19).

Egypt is the largest of the Arab nations and has led the attacks on Israel since 1948 when Israel became a nation. Daniel wrote that the Tribulation will begin with an attack from the *"king of the south"* which will be repulsed

by the combined forces of Antichrist (Dan. 11:40-43) and Israel (Isa. 19:17) for Israel will have a covenant with the revived Roman Empire immediately after the Rapture of the Church. Isaiah provides a lot of detail about this Egyptian attack and the devastation that will follow. The only bright spot in the account is that many Egyptians will turn to the Lord at that time (Isa. 19:18-25), probably as a result of the testimony of some of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses who will be sealed as the servants of God to preach the Gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 24:14) at the outset of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:1-4).

Edom located on Israel's south-east, is today a part of Jordan and will also be desolated in the Tribulation. The reason for God's vengeance on both of these countries is **their treatment of Israel**.

Isaiah described the destruction of the land of Edom in the last days:

"For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment... For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever" (Isa. 34:5-10).

The Arab neighbours of Israel will pay a heavy price for their treatment of the Jews. The Arab wars, the Intafadas, the stabbings, car and suicide bombings must be judged (Zech. 12:9). During the Tribulation when Israel turns to the Lord, God will fight for His people and there will be amazing military victories against *"all the people round about."* God has said:

*"In **that day** will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left" (Zech. 12:6).*

THE LORD WILL REIGN IN ZION

Israel's wars will be over when Christ returns and she will occupy an exalted place in the kingdom of Christ. The pardoned nation will **never again stray** from the Lord and the glory of God will lighten Jerusalem to such an extent that the kings of the earth will come to Jerusalem to see it (Isa. 60:1-3).

Jews will be highly honoured by the Gentiles such that

"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,

saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you"
(Zech. 8:23).

After Christ returns, transport will be provided by the Gentiles to bring every Jew back to the land with their possessions:

"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. Gentile nations will rebuild Israel's cities" (Isa. 60:9).

The twelve Apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28) and the law of the Lord will go out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Isa. 2:3). All nations will serve Israel and *"the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee (Israel) shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted"* (Isa. 60:12).

The throne of David will be re-established in fulfilment of Amos 9:11, Ezekiel 21:27, and the promise of Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:32-33). Joel concludes his prophecy with the words:

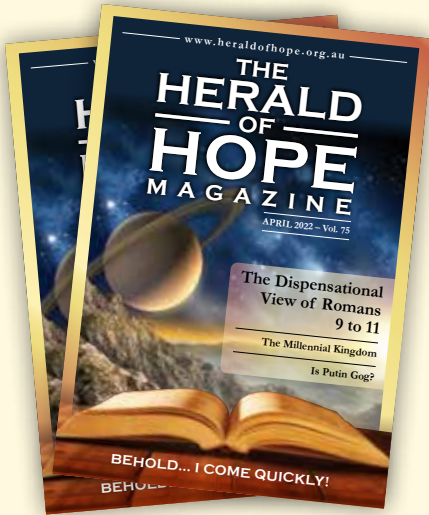
*"But Judah shall dwell **for ever**, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: **for the LORD dwelleth in Zion**" (Joel 3:20-21).*

Thus, Joel gives us the final chapter in the history of Israel during the seven-year period that immediately precedes the return of Christ to this earth. He opens the door into the glorious kingdom of God over which Christ will reign as the King of Israel and the King of kings.

LOOK UP! OUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH

In 2019 we see Russia's military forces in Syria; Iran has her troops in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, and Turkey is supporting rebels fighting the Syrian army. In these last days, Russia and Islamic nations are coming together for the invasion of Israel early in the Tribulation but **the Rapture must come first**. Israel's conversion occurs at the time of the Russian invasion so the Church must depart beforehand. The Rapture must be very near. Even so, Come Lord Jesus!

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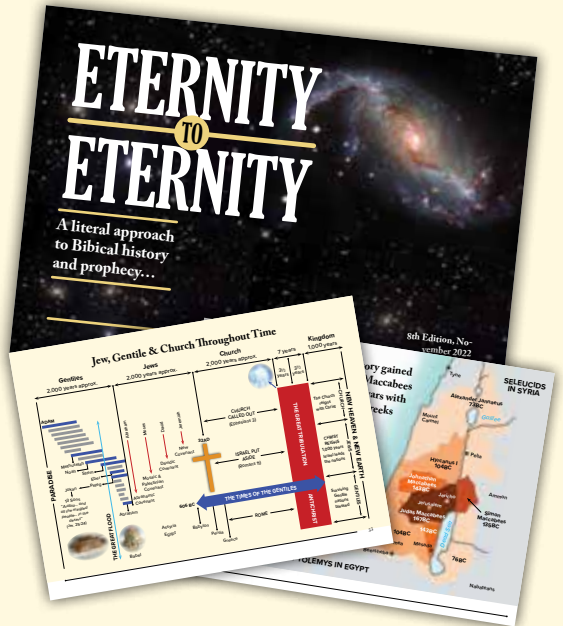


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Joel's prophecy is one of the last of the twelve minor prophets and has as its focus Israel in the Tribulation.

Two wars are featured in Joel's prophecy.

The first war is an invasion by a northern army in the first half of the Tribulation which brings Israel to repentance (Ch. 2).

The second war is led by Antichrist in the second half of the Tribulation and is generally referred to as Armageddon (Ch. 3).

The book concludes with the fury of the Lord poured out on Israel's enemies as the Lord returns and reigns from Jerusalem.

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