
Joel

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INTRODUCTION

Author and Date

The author is 'Joel,' "Jehovah is God;" and the only distinguishing personal fact presented is the name of his father, 'Pethuel.' Conservative scholars date Joel circa 835 to 800 BC. Others assert that Joel is definitely post-exilic and place the date as late as the 4th century BC. However, this sort of incoherence, at once engaging and suggestive of a deeper wisdom, cannot be supported; indeed, the dissemination of such nonsense denies the interior distinctions, the very eschatological references of the book, and demotes the prophecies of the book to historical hindsight.

What is definitely known about the book of Joel is: Joel was the earliest of the prophets, a contemporary of Homer. And while Homer wrote about the past, the Trojan Wars of the 12th century BC, Joel wrote to his day and to the future. The immediate problem of his day was an infestation of locusts; the future problems were those of 200 years later, i.e., the Assyrians, and the undated/unknown time of the Tribulation and the King of the North.

The outline of the book is as follows:

A. Symbols of the Day of the Lord (chapter 1)

1. Plague and drought (1:1-14)
2. Starvation and fire (1:15-20)

B. Events of the Day of the Lord (chapters 2,3)

1. The army from the north (2:1-10)
2. The army of the Lord (2:11)
3. The remnant's repentance (2:12-17)
4. The remnant's acceptance (2:18-27)
5. The remnant's blessing (2:28-32)
6. The restoration of Israel (3:1)

7. The judgment of the nations (3:2-16)

8. The establishment of the kingdom (3:17-21)¹

Joel 1:1 "The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel."

To summarize Joel 1:1: Joel's name means 'Jehovah is God' in the Hebrew, and is specifically a reference to Jesus Christ as the Shekinah glory, the revealed member of God. Other than his father's name, Pethuel ('graciousness of Jehovah'), we are given no information about Joel. However, both Isaiah and Amos quote him and almost all of the prophets use his technical-prophetic vocabulary. Thus, the emphasis is placed on the message of Joel, and not on the person of Joel. And the principle is this: God does not need Joel to sustain His Plan, but Joel needs God to sustain anything.²

Again, Joel was the earliest of the prophets and the only prophet who was pre-Assyrian. Joel's prophetic ministry was to the southern kingdom, Judah, during the regency period ascribed to Joash, 837-800 BC. In Joel's day a national and world-wide catastrophe took place: a locust plague. The locusts then became the foundation of Joel's prophecies, i.e., Joel used the attack of the locusts as an analogy to the forthcoming attack of Assyria, and the Tribulational attack of the King of the North. The principle is this: according to Leviticus 26:14ff., God uses national disasters to warn apostate nations.³

In Joel's time, circa 800 BC, the disaster was an economic/agricultural famine. Two hundred years later it would be the aggression of the Assyrian Empire (Deuteronomy 28:15,17,18,23-26).

Evidence that the book of Joel is pre-exilic is found in the quotations in Amos and Isaiah.

Amos 1:2 quotes Joel 3:16; Amos 9:13 quotes Joel 3:18; Isaiah 13:6 quotes Joel 1:15. And as scholars date Amos' ministry to the northern kingdom as 810-745 BC, the quotations necessarily place Joel

¹Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Survey of the Bible.

²Thieme, Robert. Joel; from notes. This is a paraphrase of a principle expounded by Robert Thieme.

³Ibid..

as prior to Amos. Additionally, no reference to a king in Judah during Joel's ministry parallels the infancy/regency period of Joash. This, too, sustains the date ascribed above to Joel.

Assyria

Assyria was a country located east of the Tigris River; the capital was Ashur (Assur, Asshur, Ashshur), from which the entire country derived its name. The Assyrian Empire encompassed a large mass of land. The Assyrians were an ethnic blending of Hurrians, Sumerians, and Semites. And the Assyrian culture fused elements of the Babylonians, the Hittites, and the Hurrians.

From approximately 1950 BC to 1850 BC Assyria was ruled by the Babylonians. Then in circa 1800 BC, the area came under Amorite rule, then successively under the hegemony of the Hittites, the Egyptians, and the Hurrians. However, Assyria proper began to assert and consolidate itself in 1380 BC, and in 1280 BC Shalmaneser I established his capital at Calah (Kalhu), a few miles south of Nineveh. Shortly thereafter a period of weakness took place, but Assyria eventually regained military and political pre-eminence under Ashur-dan I, circa 1150 BC. And during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, circa 1110 BC, Assyria attained greatness through foreign conquests and internal reforms; and under Tiglath-pileser I the capital city was once more Ashur.

For the next two centuries, from 1100 to 900 BC, the nation of Assyria faded almost to extinction; and it was during this decline that David and Solomon ascended. Around 900 BC Assyria again began to revive itself. Tulkulti-Ninurta II, then Ashur-nasir-pal (who was cruel beyond imagining), then Shalmaneser III, each in succession made Assyrian larger and stronger. The latter king, Shalmaneser III, was the first Assyrian to come in contact with Israel as a nation. Shalmaneser III forcefully impacted history: he invaded Urartu (Armenia), captured Carchemish and in 853 BC fought the battle of Karkar, where he encountered the axis of Ben-hadad of Damascus, his allies, and Ahab, king of Samaria. Ten years later Shalmaneser III received tribute payments from both Tyre and Sidon and king Jehu of Samaria. Shalmaneser's son, Shamshi-adad V married Semiramis, who ruled so successfully as regent for her son Adad-nirari III. Finally, in 782 BC, Assyria once more suffered reversals.

Then, in 746 BC, after the ministry of Jonah, Pul or Tiglath-pileser III came to the throne and the period of the Second Empire began. Pul was followed by Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esar-haddon and Ashurbanipal. The last ruler of Assyria was Shin-shar-ishkun; he died when Nabopolassar, king of Babylonia, and Cyaxeres, king of the Medes, destroyed Nineveh in 612 BC. And after 605 BC, the Assyrians ceased to exist.

Joel 1:2 "Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your forefathers?"

Here, in verse 2, Joel commands the hearing of the elders and the people who live in the land. The king, Joash, and his court are not mentioned because Joash is an infant, and the elders "appear in the book of Joel in 1:14 (cf. 2:16; 3:1) as the real leadership group."⁴

The elders, then, are functioning as regents for Joash. Additionally, Joel demands that those who live in the land also listen to his words. And the 'land' refers to Judah and Jerusalem.

From the initial question "has anything like this ever happened?", Joel cites the incredible phenomena of the locust induced famines.

Joel 1:3 "Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation."

Joel instructs the Jews to teach their children, etc., about not only the locust plagues but about his prophecies concerning the Assyrians and the Tribulational King of the North.

To know it, it must be taught.

Prophecy

The concept of prophecy includes *dual fulfillment* of prophecy: near fulfillment and far fulfillment. Thus prophecy includes the prediction of future events and prediction was a definite part of the prophet's intent, but prophecy also includes the aspects of the present and the past. It can be seen, then, that the prophet is not only a *foreteller* but a *forthteller*. He speaks *for*, or in behalf of God.⁵

⁴Wolff, Hans Walter. Joel and Amos; page 25.

Joel 1:4 “What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.”

Here, in verse 4, Joel lists four literal locust infestations, each of which caused total economic/agricultural devastation. And Joel, in a prophetic (foretelling) sense, will equate each infestation with a future Assyrian king.

The Locusts⁶

Four different types of locusts are mentioned by Joel in verse 4, chapter 1:

1. GAZAM, which means ‘to cut off,’ and refers to the locusts that eat the tops off the stalks of plants. This type of locust has been called the ‘gnawing locust,’ or ‘the devourer,’ and has no wings. The eschatological (future) reference is to Tiglath-pileser III, also known as Pul, the Assyrian king.
2. ‘ARBEH, which means ‘to increase,’ this type of locust eats the stalks of the plants. It has been called ‘the swarming’ locust. The eschatological reference is to Sargon II, an aristocrat unlike his predecessor, Tiglath-pileser III, who was a commoner. Sargon II founded the Sargonid Dynasty.
3. YELEK, which means ‘to lick up,’ and designates the locust that eats the stub of the stalk. The eschatological reference is to the Assyrian king Sennacherib.
4. CHASIL, which means ‘to devour,’ and denotes the locust that eats the root of the plant. And eschatologically, the term refers to Esar-haddon.⁷

Locusts belong to the order called Orthoptera, and include grasshoppers. True locusts, or jumping grasshoppers are migratory and belong to the family Acrididae. There are 23,000 different

species of locusts. And they cause great damage to crops wherever they swarm. Modern control measures include poison bait, the plowing under of locust eggs, airplane sprayed insecticides and truck-mounted poisonous mist blowers. When locusts swarm, the numbers are estimated to be in the hundreds of millions.

A few Scripture references are: “They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.” Judges 6:5.

“They will chop down her forest,’ declares the Lord, ‘dense though it be. They are more numerous than locusts, they cannot be counted.’” Jeremiah 46:23

“Locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks.: Proverbs 30:27

To demonstrate how destructive locust infestations can be, Gustaf Dalman wrote:⁸ “In Jerusalem the locusts appeared at that time in flights lasting for hours, like clouds from the northeast and south, from the 22nd to the 27th of March.....At the end of May and the beginning of June the first hatching of eggs, deposited by them into the ground, appeared as wingless larvae..., which wander about and eat up everything green that they encounter. Wild growth, grain, the leaves of fig trees, vines, even olive trees, everything disappears where they move along. They cover the walls of houses, penetrate to the inside through doors and windows, just as Exodus 10:5f assumes. Following a sixfold shedding, the wings appear after approximately two months, and twenty days later they fly on..., to invade other regions.”

Joel 1:5 “Wake up you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine; wail because of the wine, for it has been snatched from your lips.”

This is the wine of the new vintage that has not yet been put in containers. And Judah is a nation of alcoholics in Joel’s day. The result of the locust infestations is the destruction of all crops and vegetation. There is no more beer, no more wine, no more grain-based alcohols. These Jews were not interested in God’s word; they were bored,

⁵Thieme, Robert. Joel; from notes. Paraphrase of principles propounded by Robert Thieme.

⁶Thieme, Robert. Joel; from notes. The designation and definition of these terms was originally posed by Robert Thieme.

⁷Isaiah 7-11 speak specifically of Tiglath-pileser III; Isaiah 20:1 speaks of Sargon II; and Isaiah 36-39 and II Kings 18

speak of Sennacherib. Esarhaddon is mentioned in Ezra 4:2.

⁸Dalman, Gustaf. Arbeit 1/2, 393f (based on Israel Aharoni’s description of the locust plague of 1915-16).

their lives were tedious. Through lack of God's word in their souls they had no capacity for life. Indeed, boredom and frustration caused them seek escape through alcohol.

When these people awaken from the ignorance of their drunken stupors they will "weep and wail" because there is no more wine. They will no longer be able to evade reality.

Verse five brings up two concepts: drinking and crying. These will be briefly covered now, because the topics occur throughout the book of Joel, and for that matter, throughout the Old Testament.

Drinking and Drunkenness

Drunkenness is a sin according to Scripture: Proverbs 20:1, 23:20, Isaiah 5:11,22, 28:7-8, Romans 13:13, I Corinthians 5:11, Ephesians 5:18. And the following professions are singled out for specific and special warning against drunkenness: *Kings or government leaders*, Proverbs 31:4,5; *Pastors or priests*, I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7; *Deacons*, I Timothy 3:8.

Examples of drunkenness and the harmful results therefrom are found in: Genesis 9:21, which is the story of Noah. I Samuel 25:36,37, which relates the story of Nabal. Ephraim's drunkenness is narrated in Isaiah 28:1, and the depravity of Lot is attributable to drunkenness in Genesis 19:32-36.

Scripture does, however, allow drinking in moderation. In fact the following medical benefits are ascribed to small amounts of alcohol by Scripture: the brain and nervous system are relaxed by alcohol; alcohol is described as good for the stomach and the appetite; and red wine is recommended to improve circulation (the cardiovascular system). Citations are: Proverbs 31:6,7, and I Timothy 5:23.

When abused, alcohol has very detrimental effects. Abuse leads to impulsive and violent behavior, and it removes normal inhibitions and clouds ratiocinative capabilities. Too much alcohol may cause the following diseases: Wernicke's disease, Marchiafava-Bignani's disease, Cirrhosis, Delirium tremens, and Korsakoff's psychosis.

In John 2:1-11, our Lord turned water into wine. Many would cite this passage as support for drinking; however, it neither condones nor condemns drinking. All it does is report a miracle. And the miracle was intended to

demonstrate the power and Person of the Son of God, i.e., that He was the God-Man, the unique Person of the universe. Additionally, the miracle portrayed the power of the "water of the word" in the life of the believer, Ephesians 5:26, and also depicts the true soul happiness that the "water of the word" produces, just as wine produces a giddy feeling in the mind, Judges 9:13 and Psalm 104:15.

The books of Joel and Isaiah assert that extensive misuse of alcohol in a nation brings about not only natural consequences, but also discipline from God. Joel 1:4 relates alcoholism to economic disaster, while Joel 1:5 relates alcohol to individual failure, yearning and rage. And both Joel 1:6 and Isaiah 28:1,7-9 relate alcoholism to national failure and foreign domination.

The Law of Love, the Law of Expediency, and the Law of Supreme Sacrifice, all of which are mentioned in I Cor. 8:1-10, provide direction that drinking should be curtailed under certain conditions: when offending other believers, when evangelizing unbelievers, and when any bona fide ministry might be disadvantaged.

Jeremiah 13, verses 12 through 17, make the remarkable statement that drunkenness is associated with apostasy. How and why? Because drunkenness is a violation of God's word, and such a violation *may* be indicative of insufficient love for God.

Thus, partaking of alcoholic beverages should be accompanied by large amounts of common sense, such as: teenagers should avoid all alcohol as maturity is necessary for restraint; women should avoid alcohol when in the company of strangers; alcohol should be avoided when one is irritated or worried; and the old adage "never drink alone" is still true; and alcohol should be avoided while working, hunting, fishing, firing weapons, driving, flying, or operating machinery and, in any unusual circumstances.⁹

Tears and Lamentations

In our passage in Joel, wailing is indicative of confusion and distraction from God and God's word. It is a symptom of soul misery and self-pity. However, Scripture sanctions crying and weeping in certain conditions. The chief example of justifiable tears is found in the tears of our

⁹Thieme, Robert. *Doubtful Things In Corinth*; page 35, 1974. Revised and altered by R. E. Radic.

Lord. Scripture records three instances in which He wept:

1. John 11:35, here our Lord wept at the tomb of Lazarus. These were tears of loss, love and compassion.
2. Luke 19:41, where our Lord cried for the city of Jerusalem because He knew that it would be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. His tears were those of compassion and love.
3. Hebrews 5:7, which says, "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission." This is a reference to His crying on the Cross because of the intense pain He felt, a pain that we will never feel -- the pain of bearing our sins.

Thus, weeping is sanctioned as an expression of sorrow, I Thess. 4:13; because of compassion, John 11:35; as an expression of faith in God, Psalm 30:5; anguish over one's nation, Jeremiah 9:1; and as the result of physical pain, Revelation 21:4.

Nevertheless, weeping is not justified according to Scripture under other conditions:

because of personal failure, II Samuel 14:24,28, 18:33, 19:1-4, where David not only had sorrow (which is acceptable) but regrets; because of devastation, I Samuel 30:4, Joel 1:5; because of embarrassment and arrogance, Ezra 3:12,13; or because of obstacles, Numbers 14:1.

According to Matthew 8:12, 25:30, and Luke 13:28, unbelievers will weep and gnash their teeth at the last judgment. And I Corinthians 14:32, states that pastors should not cry in the pulpit. They are to be in control of themselves.

Weeping because of extreme soul happiness, i.e., love, weddings, faith, is classified as "private" or "secret" weeping and is permissible. Psalm 30:5, Luke 7:38.

Finally, Revelation 21:4 and Isaiah 30:19, declare that there will be no crying, weeping or wailing in heaven, in eternity.¹⁰

Near Fulfillment: the Locust Infestations and the Assyrians

Joel 1:6-7 "A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness. 7 It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white."

In verses 6 and 7, Joel compares the locust infestations with the advance of the Assyrian Empire of the future. Both entities are horribly destructive. Here and in verse 10 we have an example of *prosopoeia* or *personification*.

Joel 1:8 "Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the husband of her youth."

Here Joel describes the misery and sorrow of the people as the Assyrians invade Judah in the future. Their misery is compared to that of a young widow who has lost her husband after marrying him, but before they have physically consummated the marriage. In other words, this is bona fide sorrow. And an analogy exists between the virgin and Judah: like the virgin, the Jews have married the Lord, but they have not made love to Him.

Joel 1:9 "Grain offerings and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests are in mourning, those who minister before the Lord."

In verse 9, as a result of the military invasion by the Assyrians, the religious life of the Jews will cease. The priests will be idled and mourn; the sacrifices will cease, the teaching of Christ through the representative analogies of the Levitical offerings will stop. And two specific offerings are mentioned: the MINCHAH, which was the meat or meal offering, and the NESEC, which was the libation or drink offering. The Christological implications of both these offerings clearly portray Christ with an emphasis on propitiation (satisfaction).

¹⁰Thieme, Robert. Crying in Scripture; from notes, 1970; revised and altered by R. E. Radic.

Joel 1:10-12 “The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up; the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails. ¹¹ Despair, you farmers, wail, you vine growers; grieve for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field is destroyed. ¹² The vine is dried up and the fig tree is withered; the pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree -- all the trees of the field -- are dried up. Surely the joy of mankind is withered away.”

The grain, the wine, and the oil were all necessary for the offerings of verse 9. When the products of the land are destroyed, either by locusts or armies, other activities are also affected. Not only will there be starvation, death, disease, famine, and plague, but there are no luxuries, and there are no sacrifices for the altars.

Joel 1:13,14 “Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God. ¹⁴ Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.”

Joel says that because of a lack of interest in God and God’s word, Judah should prepare itself for discipline from God. They should cry and wear sackcloth. Joel tells them to call for a fast, i.e., a period of concentrated prayer and reflection upon God’s word. This is what they should have been doing -- thinking about God. In the future, however, they will, because of the dire circumstances, command people to think about God and pray.

The ‘elders,’ again, are those who rule for the infant king, Joash.

They are “to cry to the Lord.” Here, crying is not weeping; this is the cry of confession of sin by those who are believers, and the cry of belief or faith by those who are unbelievers. They are to recognize God, His grace, His plan, His saving work.

Joel 1:15-20 Far Fulfillment: the King of the North

Joel 1:15 “What a dreadful day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.”

“The day of the Lord” is a technical, theological designation. This phrase occurs five different times in the book of Joel. And in this construct expression the word “day” refers both to a very distinct extent of time and a very distinct event in time “whose nature is determined by the associated personal name.” ¹¹ The term refers to the last half (3 and one-half years) of the Tribulation (it may and does include the Second Advent, and the Millennial reign of Christ). Thus, the event is the Tribulation and the extent of time is 3 and one-half years, including Armageddon.

Joel states that “it is near.” This phrase means that it will come at its appointed time in history -- a time appointed by, and known only to, God. And the phrase “destruction from the Almighty,” refers to the permissive will of God, i.e., the invasion of the Tribulational King of the North is allowed by God.

The Hebrew terms for “destruction” and “Almighty” are *dw* and *ydw*, respectively. This is a powerful example of *paronomasia*. Two terms of similar sound are placed side by side; thus two ideas are presented and emphasized. “It shall come as a destruction (k’shod) from the Almighty (mish-shaddai). The awful nature of that day is emphasized by this figure, and our attention is directed to the fact that Destruction comes from the all-bountiful One! It is like “the wrath of the Lamb,” of which we read in Rev. 6:16,17.”¹²

In other words, blessings and discipline come from the same Omnipotent God. The One who provides the blessings through perfect righteousness and perfect justice also provides tremendous discipline and destruction because of these same attributes.

Joel 1:15, then, introduces the Tribulation, Armageddon, and the King of the North. These particulars will now be discussed under the general concept of Armageddon.

¹¹Wolff, Hans Walter. Joel and Amos; page 33.

¹²Bullinger, E. W. Figures of Speech; page 313.

Armageddon

The word 'Armageddon' is the Greek form of the Hebrew HAR MEGIDDO, which means the hill or city of Megiddo, and is a hill which is pregnant at the southern end of the Plain of Esdraelon (also called Jezreel). This is the great plain that intersects Palestine immediately north of Carmel. It was here that Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites (Judges 4:15) and that Gideon defeated the Midianites (Judges 7). Additionally, this is where King Saul died in battle against the Philistines, at the battle of Gilboa (I Samuel 31:8), and where Josiah died in battle against the Egyptians under the command of Pharaoh Necho (II Kings 23:29,30; II Chronicles 35:22). Napoleon said that all the armies of the world could maneuver on this plain at the same time.

Our Lord spoke of the Tribulation in his dialogue on the Mount of Olives, commonly called the Olivet Discourse. Matthew 24:21,22, read, "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

So here in the NIV translation the phrase "great distress" refers to the Tribulation. Jeremiah 30:4-7 calls the Tribulation "the time of Jacob's trouble" and compares it to a female's "birth-pangs." Ezekiel 20:34-38 calls the Tribulation that time when Israel will "pass under the rod." And Ezekiel 22:19-22, Zechariah 13:9 and Malachi 3:1-3 call the Tribulation God's "melting pot." Isaiah 10:5, 13:5, 26:20 and Daniel 8:19 call the Tribulation "the indignation." And in Daniel 9:20-27, the Tribulation is called "Daniel's Seventieth Week. Here, each week is a prophetic week and each week refers to 7 years. So 490 years total. This 490 year time span began in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:1,5,6). And 483 years later (69 of the 70 weeks), our Lord rode into Jerusalem and was hailed as the promised Son of David (Matthew 21:8,9). This was "Palm Sunday."¹³

Thus, it can be seen that after the Cross one week (the 70th week), or seven years, still remains to the Jews. Between week 69 and 70, God has inserted the present Church Age. This Church Age exists

¹³This exposition of 'Daniel's Seventieth Week' is based on the scholarship of Robert Thieme, Clarence Larkin, and E. W.

Bullinger.

to call out the Bride of Christ, because as He is seated at the right hand of God, the God-Man is alone in his human portion. Thus a Royal Bride and Royal Family is being called out for Him. He, of course, takes precedence over all, thus this interruption of history is not unusual. But the final 7 years still remain -- Daniel's Seventieth Week. This is the Tribulation!

The Tribulation is also the time of Satan's recklessness, what Robert Thieme has called "the time of Satan's desperation." This is because Satan knows doctrine and knows that his time is running out. Exacerbating the problems are two other factors:

1. The removal of the Church Age believers at the Rapture of the Church, I Thessalonians 4:13-18.
2. The removal of the restraining ministry of God the Holy Spirit, II Thessalonians 2:6,7.¹⁴

The seven years of the Tribulation will be divided in half. The first half is a period of political maneuvers by four power-seats, called the Kings of the North, South, East and West in the Bible. During this first half, anti-Jewish sentiments will be prevalent and crime will predominate. The second half of the Tribulation is characterized by Satan's attempt to destroy Palestine, Jerusalem and the Jews. To accomplish this, he causes the four power-seats to converge on Jerusalem.

The Four Power-seats

Joel 1:6 introduced the prophecy of the King of the North. Daniel 11:40 also refers to the King of the North, and calls this King of the North "the king of fierce countenance" in Daniel 8:23. Isaiah 10:24 calls him the "Assyrian," and the "overflowing scourge" in Isaiah 28:15. In Ezekiel 38:2 and 39:1, he is called "Gog of the land of Magog." It is important not to confuse this phrase with the "Gog and Magog" of Revelation 20:8, which refers to all of Satan's gentile proselyte followers at the end of the Millennium and their rebellion.

The Kings of the East are referred to in Daniel 11:44, and are called the "kings of the sunrising" in Revelation 16:12.

The King of the West refers to the ruler or dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

¹⁴Bullinger, E. W. Commentary on Revelation.

Thieme, Robert. Revelation; from notes.

Revelation 16:13 states, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." This verse explains the evil motivations of the various kings, north, south, east and west. The three unclean spirits are KOSMOKRATOR demons, and are referred to in Daniel 10:13. These demons, at the command of Satan, 'possess' political leaders so that Satan's plans might reach fruition.

The dragon: the dragon is Satan himself. Satan himself empowers the King of the West, also called the "man of sin," and referred to in II Thessalonians 2:4. And Revelation 12:7-9 identifies Satan as the dragon.

The beast: the beast is referred to in Revelation 13:1,2, where he is called the "beast out of the sea." He is called the "feet of the image" in Daniel 2:31-45, and the "little horn" in Daniel 7:8, also "the prince that shall come" in Daniel 9:26,27, and the "god of forces" in Daniel 11:38, the "man of sin" in II Thessalonians 2:3-10, and the "scarlet beast" in Revelation 17:3. He is, then, the King of the West, the ruler of the Revived Roman Empire. He has "ten horns" in Daniel 7:7,8,23,24; these horns denote his power over a ten nation entity called the Revived Roman Empire. He is also the religious leader of this ten nation entity. In Revelation 17:2-12 he, the king of the West, is the "seventh head" or "mountain." The seven heads are those nations throughout history who have attacked Israel: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the future King of the West, the Revived Roman Empire. And as the "seventh head" he is the beast or little horn found in Daniel 7:8,24, where he gains control over three horns (nations) of the ten horns (nations) and thus comes to rule all ten nations and form the Revived Roman Empire.¹⁵

And Revelation 13:7 says that the beast will be given permission to persecute the saints and to kill them. And he will, according to Revelation 17:14, make war on the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will destroy him at Armageddon.

The false prophet: is described in Revelation 13:11, "And I saw another beast coming up out of

the land; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon." This is the "false prophet" of Revelation 19:20, 20:10; he is the ruler of the Jews in the Tribulation. He is also called "the willful king" in Daniel 11:36-40, and "the idol shepherd" in Zechariah 11:15-17. He comes "out of the land (Palestine or Israel)" while the first beast came out of "the sea (the Gentile nations)." This false prophet comes in the form of a lamb, i.e., he presents himself as the Messiah -- and he is not! That is why he is false! And his two horns speak of his two false Messianic claims: king and prophet. This second beast or false prophet is empowered by Satan and deceives by miracles and directs the Jews to worship the first beast, the king of the West, according to Revelation 13:12-18. Again, this is why he is called the false prophet; and his is the number 666.¹⁶

The Abomination of Desolation

At the beginning of the Tribulation, the false prophet, the ruler of the Jews in Israel makes a pact with the King of the West (the beast out of the sea). He does this in hopes of preserving his power. However, in the middle of the Tribulation (the 70th week, the last 7 years of the Age of Israel), the King of the West, who is 'possessed' by Satan himself, abrogates the pact. He, the king of the West, demands that he be worshipped as God and that all Jewish forms of worship cease (Daniel 12:11). This is when "the abomination of desolation," which is a statue of the King of the West, is erected in the Temple in the Holy of Holies (Revelation 13:15).

The erection of this statue is a sign to the Jewish believers of the Tribulation. They are to flee to the mountains. Matthew 24:15 and 16 say, "When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads these words let him understand them) then let those who are in Judaea flee into the mountains."

And Revelation 12:14 says, "And to the woman (Israel) were given two wings of a great eagle (divine protection from God), so that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is safe for a time (one year), and times (two years), and half a time (one-half a year), from the face of the serpent."

¹⁵This exposition is extracted from the scholarship of E. W. Bullinger, Clarence Larkin, and Robert Thieme. From notes,

handwritten, undated.

¹⁶Ibid.

World War and the Battle of Armageddon

Daniel 11:40, reads, "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push (make war) at him (false prophet, the ruler of the Jews): and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he (the king of the north) shall enter into the countries and shall overflow and pass over them."

We see then that the king of the southern power seat decides to attack Palestine. Simultaneously, the king of the north is moving through the Middle East on his way to engulf Africa. The king of the north has both land armies and navies at his command. And the phrase "overflow and pass through" seems to indicate that the king of the north moves quickly and decisively through the area.¹⁷

Daniel 11:41 reads, "He (the king of the north) shall invade also into the beautiful land (middle east), and many countries (including Israel) shall be conquered: but these (Jewish believers) shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon."

Since the military goal of the king of the north is north Africa, Egypt, he passes rapidly through Palestine. Thus, those Jews who obeyed Matthew 24:16, and fled to the mountains, remain in safety.

Daniel 11:42 reads, "He (the king of the north) will shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries (of north Africa): and the land of Egypt will not escape." He takes Egypt.

Daniel 11:43 reads, "But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans (his naval forces from the Mediterranean and the west) and the Ethiopians (his land armies driving toward central Africa) shall be at his steps." So the king of the north, also called Gog (Ezekiel 38:2), is ready to conquer Africa when God intervenes.

Revelation 16:2 says, "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." In other words, the kings of the east now enter Palestine.

Daniel 11:44 reads, "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he (the king of the north) will go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away (to wipe out) many (the Jews in Jerusalem)."

So we have the armies of the kings of the east penetrating to Idumea (Isaiah 63), and we have the king of the south entering Palestine; and to the north, in the valley of Esdraelon, the army of the king of the West (Revived Roman Empire) is descending upon Jerusalem.

So the king of the north, who is down in Africa, must reverse his line of march and return to Palestine so that he might protect his lines of supply. So "with great fury" he turns for Jerusalem. Remember, the King of the West seeks to protect his statue in the Holy of Holies.

Daniel 11:45 says, "And he (the king of the north) will plant the tabernacles of his palace (his army headquarters) between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Zion); yet he will come to his end, and none shall help him." So we see that he returns to Palestine and sets up headquarters on the western escarpment of Jerusalem.

Joel 2:2-9 describes the king of the north's attack on Jerusalem. It is like the attack of the locust infestations: devastating. The king of the north contacts great prosperity, but leaves only desolation behind, just as the locusts, and just as Satan in the original Garden of Eden.

Thus we have the four power-seats of the future, north, south, east and west; the armies of the entire world are descending upon Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12 relates the attack against the Jerusalem of the Tribulation from the perspective of the believing Jews living and fighting in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12:2 says, "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of intoxication to all the people (the four armies) round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." Here, the Jews are depicted as a cup of strong wine; the invading armies will drink of this wine and become intoxicated. This wine is the wrath of God poured out upon these armies.

Zechariah 12:3 says, "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people (the four armies): all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it."

¹⁷Thieme, Robert. Revelation; from notes taken in 1970's, undated.

Zechariah 14:1 and 2 state, "Behold the day of the Lord approaches, and your wealth will be divided in the middle of you. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women raped; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity (unbelieving Jews), but the residue of the people (the believing remnant) will not be cut off from the city (they will be safe)."

Remember, Jesus Christ controls history.¹⁸ He allows this to happen.

Zechariah 12:5 and 6 say, "And the governors of Judah will say in their heart, the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be my strength in the Lord of the armies (hosts) their God. 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: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem." These governors, then, are believers and those who stand with them are believing Jews. They stand and fight, trusting in God.

Remember, the king of the north is on the western escarpment of the city; the king of the west is on the Valley of Megiddo in the Plain of Esdraelon. The kings of the east are on Jehoshaphat's Valley to the east, and Scripture does not relate where the kings of the south are.

Then, then when the world is attacking the believing Jews and all hope is lost -- supernatural darkness! Matthew 24:29 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Isaiah 60:2, says, "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people..."

Zechariah 12:4 says, "In that day (the day of the Lord), saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with shock: and I will open my eyes (divine favor and blessing) upon the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the people with blindness." Total darkness and total confusion of the four armies. No one can see, no

computers work, no information is available -- men begin to go mad with fear.

Isaiah 13:6-9, compared with Luke 21:25 and 26 says, "Howl; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore will all hands be faint, and every man's heart will melt: and they will be afraid: pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in child-bearing: they will be amazed at each other (total shock); their faces shall be as flames. Behold the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and anger, lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners on it."

Just as the darkness of the Cross provided salvation for all believers, so this darkness preserves the Jewish believers of the Tribulation.

Then, unexpectedly and suddenly, from within the all encompassing supernatural darkness, there appears the only thing that can pierce such darkness -- supernatural light. Zechariah 14:6 and 7 put it thusly, "On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime (no light whatsoever) -- a day known only to the Lord. When evening comes (that time of day at which evening would normally occur), there will be light."

And Psalm 97:2-6 describe that day, the day of the Lord, as follows: "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goes in front of him, and burns up his enemies round about. His lightnings light up the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord....and all the people see his glory."

And Revelation 1:7 describes our Lord's return: "Look, he is coming with the clouds (saints in their resurrection bodies), and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen."

So we see that as our Lord descends from the Third Heaven, the Abode of God, everyone will see him, for His is the Light of the world. Christ himself said in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows (believes) me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

This supernatural light, visible to all, is the return of our Lord at the Second Advent. He returns to render judgment. Zechariah 14:3 says, "Then the

¹⁸Thieme, Robert. The phrase "Jesus Christ controls history" while perhaps not exclusive to, probably was first uttered by

Robert Thieme.

Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle."

The Lord will fight and deliver! For just as Moses said at the Red Sea, "Stand and watch the deliverance of the Lord!" And just as the Jews were delivered at the Red Sea in Exodus 14:10-14, so will the believers of the Tribulation generation be delivered. For Zechariah 14:4 states, "On that day (the day of the Lord, the Second Advent) his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south." Therefore, just as the Red Sea parted so Moses and the Exodus generation could escape, so will the Mount of Olives part. The Mount of Olives is the first place that His feet will touch the earth and it will part and the believers in Jerusalem during the Tribulation that are fighting against overwhelming odds will escape in the valley created by the rending asunder of the mountain.¹⁹

Here, then, is the return of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the Ancient of Days, the Stone cut without hands, David's Greater Son, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Revelation 19:11-16 speak eloquently of His coming: "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one but he himself knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. 'He will rule them with an iron scepter.' (Psalm 2:9) He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Throughout the ancient world the 'white horse' was the symbol of conquest and victory. And He is true to His Word and Faithful, and He will deliver His own, both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. And He does this through Righteous judgment, violence and death.

And His judgments are correct, right, just and true! For He is the very God. And those that are judged at this future day are unbelievers who have, without exception, had each and every chance to believe, but who have rejected Him repeatedly.

The armies that accompany Him at his return are the Elect Angels, the Old Testament Saints, those saints who have died (martyred) during the Tribulation, and the saints of the Church Age. References to these groups are found in I Thessalonians 3:13 and Jude 14. And all these saints will stand and watch. Our Lord Jesus Christ will do all the fighting and all the judging. And His only weapon is the "sharp sword" of Revelation 19:15; this sword is His spoken word. The "winepress" refers to the tremendous crushing power of these words: the devastation is total and complete.

Continuing in Revelation 19:17. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven (the first heaven - the atmosphere which surrounds the earth), Come and gather yourselves together at the supper of the great God." This angel announces the destruction of the Beast and all his allies. The angel calls those carrion-birds such as vultures to prepare for a feast of dead bodies. Ezekiel 39, the entire chapter, and specifically verses 17-22, provide the prophet's description of this scene. And note: there is no doubt as to the outcome of the battle in the angel's mind; indeed, he is so sure that he commands the vultures to gather before the battle takes place.

Revelation 19:19 says, "And I saw the beast (King of the West - the Revived Roman Empire), and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." Here we have the culmination of the work of the three "frog spirits" of Revelation 16:13: they have gathered together the four power-seats to do battle. Remember, these four kings and their armies have been fighting each other for control of the world and Palestine. Now, faced with the Great Lamb of God, they unite with another to fight against God. They suffer what II Thessalonians calls "strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all might be damned..." Thus, these four armies now prepare to war with God Himself; their absolute arrogance fuels their belief that they can defeat God. Psalm 2: 1-3 describes their thoughts:

¹⁹Thieme, Robert. Revelation; from undated notes.

"The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed."

Isaiah 63:1-6 describes the short-lived battle: "Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save (the Jewish remnant of believers and any Gentile believers).' Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."

Revelation 19:20,21 tell the final end of the dictators: And the beast (king of the West) was taken, and with him the false prophet (dictator of Israel) that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image (the abomination of desolation - the statue of the King of the West). These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone." The armies are slain and defeated and the two dictators are cast 'alive' into the lake of fire.

As we have already seen in Isaiah 63, so widespread is the slaughter that our Lord's garments of white are stained red with the blood of His enemies. Revelation 14:19 and 20 describe the extent of the carnage: "The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1600 stadia (180 miles)." Thus the blood runs 5 to 6 feet high for a distance of 180 miles.

Many flounder at this picture of our Lord. "And ask, in amazement, whether the author really

believes it? We answer, Yes!"²⁰ For at the First Advent He came in humiliation to provide salvation; then, at the Tribulation, however, He will come in glory. And this is stated in Psalm 45:3-6: "Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom."

So the entire picture is that of judgment and vengeance. And our Lord Himself spoke of this day in Luke 19:27, where He said, "But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them -- bring them here and kill them in front of me."

And there are so many dead enemies of our Lord that Scripture relates that it takes seven months to bury all the bodies. Ezekiel 39:12 says, "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land."

Summary of Armageddon and Some Loose Ends:

The "day of the Lord" or the "day of Jehovah" or the "Great day of God," then, occurs in the final days of the Tribulation, which is the final 7 years of the Age of Israel (Daniel's Seventieth Week). And Christ returns to fulfill the promises to Israel made in the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New Covenants to Israel. And the location of this last great battle is in Palestine, specifically in Armageddon (Valley of Megiddo), the Jeshoshaphat Valley, Edom (Idumea) and the city of Jerusalem.

Because of 'demon possession' and empowerment by Satan himself, the four power-seats of the future descend with their armies upon Jerusalem. And these four power-seats are called the Kings of the North, the South, the East and the West in the Bible.

Then the Second Advent of Christ occurs; He destroys the invading armies who unite to make war with Him. The two beasts (the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire, also called the King of the West; and the False Prophet, the dictator of

²⁰Bullinger, E. W., Commentary on Revelation; page 597.

Israel) are cast alive into the Lake of Fire for eternity. Then Satan himself is bound and thrown into the Abyss, and the Great White Throne judgment takes place. And our Lord rules on the earth for 1000 years, which time is called the Millennium.

Questions: Is the Tribulation close? The Bible states that there is no prophecy that must be fulfilled before the Rapture of the Church takes place. However, this has been true since the death of the Apostles. And "no one knows the day or the hour." Thus no accurate forecast may be made or supported. Additionally, remember the Church will not go through the Tribulation; the Rapture of the Church precedes the Tribulation.

Who is the beast? Who is the false prophet? Again, no one knows for sure. Their identities cannot be stated. Also, many world leaders in the past have been marked as the beast and the Anti-Christ, including Napoleon, Hitler, the Pope, and Mussolini.

Finally, for the Church Age believer God has a plan (Ephesians 3:20). And as we have just seen, He is Faithful and True. He is faithful to His promises and true to fulfill His warnings of judgment.

Loose Ends

The Mark of the Beast:

Revelation 13:18 is the verse under scrutiny. "This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast (the false prophet of Israel), for it is man's number. His number is 666."

Let's explore the many options available in this verse based on *numerology*. The verse hints that a calculation is possible, but extremely difficult. Many commentators utilize what is called *gematria*, which is a cabalistic (mystical/philosophical interpretation of the scripture by certain Rabbis) method of interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures based upon the numerical value of the letters in the words. In this method, a *letter* is substituted for a related *number*. This, however, would be more accurately *enumeration*, not *computation*.

Additionally, the abundance of names that this method has produced boggles the imagination. And it should be noted that *gematria* is not divinely inspired, and thus the massive discrepancies are to be expected.

It is generally recognized that *three* is the number of Deity; that *seven* is the number of perfection, and that *six* is the number of mankind. This is because man was created on the sixth day. Commentators note that Goliath was six cubits in height, his spear's head weighed six shekels and he has six pieces of armor. Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar's dream Image was 60 cubits in height, and six cubits wide and 6 musical instruments are used in its worship.

Too, it has been noted by other commentators that the number 666 is the sum of the aggregate numbers of the square root of six. The square of 6 is 36 and $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +$ each successive number up to and including 36, add up to 666.

And the cryptic symbol of the Pagan mystery cults was SSS or 666; and some assert that this is the "connection number" in Spiritism, Theosophy and the New Age cults. And the Greeks wrote the number 666 as cxj, the c representing 600, the x representing 60, and j denoting 6. The latter j is called *stigma*²¹, and carries pejorative connotations.

It would appear, then, that the meaning of the number is *man x 3* or *man, man, man*. This probably connotes the idea that this "beast-dictator" combines all that is evil in man; and this beast believes only in man and man's power, and in the worship of man. This would deny God, the saving work of Christ and any divine power. And this anthropocentric (man-centered) system of all that is vile, abnormal, and contemptible, would explain his designation as "the beast."

Thus the "mark of the beast" on individuals during the Tribulation means that they are members of the false religion that worships the "abomination of desolation" in the Holy of Holies. The king of the West is the "abomination;" they worship his statue in the Temple.

²¹ A stigma was a brand or cicatrix on soldiers and slaves in the ancient world. This stigma was held to be protective in the sense

that it was usually the symbol of the god whom they served; Leviticus 19:28; 21:5; Deuteronomy 14:1; III Macc. 2:29. Also,

see Isaiah 49:16, Ezekiel 9:4, Exodus 13:9,16, Revelation 14:1: 7:2; 9:4.

And his prophet is the dictator of Israel, and he is "false." He claims he is the Messiah, and that the King of the West is God the Father.²²

And the "mark of the beast" could be any type of brand, bar-coding, fingerprinting, pupil-coding, etc., method that presently exists, or that might still be invented. It could be as simple as a credit card with a number on it.

A Little More About the False Prophet

Daniel 11:36ff. provide us with a picture of the False Prophet. "The king (of the Jewish state, Israel, also called the Anti-Christ; called the beast in Rev. 13:11-18, and the false prophet in Rev. 16:13; 19:20; and 20:10) will do as he pleases (this indicates his absolute power); and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god (religious system of the Tribulation) and will say (eloquently) unheard-of things (blasphemies) against the God of gods (the Lord Jesus Christ). He will be successful (in his own eyes) until the time of wrath (the Tribulation) is completed, for what has been determined must take place (this is the Permissive Will of Christ allowing certain things to take place - remember, Jesus Christ controls history!)."

Daniel 11:37 says, "He will show no regard for the God (gods) (the Lord Jesus Christ; this is a statement of ignorance and lack of desire) of his fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) nor have normal sexual desires toward women (either a statement of homosexuality or complete disinterest due to self-centeredness, or perhaps both), and will not recognize any god (he is an atheist): but will exalt himself above them all (total arrogance, he believes that he is a god himself and that he should be worshipped)."

Daniel 11:38 "Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses (literally, 'god of the fortified cities;' this is a reference to the King of the West, the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire); a god unknown to his fathers he will honor (make a pact with) with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts."²³

²²This exposition on the number of '666' is surmised from the works of Clarence Larkin, E. W. Bullinger, and Robert Thieme.

²³Thieme, Robert. Revelation; this interpretation of passages from Daniel is attributed to the scholarship of Robert Thieme,

and secondarily, to E. W. Bullinger.

Summary: The dictator of Israel, also called the false prophet and the beast out of the land, takes a look around at the world situation near the middle of the Tribulation; he determines that he needs an ally so that he might preserve his power base against the warlike kings of the north, south and east and west. He must, then, choose one to become allies with. And his decision is simplified by the fact that the kings of the north and the kings of the south have already reached an accord. Thus he chooses the king of the west, the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire (western Europe); the cost, though, is expensive. Not only must he pay tribute, but he and his nation must accept and worship the religious system of the king of the West. And this religious system is the worship of the king of the West as god. Thus, part of the deal is that the "abomination of desolation," the statue of the king of the west, must be erected in the Jewish Temple, inside the Holy of Holies. However, since the dictator of Israel is an unbeliever this is no problem.

Daniel 11:39 says, "He (the dictator of Israel) will build mighty fortifications with the help of a foreign god (king of the west) and will greatly enrich those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many peoples (Jews) and will distribute the land (portions of Israel) at a price (in effect, he sells power to rule over portions of Israel to the highest bidders; graft and corruption)." And Revelation chapter 17 expands on Daniel 11:39, providing more details.

Daniel 11:40 says, "At the time of the end (the Tribulation, the end of the Age of Israel), the king of the South will engage him (the dictator of Israel) in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He (the king of the North) will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood."²⁴

A Note of Interest Concerning the False Prophet

By comparing the following verses, Genesis 49:16,17 and Deuteronomy 33:22, there appears to be some foundation for stating that the False Prophet, the dictator of Israel during the Tribulation, is from the tribe of Dan.

Dan was the fifth of Jacob's sons, the first child born to Jacob by his wife Bilhah, the maid of Rachel.

²⁴Ibid.

In Genesis 49:16,17 we have Jacob's blessing on Dan. "Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward."

And Deuteronomy 33:22 relates the words of Moses concerning Dan, "About Dan he said: 'Dan is a lion's cub, springing out of Bashan.'" And Bashan was an area of land from Gilead to Hermon, and included many fortified cities, according to Deuteronomy 3:4,5 and I Kings 3:14. And the phrase "a lion's cub" may refer to the False Prophet's claim to be the Messiah.²⁵

The Abomination of Desolation

In Matthew 24:15-20, our Lord Himself spoke of the "abomination of desolation." However, first let us note the different references to this idol: there are actually two:

1. This one was of Zeus Olympus and was set up in the Holy of Holies by Antiochus Epiphanes. It is referred to in Daniel 11:31.
2. This one will be the idol representing the king of the West during the Tribulation. It, too, will be set up in the Temple in the Holy of Holies. It is referred to in Daniel 9:27, Daniel 12:11, and in Matthew 24:15ff. It is also referred to 5 times in Revelation by the Apostle John.

Now, Matthew 24:15-20 reads as follows: "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel -- let the reader understand -- then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."

The reference to Judea refers to Israel in the time of the Tribulation. And "the mountains" to which they are to flee are the higher mountains in Edom, Moab and Ammon; these mountains are named in Daniel 11:41. Once the idol goes up in the Temple, and it will in the middle of the Tribulation (3 and one-half years), then the

believing Jews are to immediately flee to the mountains.

"The one on the roof" refers to the person working in his/her garden; this person is not to stop and come down from the roof to collect items from his house. "The one in the field" is the person at work; this one must not go back to his/her desk to get their jacket. They must leave immediately. Hesitation will get them killed. And since pregnant women and mothers with small children move more slowly than those without, these women are to be doubly alert.

And then our Lord commands them to pray for the removal of obstacles to traveling. They are to pray that their departure does not occur during bad weather (winter) or during a holiday (sabbath). Because traveling through mountains during storms is extremely hazardous, and traffic jams are common on holidays.

Matthew 24:21 then goes on to say, "For at that time (from the idol going up in the Temple till the end of the Tribulation) there will be great, great tribulation (adversity), such as has not occurred from the beginning of history, until this time; no, nor ever will occur." Here, then, our Lord states that the Tribulation will be a time of complete and total lawlessness, violence, crime, rape, murder, pillage, plunder; mankind will be animalistic.

Matthew 24:22 "And unless those days had been cut short (and they are), no flesh would have been delivered; but because of the excellent ones (the tribulational believers) those days will be cut short."

God shortens the Tribulation only because of spiritually mature believers existing at that future time. This is the "remnant according to grace."

Matthew 24:23 "At that time, if anyone communicates (lies and propaganda) to you (those believers now hiding in the mountains), 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it." Here, our Lord warns the future believers of Jerusalem that propaganda will be disseminated to try to entice them out of the mountains. They must remain true to the doctrines of Christ, and the true doctrine is that darkness will cover the earth as He returns, and "every eye will see" Him, including theirs. If they fall for the trick, they will return and be killed.

Matthew 24:24 "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect -- if that were

²⁵An extrapolation from the scholarship of Robert Thieme.

possible.” The “false Christs” refer to political leaders of that time; and the “false prophets” refer to religious leaders.

Matthew 24:25 “See, I have told you ahead of time.” The future generations alive during the Tribulation have the doctrines of Christ in written form, as do we. If they study Scripture, they will know what to do, when to do it, and will be able to discern the lies from the truth. They will also know the circumstances of the Second Advent.

Matthew 24:27 “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” Just as lightning can be seen by all during a storm, so will be the Second Coming of our Lord, Rev. 1:7. And just as lightning travels at great speeds, so the Second Advent will come rapidly, Rev. 22:7,12. Thus, as lightning can alarm the uneducated, so Christ’s return alarms unbelievers, Rev. 6:15-16. And the lightning that precedes a storm warns of what is to come; so also will lightning warn of coming judgment and death at our Lord’s return.²⁶

The title ‘Son of Man,’ of course, is the title of our Lord in His hypostatic union, which is the essence of true God and the essence of true man united in one Being.

The Second Advent

The word ‘second’ indicates that there are two advents. The first was at the birth of the only-begotten Son of God, and the objective of the first advent was to provide salvation for all mankind. The second advent will display the Royalty and Glory of our Lord, and at that time He will fulfill all the covenants to Israel.

The Rapture is not the second Advent. At the Rapture of the Church, Christ does not actually touch the earth. We, the Church Age believers, meet Him in the air. Whereas the Second Advent is the return of our Lord to the earth in His hypostatic union.

The Rapture is designated as private, Acts 1:11; i.e., it is for the Church only, for believers only. Whereas the Second Advent is public, Rev. 1:7. *Every eye shall see him.*

The Rapture occurs in the air, I Thess. 4:17; the Second Advent occurs on the earth. And the Church goes up to heaven at the Rapture, John

14:3; whereas at the Second Advent, the Church returns with Christ, I Thess. 3:13.

Additionally, the Rapture includes the judgment of the believer’s works, II Cor. 5:10; whereas the Second Advent includes many judgments, Matthew 25:31-46.

At the Rapture, the restraining ministry of God the Holy Spirit is removed, II Thess. 2:6; whereas at the Second Advent, Satan is removed, Rev. 20:1-3. And the Rapture causes a change in the believer’s body, Philippians 3:21; whereas the Second Advent causes a change in the earth, Zechariah 14:9 and Romans 8:19-27.

At the Rapture of the Church, Christ appears as the Groom, while at the Second Advent Christ appears as the Messiah to Israel and as Royalty to the whole earth (King of Kings and Lord of Lords).

The Rapture signals the end of the Church Age, while the Second Advent signals the end of the Jewish Age. Too, at the time of the Rapture, Israel is dispersed; while at the Second Advent, Israel will be restored and regathered.

At the Rapture believers are taken from the earth, I Thess. 4:16-18; whereas at the Second Advent, unbelievers are taken from the earth, Matthew 24:37-43. And the Rapture is a source of comfort to the believer, I Thess. 4:18, while the Second Advent is a source of terror to the unbeliever, Rev. 6:15-17.

And according to Zechariah 14:1-4 the location of the Second Advent is Jerusalem. There are two analogies to the Second Advent utilized in the Bible:

1. Lightning, Matthew 24:27.
2. Historical, Matthew 24:37-41 (ignorance).

It is at the Second Advent that Christ is totally victorious over Satan. In Scripture the phraseology is “he will be as your footstool.” Psalm 110:1, Hebrews 11:13; 10:13. Also at this time, our Lord’s Bride will be cleansed from all except divine good, I Cor. 3:12,15. Satan will be imprisoned, Rev. 20:1-3. The triumphal procession of Christ will occur, Col. 2:15. And believers will cast demons into the Lake of Fire, Zech. 13:2 cf. Col. 2:15 cf. I Cor. 15:24-25.

Too, at the Second Advent the Baptism of Fire occurs, I Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 3:11-12.

²⁶Ibid.

And this Baptism of Fire vindicates the perfect character of God.

The Second Advent ushers in the Millennium during which there will be perfect environment and free will. Isa. 65:24, Joel 2:28,29; Zech. 8:20-23; Dan. 9:24; Psalm 46:9, 72:7,16, Isa. 11:3-5; Romans 8:19-22, Isa. 11:6-9, 65:25.²⁷

The Concept of Days in the Bible

The word 'day' refers to three different time periods in Scripture: 1) a time period that is less than 24 hours or a day; 2) a time period that is exactly 24 hours or one day; 3) a time period that is more than 24 hours.

Less than a 24 hour time span:

Day of salvation, II Cor 6:2; here the term 'day' refers to a 'second' or an 'instant.'

Day of Christ, I Cor 15; here the term 'day' refers to the Rapture of the Church.

Day of Wrath; here the term refers to the sentencing of unbelievers at the last judgment.

Day of declaration, I Cor. 3:13; here the term refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is where Christ hands out rewards to the members of the Royal Family.

Exactly a 24 hour time span:

Six days of Genesis 1:3-31; the Creation.

The Sabbath, Friday night at sundown to Saturday at sundown.

The Lord's Day, Rev. 10:1; here the term refers to the first day of the week (Sunday).

One day at a time, Romans 14:5-6; here the term is used as a manner of living.

Thinking of Christ Daily, Psalm 119:97; here the term refers to occupation with Christ on a daily basis.

More than 24 hours:

Day of Redemption, Ephesians 4:30; here the term refers to 'ultimate sanctification,' which is the day the believer in Christ receives his resurrection body.

Day of the Lord, Isaiah 2:12, Joel 2:1; here the term begins immediately after the Rapture of the Church, includes the Tribulation and the

²⁷Thieme, Robert. From notes which were undated and without citation.

Millennial Reign of Christ; and is sometimes used for only a portion of this time period (context dictates the precise meaning).

Day of God; here the term refers to eternity and the eternal state.²⁸

Joel 1:16 "Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes -- joy and gladness from the house of our God?" The phrase "the food cut off" is an allusion to the loss of the basics of life and is also an indirect mention of the "abomination of desolation" already erected in the Temple during the Tribulation, since worship of the idol of the Beast does not involve the meal offering. And the phrase "joy and gladness" refers to there being no worship of God, from whence true happiness is derived.

Joel 1:17,18 "The seeds are shriveled beneath the clods. The storehouses are in ruins, the granaries have been broken down, for the grain has dried up. How the cattle moan! The herds mill about because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep are suffering."

In these two verses Joel relates the destruction of crops and the starvation of the cattle due to lack of grazing land. Just as the locust infestations destroyed all the vegetation of Joel's day, so will the Assyrians 200 years later, and so will the King of the North during the future Tribulation.

Joel 1:19,20 "To you, O Lord, I call, for fire has devoured the open pastures and flames have burned up all the trees of the field. Even the wild animals pant for you; the streams of water have dried up and fire has devoured the open pastures."

In verses 19 and 20 Joel speaks a prayer for the remnant of believers, both those living in his day and those of the future. He calls to God for deliverance in the face of devastation.

And the use of *judgment* terminology, "fire and flames," refers to the King of the North's invasion during the Tribulation.

Joel Chapter 2

Joel 2:1-9 portray Armageddon from the perspective of the Jewish believers who will be alive at that future time.²⁹

²⁸Thieme, Robert. Doctrine of Days in Scripture; from notes on Zechariah, 1975.

²⁹Thieme, Robert. Joel; from notes.

There are five specific narratives of Armageddon in Scripture. Each narrative has a different emphasis. The five are:

1. The Apostle John in Revelation 16:12-16.
2. Daniel in Daniel 11:40-45.
3. Zechariah in Zechariah chapters 12 and 14, the entire chapters.
4. Joel 2:1-9, our passage.
5. Ezekiel 38 and 39, again the entire chapters.

Joel 2:1 "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand --"

The "trumpet", SHOFAR,, is a reference to the ram's horn that was used in Israel to sound the alarm of coming invaders. Just as today we utilize sirens and flashing lights. "Zion" is Jerusalem, and specifically the western escarpment. "Holy hill" also refers to Jerusalem, and is so used in Daniel 11:45. And "those who live in the land" refers to the Jews in Israel and Judah. And the "day of the Lord", as we have seen, designates here the Second Advent, that day upon which our Lord returns to the earth and His feet touch the Mount of Olives.

Joel 2:2 "A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come."

Here is Joel's description of the Second Advent of our Lord. The day is one of "darkness;" this term refers to the supernatural darkness that will engulf the earth just before our Lord's return. "Gloominess" refers to the *utter hopelessness* of the situation on that day: beset by four powerful armies, the remnant of believing Jews stands and fights, but they will lose without divine intervention. And "clouds" designates the massive armies of the four invading power-seats of the future, North, South, East and West; and is so used in Ezekiel 38:9,10, which says in verse 9, "You and all your troops and the many nations advancing with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land."

The term "blackness" provides more detail and explanation about the supernatural darkness of

that "day." It is literally black; this is a darkness in which there is no light at all; no stars, no moon, no spotlights, no electrically produced light of any type, no reflective light. This lightless darkness is also described in the following passages: Isaiah 13:9,10; Zechariah 14:6,7; Ezekiel 32:7,8; Joel 2:10,11; Joel 3:15; Amos 5:18; Matthew 24:29; Luke 21:25-27; and Revelation 6:12.

Amos 5:18 says, "Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light." And Revelation 6:12 says, "I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red."

The phrase "like dawn spreading across mountains" is interesting and very descriptive. Just as the sun rises and quickly illuminates the mountains, so will the invading armies engulf Palestine during the Tribulation. But also just as the sun rises across the mountains it does not illuminate every nook and cranny. There are some areas that remain in darkness because of irregularities in topography. Just so the invading armies will miss those believers hiding in the mountains (those that ran when the statue went up in the Temple in the middle of the Tribulation) as they advance. The darkness will protect the "remnant according to grace."³⁰

The "dawn," then, is the army of the King of the North during the Tribulation; and his army is described as the largest and mightiest in the history of the world. This acknowledgment of size and power projects an aura of lethality beyond imagination.

Joel 2:3 "Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste -- nothing escapes them."

The "fire" is a picture of the invading armies (of the locusts; of the Assyrians; of the King of the North) destroying everything as they advance. And the analogy "like the Garden of Eden" describes the Palestine area in the future Tribulation: it is prosperous and beautiful, and this beauty is totally destroyed by the invasion of the King of the North. He leaves behind a

³⁰Thieme, Robert. Joel.

Wolff, Hans Walter. Joel and Amos.

wasteland. And the final phrase of verse three, “nothing escapes them,” should read, literally, “and also escape is not to them,”³¹ with “them” referring to the invading armies. In other words, although their advance leaves complete devastation behind them, this advancing army, as invincible as it appears to be, will not escape the “day of the Lord.” At the Second Advent of our Lord the destroyers will be destroyed.

Joel 2:4,5 “They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.”

In verses 4 and 5 Joel describes the invading armies. The use of the terms “appearance” and “like” indicate that the prophet was attempting to characterize machines of war with which he was not familiar, i.e., technological advancements beyond his awareness. The “horses,” then, would be some type of mobile forces capable of rapid movement. And the “chariots” would represent some type of armored forces. Zechariah 12:4, Ezekiel 38:4 and Daniel 11:40 also describe the mobile forces as horses; and Ezekiel 39:20 illustrates the armored forces as chariots.

Joel 2:6 “At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale.”

Here, the term “nations” refers to the Jews of Jerusalem and Judah; and the term “anguish” designates the great pain that is associated with child-birth. And the faces “that turn pale” is an indication of notable worry and anxiety on the part of the Jews as the massive army advances. The Jews are scared almost to the point of shock by the power and fierceness of the King of the North’s advance.

Joel 2: 7,8,9 “They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows.”

Joel notes in these three verses the initial success of the enemy armies. The “walls” are the walls of Jerusalem in the future. The phrase “march in line” indicates that this army is disciplined and well-trained; indeed, remember that this army is composed of unbelievers and therefore they have no spiritual dynamics to motivate them. Yet they are unbelievably, astonishingly triumphant. What is their secret? Training and discipline. And there is a lesson here for both believers and unbelievers.³²

The term “jostle” means that the soldiers all know exactly what to do and when to do it -- every man does his job. The term also implies that there are no accidents due to human error, ignorance or sloppiness, i.e., they do not accidentally shoot each other.

Verse 9 describes the army’s entry into the city of Jerusalem. The walls do not hinder them. They easily enter private homes, kicking in doors, smashing in windows. Zechariah 14:1,2 provides more detailed information on this ‘break into the city.’ “A day of the Lord is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people (the believing remnant) will not be taken from the city.”

All these advancing armies, and especially that of the King of the north utilize and understand only one thing: raw force. They are impressed only by force and power. It is difficult to illustrate just how powerful, dynamic, disciplined, professional, and ferocious these armies are. The Hebrew provides an almost palpable energy to these armies. As a foe the King of the North is redoubtable; his lusts are intractable; his armies exhibit no humane refinements, no mercy, no compassion. They are harsh, they smash, they destroy, they kill, they rape, they overwhelm through brute force. The implication is that the person (the King of the North and his troops) involved is of such potency that all obstacles, all difficulties, dwindle to contemptible triviality.

Joel’s narration is one of pressure, sound and chill: the pressure of a massive army of rigid discipline whose only function is to kill; the sound of war-machines, explosions, gun-fire, rapidity; and the

³¹Owens, John Joseph. Analytical Key to the Old Testament; page 792, Volume 4.

³²Thieme, Robert. Joel; from notes.

chill is the chill of passionless rape and death. It is no wonder that the faces of the Jews "turn pale."

Joel 2:10 "Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine."

Here, then, is the great earthquake as our Lord arrives at the Second Advent; Matthew 24:29, Jeremiah 10:10, Luke 21:25-27, Zechariah 14:4 and Isaiah 13:13 all describe this earthquake which splits the Mount of Olives as His feet touch it. And again we have the supernatural darkness that accompanies His return, just as supernatural darkness covered the earth as He hung on the Cross and bore our sins.

Joel 2:11 "The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?"

The word "thunder" refers to the voice of our Lord as He speaks. This voice is described in Revelation 19:15, "Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations." This sharp sword is His word of power -- His voice. Note also that our Lord is at the "head" or front of His army. This is an unusual place for a military leader to be. This signifies that our Lord does the fighting, and that His army, those believers in their resurrection bodies, stand and watch. "And mighty are those who obey His command" is a direct reference to the power of any and all believers present at the Second Advent, for they have obeyed His Word by believing unto salvation and knowing Scripture.

"Who can endure it?" None, except the believer will endure the judgment of our Lord at the Second Advent.

Joel 2:12 "'Even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.'"

In verse 12, Joel gives the solution to judgment at anytime throughout history: believe in Christ. This was the solution to the locust infestations; this will be the solution to the coming Assyrian invasions; and this will be the solution during the future Tribulation. It is the same "yesterday, today and forever" -- Christ.

The term "heart" refers to the thinking part of the soul, and describes the faith principle which

occurs in the soul. And the three terms "fasting, weeping, and mourning" mean focus on God, and all three will be demonstrations of faith in the Tribulation. "Fasting" refers to bible study, i.e., setting aside time that would be normally spent in eating to study the Word. "Weeping" will accompany faith during the Tribulation. Why? Because the Jews, still in dispersion and under anti-Semitism, will, despite all obstacles, still be able to find Christ, and when they do, they will weep with joy because they have been graciously provided with "the" answer. This weeping is described in Zechariah 12:11-14.³³

And "mourning" is more than likely a reference to Gentile believers of the Tribulational period. They mourn because they missed the Rapture and wasted time by not believing sooner.³⁴

In this verse, verse 12, Joel speaks of evangelism during the Tribulation. Our Lord described this evangelism in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." So we see that not one individual of the Tribulation has an excuse for not believing.

There are four phases of evangelism during the Tribulation.

1. According to Revelation chapter 7, there are 144,000 evangelizing Jews. Twelve tribes of 12,000 each. The tribe of Dan is missing because they are apostate during the Tribulation, just as they had a history of being apostate during all other historical periods.

2. The second phase is composed of the converts of the 144,000. They, too, begin an intense period of evangelization. And for their efforts many of them are martyred. This phase is cited in Revelation 14:12,13, "This (evangelism) calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.'"

3. The third phase of evangelism is performed by the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, who, through a world-wide television ministry, present

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

the gospel to the entire world, not only while alive but through their dead bodies being televised to every home. This phase is related in Revelation 11:1-14.

4. The fourth phase of evangelism is accomplished by flying angels, Revelation 14:6,7, "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.'" ³⁵

Joel 2:13 "Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."

In this verse, Joel "demands a reorientation of the direction of one's thought and will, and hence a new orientation towards Yahweh (?)." ³⁶ Hans Walter Wolff presents this quote as a question; the author presents his words as a statement. Joel demands precisely what the prophet Jonah later demanded of the Ninevites, a change of mind toward the Savior of the Universe -- belief in Christ.

"Rend your heart" means believe in Christ; the Jews of the Tribulation must alter the manner in which they think of Christ. And "not your garments" is a reference to the wailing of lamentation. The lamentation here is the fear of circumstances, i.e., the advancing armies, the lack of food, death, etc., and the belief that there exists no solution to these crises. Joel says do not just tear your garments and cry in fear, worry and terror. Instead, rend your heart -- believe in Christ. Here is the answer to the tragic conditions of the Tribulation.

"Return" to the Lord your God; return, says Joel, to the God of your fathers, believe in Christ. "He is gracious" is a direct reference to God the Father judging the Son on the Cross. This is a gift to mankind and is thus "gracious" in the extreme. "And compassionate," refers to the execution of

the Father's Plan for the salvation of all -- this is "mercy or grace in action." ³⁷

"Slow to anger" means that God loves His own perfect Righteousness which the believer has because of grace. Thus God may be patient. "Abounding in love" speaks of the reason for God's graciousness, *propitiation* -- He was *satisfied* the work of Christ on the Cross.

"And he relents from sending calamity" means that He does not judge us as we deserve (calamity), but instead "relents," which means He found a way to avoid judging us -- by judging His own Son for our sins.

Joel 2:14 "Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing -- grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God."

"Who knows?" The believer knows and is confident that our Lord will be gracious and that He will return as promised in Scripture. Perhaps a more lucid translation of this verse would read, "Who knows when he will return? And have pity and leave a blessing." The phrase "have pity" pertains to the restoration of Israel at the Second Advent. And the clause "leave a blessing" concerns the gift of perfect environment, and includes the heavenly Jerusalem of the Millennium.

"The grain offerings and drink offerings" relates the function of the Levitical sacrifices during the Millennium: they will become the communion table of the Jews, looking back on the Cross, just as we do during the Church Age. They will become an "auld lang syne" for Israel. This use of the sacrifices in the Millennium is also related and supported in Ezekiel, chapters 40-47. ³⁸

Joel 2:15 and 16 present the Millennial Reign of Christ and the Regathering of Israel.

Joel 2:15 "Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly."

Again we have the blowing of the trumpet as a signal, just as in 2:1. Here, however, the trumpet signals the gathering of the people rather than a warning blast. And "Zion," again, refers to

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Wolff, Hans Walter. Joel and Amos; page 49.

³⁷Thieme, Robert. Exegesis of the Book of Joel; from notes of 1967.

³⁸Ibid.

Jerusalem, or more specifically, the western escarpment. A “holy fast” is to be declared; this refers to the designation of a special worship period, a time to concentrate on our Lord. In effect, this is a ‘celebration,’ in every good sense of the word, and the celebration is to last 1000 years, for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords now resides and rules on earth. Finally, the term “assembly” refers to the saved Jews gathering to worship.

Joel 2:16 “Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber.”

The first phrase, “gather the people,” designates the end of the *Diaspora*, which is the dispersion or scattering of the Jews throughout the world during the Church Age. After the Second Advent the Jews will be restored to Israel and the four unconditional covenants will be fulfilled. This also implies the Baptism of Fire; the tares (the unbelievers) go to the Lake of Fire, and the wheat (the believers) enter the Millennium.³⁹

The regathering of Israel is described in Isaiah 5:26-30, and Zechariah 10:6-12. The “elders” means that those ruling the country stop their governmental functions to attend the assembly. Too, the “children” means that school is out. And those “nursing” means that young mothers and their babies attend. And note that these babies, although not believers because they have not yet passed the age of accountability, are present. The implication, then, is that babies that die before the age of accountability are automatically saved and enter heaven. The “bride and the bridegroom” means that honeymoons stop for this party for Jesus Christ and the regathering of Israel. All these people bypass the Baptism of Fire.⁴⁰

Joel 2:17 “Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, ‘Spare your people, O Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God.’”

In verse 17, Joel introduces a totally different idea, the idea of praying for the deliverance of one’s country. The “weeping” of the priest refers to offering prayer in a period of public or national crisis. The “porch” is the east porch of Solomon’s Temple, and means that as the priests go about their functions in the Temple, they are to pray for the nation. How are they to pray? They are to petition God to “spare” the nation, or to have compassion on Israel. This is a demand for mercy (grace in action) based upon who and what God is, not upon any merit found in the Jews. “Inheritance” is a reference to the 4 unconditional covenants between God and Israel: the Abrahamic, Davidic, Palestinian, and New Covenants to Israel. “Scorn” means discipline from God, such as the scattering of Israel or its military occupation/rule by other nations. And the phrase “a byword among the nations” means “a hissing” or a “disgrace” among the Gentile nations. In other words, if Gentile nations (the Assyrians or the King of the North) are allowed to conquer Israel, then the Gentiles will ask, “Where is their God?” The Gentiles will be, in effect, stating that God is impotent and unfaithful, for He has not kept His covenants with Israel.

Joel 2:18 “Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.”

“To become jealous for” means that God becomes “zealous for” His people, His holy nation. This phrase is also used in Ezekiel 39:25 and Zechariah 1:14 and 8:2. Thus we see the contrast between the two aspects of the Day of the Lord: the first is found in Zephaniah 1:18, “wrath;” the second is found here and in Nahum 1:2, “the fire of His zeal.” Thus Christ at the Second Advent is zealous for those who are believers, and He is terrible for those who are unbelievers. And “to take pity on his people” means that God has compassion based upon grace, love and mercy: God’s love finds a way.

³⁹Bullinger, E. W. Commentary on Revelation.

Thieme, Robert. Joel.

⁴⁰Ibid.

2:19 "The Lord will reply to them: 'I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.'"

Here, in verse 19, the Lord answers the prayers of verse 17. Principle: a nation may be saved or regain its greatness through prayer. This is quite a thought and demonstrates the power of prevailing prayer.

"Corn, wine and oil" refer to economic and agricultural prosperity. And "never again an object of scorn" means that Israel will receive no more discipline from God; the restoration of Israel will take place.

Joel 2:20 "I will drive the northern army far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land, with its front columns going into the eastern sea and those in the rear into the western sea. And its stench will go up; its smell will rise.' Surely he has done great things."

Here we have another reference to the King of the North during the Tribulation. Our Lord will push this army back, it will be trapped and destroyed between the "eastern sea," which is the Dead Sea and the "western sea," which is the Mediterranean Sea. And Daniel 11:45 confirms this destruction site of the King of the North. "He (the King of the North) will pitch his royal tents between the seas (east and west) at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."⁴¹

"The stench" refers to the great slaughter and the dead bodies of the King of the North's army at our Lord's return. This stench rises in contrast to the "sweet smell of victory" which rose as our Lord hung on the Cross. And both odors carry the smell of perfect Justice and Righteousness; however, one indicates death while the other provides salvation and indicates eternal life. This great slaughter is described in Ezekiel 39:11.

The final phrase in verse 20, "surely he has done great things," refers to Jesus Christ. And the "great things" He has accomplished, He has accomplished because of His perfect Love. Salvation comes through this Love, and deliverance and restoration of the Jews at the Second Advent also come through this Love.

⁴¹Ibid.

Joel 2:21-25 "Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the Lord has done great things. Be not afraid, O wild animals, for the open pastures are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches. Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you a teacher for righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten -- the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm -- my great army that I sent among you."

In verses 21,22,23 and 24 the "land," the "animals," and the "people of Zion" are commanded to be unafraid and to rejoice. And with each *strophe* the foundation for happiness becomes more cogent. The "land" will prosper under the economy of the Millennium, for there will be perfect environment. The "animals," too, will prosper and lose their viciousness and cease suffering for lack of food. And the picture here is pure grace. The land and the animals will benefit -- and they do not deserve it. They have done nothing -- good or bad. They are blessed because of who and what God is. And the "children of Zion" are the believing Jews; they belong to God ("your God").

The Teacher of Righteousness: this concept is found in the phrase "for he has given you a teacher for righteousness." And "he" is God the Father; and the "teacher" is Christ Himself as He reigns during the Millennium. This teacher is also referred to in Hosea 10:12, "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you." And again is found in I Kings 8:36, "Then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance."

The final phrase in verse 25, "my great army that I sent among you," refers to the permissive and directive will of God -- He utilizes both natural (locusts) and human (Assyrians and the King of the North) agents as His whips. Jesus Christ controls history!

The Restoration of Israel's Worship During the Millennium and the Nature of the Worship

Joel 2:26 "You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed."

First, note the repetition of the phrase "never again will my people be shamed" at the close of both verse 26 and 27. This is an example of *epistrophe*, which is the repetition of a phrase at the end of successive sentences for the purpose of emphasis of the idea. And the idea being emphasized is that of no confusion of soul, no mental disturbance in the souls of the Millennial believers.

"You will have plenty to eat, until you are full," is a very interesting phrase. It connotes beneficial, non-fattening, delicious food. And the idea is that during the Millennium there is perfect environment; there is no war, no poverty, no physical death, no disease, and there is perfect spirituality. This also includes perfectly functioning human bodies -- you will not gain weight from overeating.⁴²

"Praising the name of the Lord your God" means they will praise Christ as He rules for 1000 years. And the "wonders he has worked" refers not only to the restoration of the Jews and perfect environment, but also to the miracle of grace and salvation. "My people" is any and all believers (Jew or Gentile) during the Millennium; and they will have a full understanding of God's Word -- this is the reason that they will not be "shamed" or confused in their souls. They will have a full and perfect understanding of doctrine, the mind of Christ.⁴³

Joel 2:27 "Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed."

"Then you will know" refers to knowledge in the human soul; Christ will be known during the Millennium. And taken together, these two verses, Joel 2:26,27, provide us with an outline of worship and Spirituality in the Millennium. All

believers will have a 'full knowledge' of God's Word and the Filling of the Spirit.

Joel 2:28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people, your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions."

"To pour out" is used for the pouring out of water in Exodus 4:9, the pouring out of blood in Genesis 9:6, and generally, for the pouring out of liquids. And "Spirit" is RUACH. This is a different filling of the Spirit than that of the present Church Age. During the Church Age the function of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and convict, to teach the Word of God to believers. During the Millennium, since every believer has a 'full knowledge' of Christ already, the emotions of the believer may fully respond to, and appreciate, that full knowledge of God. Thus the ministry of the Holy Spirit during the Millennium is to aid in the appreciation of this full knowledge of Christ -- thus to produce ecstasies in the believers of the Millennium.

Thus, Ecstasies and the Filling of the Spirit depends on four factors during the Millennium:

1. The removal of all false religions.
2. Perfect environment, including perfect physical health.
3. The presence of Christ on the earth.
4. A full knowledge of God's Word.⁴⁴

So the adverb "afterward" refers to after the Second Advent, during the Millennium. And "all flesh" means all believers, Jew or Gentile, who have escaped the Baptism of Fire, and their believing progeny. And the references to sex, age, and class indicate that there will be no human distinctions which could cause limitations to these ecstasies. There are no gender limitations, both male and female will have a full knowledge of God and the 'pouring out of the Spirit;' both old and young will have this 'pouring out;' and all classes will experience 'this pouring out.' This, then, will be the fulfillment of Moses' wish in Numbers 11:29, "But Moses replied, 'Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!'" Of course, this wish of Moses' also refers to the present filling of the Spirit during the Church Age.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

The Apostle Peter, in Acts 2:13-21, quoted Joel 2:28 on the Day of Pentecost. On this day, the day of Pentecost, the Church Age began and all the believers in Jerusalem were filled with the Holy Spirit. Some supposed them to be drunk, for Acts 2:13 says, "Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'" However, Peter said they were not drunk; he then drew a comparison between the filling of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the 'pouring out of the Spirit' during the Millennium.⁴⁵

Joel 2:30 "I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke."

The "wonders" are the miracles that surround the Second Advent of Christ. "In heaven" refers to our Lord's return (Rev. 1:7); "on earth" refers to His feet touching the Mount of Olives. "Blood" refers to the slaughter of unbelievers at the Second Advent. "Fire" is a reference to the death of large numbers of people during the Tribulation by fire, for Revelation 9:17,18, "The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths." Some commentators liken this fire, smoke and sulfur to chemical warfare, even nuclear warfare.

"And pillars of smoke" are associated with the destruction of the evil, false, Satanic, ecumenical religious system of the Tribulation. Revelation 18:9,18 and 19:3 read as follows, "18:9 When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her (the false religion) and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 18:18 When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' 19:3 And again they shouted: 'Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.'"

Joel 2:31 "The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

The "darkness," of course, refers to the supernatural darkness of Joel 2:10,11 and Isaiah

13:9,10. And the "moon to blood" is not literal blood, but a reference to the moon turning the color of dark clotting blood -- black, as all light fades. And "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" is the Second Advent and Armageddon. Recall that for some the day is great, for He is zealous for His believers; for others the day is dreadful, for He will come to render perfect, righteous judgment.

Joel 2:32 "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls."

In this final verse of chapter 2, Joel cites the qualification to enter the Millennium. There is but one qualification: "calling on the name of the Lord," which calling is a verbal expression of soul faith in Jesus Christ. For these believers, then, there will be "deliverance." They will enter the Millennium; everyone else (unbelievers) will enter the Lake of Fire. And the term "survivors" refers to the believing remnant at the Second Advent.

Confirmation that this verse refers to salvation and subsequent physical deliverance is found in Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13. "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21). And Romans 10:13 says, "For, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Thus, both Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 quote Joel 2:32, and provide us with clarification.

The Millennial civilization, then, begins with these believers.⁴⁶

Seven Judgments in Scripture

There are seven specific judgments cited in Scripture:

1. The Cross; here, the sins of the world were judged as Christ was judged for our sins. This was a real judgment. And in this judgment the "blood" refers to the spiritual death of our Lord on the Cross. II Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
2. Self-judgment or confession. Here the believer confesses his/her sins to God the Father. I John 1:9, Hebrews 12:3-15, John 15:1-9 and I

⁴⁵Bullinger, E. W. From notes, which were unmarked and undated.

⁴⁶Thieme, Robert. Joel.

Corinthians 11:31, which says, "But if we judged ourselves, we should not come under judgment."

3. The dead works of the Church Age believers are judged in heaven during the Tribulation. They are disposed of by burning. This particular judgment is only for believers, the saints, and has nothing to do with sins, which have already been judged. This judgment involves "the divine appraisal of the Christian's works and service. This will entail reward or loss of reward."⁴⁷ II Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10, Ephesians 6:8, and II Timothy 4:8, which says, "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day -- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." This judgment is referred to as the Judgment Seat of Christ.

4. Judgment of Tribulational Gentiles, Matthew 25:31-46.

5. Judgment of Tribulational Jews; Matthew 25:1-13, Ezekiel 20:33-44 and Joel 3:11-15.⁴⁸

6. The Judgment of all fallen angels at the end of the Millennium. This judgment is associated with the Great White Throne, I Corinthians 6:3, II Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6, and Revelation 20:10.

7. The Last Judgment, which is the final judgment at the end of the Millennium; here, all unbelievers are cast into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:11-15 narrates this judgment. All who are not mentioned in the 'book of life' are cast into 'the lake of fire' based upon 'the book of works.'⁴⁹

Since the Baptism of Fire has been recently examined in our study of Jude, we will not inspect it in detail again. We need only note the three pertinent passages in Scripture that deal with the Baptism of Fire: Matthew 3:11,12; Luke 3:16,17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Restoration of the Jews

Recall that in 63 BC Pompey the Great of Rome, took military control of Palestine and Judea. Thus began the *penultima*, the next to the last phase, of

⁴⁷Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Bible Dictionary; page 621.

⁴⁸No. 4 and No. 5 in the above disquisition are both part of the 'Baptism of Fire.'

⁴⁹This exposition on the 'Seven Judgments in Scripture' is based on the scholarship of Merrill F. Unger, and Robert Thieme.

the Jews punishment prior to the 'dispersion,' called the *diaspora*. Then in 70 AD, the Emperor Vespasian, by means of his son Titus, besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the Temple. This was the *ultima*, the final phase of discipline from God. Just after the fall of Jerusalem the Jews entered the *Diaspora*.

After the Second Advent of Christ, He will assemble and restore Israel. However, it is necessary and vital that a distinction be made between 'true Israel' and 'racial Israel.'

True Israel is regenerate, that is, it is composed of believing Jews.

Racial Israel describes any Jew that has the genes of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but is not necessarily regenerate. Thus a racial Jew is not a saved Jew. Salvation involves a decision. And the 'regathering and restoration' of Israel after the Second Advent concerns only regenerate or *True Israel*.

This distinction, along with a third type of Jew, the religious Jew, is delineated by the Apostle Paul in Romans 9:6-14, which is quoted: "It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- the genes of Jews) are Israel (regenerate as were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). 7 Nor because they are his (Abraham's) descendants (physical descendants) are they all Abraham's children (spiritual descendants, children of God, regenerate). On the contrary, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise (of salvation through Christ) who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9 For this was how the promise was stated: 'At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.'"⁵⁰

The basis of the restoration of the Jews is the four unconditional covenants:

1. The Abrahamic Covenant: Genesis 12:1-2; 13:15,16; 22:15-18. This covenant established the Jewish people as a race, and the Jewish people as a future nation. It also pronounced divine disfavor on any who persecute the Jews.

2. The Palestinian Covenant: Genesis 15:18; Numbers 34:1-12; Deuteronomy 30:1-9; Joshua 1:3,4; Isaiah 11:11,12. This covenant provided the

⁵⁰Thieme, Robert. Anti-Semitism; privately published.

boundaries of the land that the Jews would receive from God; it also provides this property at the Second Advent of Christ.

3. The Davidic Covenant: II Samuel 7:8-16; 22:51; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29,30 and Psalm 89:20-37. This covenant promised David a son that would rule forever -- a promise of Christ.

4. The New Covenant to Israel: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13. This covenant re-states God's intention of fulfilling His promises to the Jews. In other words, the Jews do have a future in spite of the *Diaspora*.

Religious Jews:

The author quotes from Robert Thieme's very lucid comments concerning 'religious Jews.'

The religion of the Jews is called Judaism. Modern Judaism came down to us from the teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It is composed of three different viewpoints: orthodox, conservative, and reform. The orthodox Jew follows, strictly, the Torah and its interpretation by the Rabbis. The conservative Jew follows the traditional rituals of Judaism but allows for a more liberal interpretation of the religious fundamentals and of the Jewish way of life. Conservative Judaism is, indeed, a compromise between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Whereas Reformed Jews are modern and secular. They are the least stringent of the Jews and far removed from the Biblical definition of Jewry.

And although Judaism generally represents the religious Jew, a Jew may or may not be religious. The Knesset's definition of a Jew states that Jewishness may be a matter of birth or a matter of belief. Thus one need not even be an ethnic Jew in order to be a religious Jew; one can be a proselyte (Matthew 23:15; Acts 2:10), or one can be both -- racial and religious."⁵¹

All of the covenants, the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New Covenants to Israel, have an *eternal clause*, i.e., they apply only to regenerate (Jews who accept Christ as their Savior) Jews. This, of course, would not include believing Jews of the present Church Age; for they become part of the Church, the Royal Family of God, when

they accept Christ during the present dispensation."⁵²

And Israel's future as Israel depends upon the Second Advent of Christ. The Jews have no future until the final seven years of the Jewish Age, commonly called the Tribulation.

The Restoration

Israel's future was declared at the institution of the race, Exodus 6:2-8. And just as the Royal Family's future is related to heaven, so Israel's future is related to earthly real estate. This piece of property extends from the Euphrates to the Jordan, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Negev, according to Genesis 13:15. And the progeny of those who persecuted the Jews will, during the Millennium, come to Jerusalem. "The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet." Isaiah 60:14 (KJV)

And in Zion, the 'city of the Lord,' the Holy One of Israel, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah will rule on earth for one thousand years. And the Millennial Jews will come and worship. "And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left (believing remnant) of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles," Zechariah 14:16.

According to Romans 20:6, the Royal Family of God (Church Age believers) will be "priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Thus, the Royal Bride will reside in "the heavenly Jerusalem," and reign with her Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Hebrews 12:22. The Land belongs to the Jews, not to the Church. And the environment will be perfect, according to Isaiah 26,27 and Daniel 12:13.

After the Millennium, the future of Israel also goes on. II Peter 3:7 and Revelation 20:11 tell us that God will destroy the present heavens and earth at the end of the Millennium, and then create new ones. And Revelation 21:1,5, tell us that God will create the new heavens and earth larger, grander and more beautiful. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. He who was seated on the

⁵¹Thieme, Robert. Anti-Semitism; page 128-129. Privately published, 1974.

⁵²Ibid.

throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"

At this point, then, Abraham will receive his promised city. For Hebrews 11:10 says, "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

The Palestine of the 'new earth' will be the property of the Jews, also. And the home of the Bride of Christ, the Royal Family, is the new heavens, for they are a "heavenly people."

Note, then, that Israel's future is assured.⁵³

Joel 3:1 "In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem (,)."

Jeremiah 50:4,20 and 33:15 likewise employ the phrase "in those days and at that time." And in all three instances in Jeremiah the phrase refers to 'deliverance from enemies.' Thus, in Joel 3:1 the reference is to that period just after the Second Advent and the Armageddon battle; this is the very beginning of the Millennium.

"To restore the fortunes," or "to restore the captivity of Judah," is a direct reference to the regathering and restoration of Israel. The phrase signals the end of the *Diaspora*, and is referred to in Ezekiel 39:25, which says, "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name (a reference to the covenants with Israel)." And Zephaniah 3:20 says, "At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes (captivity) before your very eyes," says the Lord."

Joel 3:2 "I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land."

"All the nations," here, refers to the Gentiles still alive just after the Second Advent. And they will

be brought down to the "Valley of Jehoshaphat." Jehoshaphat means 'the Lord judges.' And is presently identified with the Kidron. It is that valley situated between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. And it was here that the Moabites and Ammonites were slaughtered by the Lord as they opposed Israel and Jehoshaphat.

Joel, however, is not making reference to the valley as it exists today. The location is the same, but a deeper valley will be formed by the Second Advent earthquake which splits the Mount of Olives, according to Zechariah 14:4-6, which says, "On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley (Jehoshaphat), with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

Thus, the Mount of Olives will vanish into a great valley, GE' GEDHOLAH ME'ODH, "a huge valley." Here, then, Christ will judge these unbelieving Gentiles; and He will not only judge them, but He is also the plaintiff, the accuser. And the "inheritance" and "my people" both refer to the same group of people: true Israel, the regenerate Jews.

"For they" is the Gentiles, and "scattered my people among the nations" refers to persecution of the Jews in the form of anti-Semitism by these unbelieving Gentiles.

This anti-Semitism and persecution is narrated in Revelation 12:1-10. This period will mark the most intensive persecution of the Jews in the history of the world. And the bulk of the persecution occurs in the final half (3 and one-half years) of the Tribulation.

Matthew 25:31-46 tells the story of these Gentiles. They were evangelized by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation. Some became believers; these are the sheep. Others rejected Him; these are the goats. The sheep enter the Millennium. The goats are cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity.

⁵³Thieme, Robert. Joel; from notes, and Anti-Semitism; privately published, 1974.

Joel 3:3 “They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.”

The term “they” refers to the Roman soldiers under Titus in 70 AD as they besieged the city of Jerusalem. As you recall, the Emperor Nero thought he was quite a musician and vocalist. He gave command performances at his own command. All his officials and nobles were mandated to attend. And, of course, wishing to remain alive, they lied and praised his abilities. There was one, however, who, according to Theodor Mommsen, “fell asleep” at one of Nero’s performances; this miscreant was Vespasian; he was a Roman General and very powerful. Nero could not execute such a powerful man, so he banished him to Judea, which was Nero’s idea of a living hell. After Nero’s death, Vespasian and his three legions were perceived as being all that could keep the Empire together; thus, Vespasian was made Emperor. Almost simultaneously, the Jewish situation exploded. And Jerusalem was besieged.

Vespasian’s son, Titus, captured the city and destroyed it in August of 70 AD. One million nine hundred thousand Jews, men, women and children, died during the siege and capture of the city. Only 97,000 Jews survived and they were all taken prisoner. It was for this group of survivors that the Roman soldiers “cast lots.” They gambled for the “distribution of prisoners of war.”⁵⁴

The phrase “cast lots” is also used in Obadiah 11 and Nahum 3:10. “On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem (the survivors), you were like one of them,” Obadiah 11. And Nahum 3:10 says, “Yet she was taken captive and went into exile. Her infants were dashed to pieces at the head of every street. Lots were cast for her nobles, and all her great men were put in chains.”

So the picture is one of the Roman soldiers gambling for survivors of the city of Jerusalem, just as armies had done in the past. “And traded boys for prostitutes” means that young Jewish boys were given over as catamites to be used in pederasty. “Jews (particularly slaves) were often forced into shameful passive participation during orgies and private shacksups. In A.D. 70, Emperor Vespasian ordered three shipsful of eminent

young male Jerusalemites to be placed in Roman brothels; whereupon his son Titus, in celebration of his victory, sent an additional four hundred Judean boys and girls ‘for immoral purposes.’”⁵⁵

Too, “they sold girls for wine that they might drink;” this is a reference to the selling of young Jewish females to another soldier for a cup of wine. That was the value of a female after the siege of Jerusalem: for a cup of wine you could buy one. And of course the intent was rape, violence, etc.

Flavius Josephus witnessed the siege of Jerusalem and wrote of it. He describes the horrors, suffering, starvation and death of the siege. Our Lord, also, prophesied the fall of Jerusalem in Luke 21; the year was 30 AD. This passage is very similar to, but not the same as Matthew 24. Matthew 24 describes the period just prior to the Second Advent; Luke 21 describes the period prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. There are very real similarities, but these are the similarities of persecution.

Luke 21:6 “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.” This is Titus destroying the Temple in 70 AD.

Luke 21:9 “When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” Here our Lord is speaking of that period from 30 AD until 70 AD. There will be wars and commotions.

Luke 21:11 The “great signs” includes the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost. This fulfills Isaiah 28. The purpose of tongues was to evangelize the Jews and to warn of the coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the subsequent *Diaspora*, the dispersion of the Jews as a punishment from God.

Luke 25:13 “This will result in your being witnesses to them.” Here our Lord is saying that crisis and suffering bring people to salvation.

Luke 25:16 “You will be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.” This reference is confirmed by Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian. Many of the Jews, during the siege, betrayed their own family members for food, even to the point of cannibalism.

⁵⁴Wolff, Hans Walter. Joel and Amos; page 77.

⁵⁵Edwardes, Allen. Erotica Judaica; page 122.

Luke 21:20 "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies (the Roman armies of Titus and Vespasian), you will know that its desolation (the dispersion, the final phase of discipline) is near."

Luke 21:24 "They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations (dispersion of the Jews throughout the world). Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles (the Church Age) are fulfilled." Here is the verse that defines the difference between this description of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the siege of Jerusalem during the Tribulation just before the Second Advent, the Day of the Lord.

Joel Chapter 3:4-8 is a parenthetical insertion; in this parenthesis Joel marks a parallel between the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 AD, and the Philistine raid on the Jews in 845 BC, when the Philistines took many Jews captive and sold them to the Phoenicians, who in turn sold them as slaves to the Greeks. This event was within the memory of Joel's generation and was therefore a very real example of that which Joel is stating in his parenthesis: God punishes anti-Semitism; the Jews themselves are to remember this and depend upon it.⁵⁶

These Jewish slaves were sold to the Greeks by the Phoenicians because the Greeks of the ninth century BC were the most notorious homosexuals and pederasts in the world. And the demand for young people of both genders was extraordinary. "The cult of nudity, and deification of the male body, had made homosexuality quite fashionable in Greek society. Athletics and militarism were prime interests, and personalized with hedonistic humanism they encouraged a camaraderie conducive to spiritual and physical homophilia."⁵⁷

This particular event is related in II Chronicles 21:16 and 17, which says, "The Lord aroused against Jehoram the hostility of the Philistines and of the Arabs who lived near the Cushites. 17 They attacked Judah, invaded it and carried off all the goods found in the king's palace, together with his sons and wives. Not a son was left to him except Ahaziah, the youngest." The reference to Jehoram dates the passage for us: 845 BC.

⁵⁶Thieme, Robert. Joel.

⁵⁷Edwardes, Allen. *Erotica Judaica*; page 110.

Joel 3:4 "Now what have you against me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done."

Joel begins the parenthesis with the *judicial or forensic language*, "What have you done to me?" This legal phrase is also found in Judges 8:1; Jeremiah 2:5,29; Micah 6:3. The prosecuting attorney is the Lord Jesus Christ; He makes the charges; and He will act as judge and executioner.

Tyre, known now as Sur, was the foremost city of the Phoenicians. Sidon, known now as Seda, located approximately 30 miles north of Tyre, was at one time the foremost city of Phoenicia. Indeed, this is why both the Old Testament writers and Homer refer to the Phoenicians as 'Sidonians.' And the phrase "all you regions of Philistia" refers to the Philistine pentapolis: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron.

The Phoenicians were great traders and were the only people of the ancient world intrepid enough to sail out of the Mediterranean, through the Pillars of Hercules, into the Atlantic. And the Philistines were progeny of the 'Greek Sea Peoples' and were a military people. They trained year-round and found it demeaning to farm and produce food. Thus to obtain food and necessities they raided Judah for food. And to obtain money they kidnapped Jews and sold them into slavery.⁵⁸

Another translation of verse 4 might read: "Do you inflict evil on me? (The question demands a 'yes' answer.) When you inflict evil on me, quickly and speedily I will inflict evil on your heads."^{59,60} [59,60]

⁵⁸Macalister, R. A. S. *The Philistines: Their History and Civilization*; 1965. Corroborated by Robert Thieme in Joel.

⁵⁹Thieme, Robert. *Notes on Joel*; 1976.

⁶⁰Wolff, Hans Walter. *Joel and Amos*; page 78. Here, although he argues for a date of 400-443 BC, Dr. Wolff presents in-

formation that admits to a much earlier dating: "Myers, 'Date,' 181-85. Cf. Nvy ('Javan,' i.e. Greece) in Ezek 27:13,19 --

in the framework of a list which may derive from the period before 587 and may perhaps have

Joel 3:5,6 “For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far off from their homeland.”

The phrase “fines treasures” refers to the furniture and articles from the Temple in Jerusalem. These items, the silver and gold, and the people of Judah and Jerusalem are all viewed as God’s possessions. This, then, is the intimacy between God and the Jews. And we have already seen the purpose for which the Greeks intended the purchased slaves. Not only were they bartered for, but they were removed from their homeland.

Joel 3:7,8 “See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.’ The Lord has spoken.”

The hip’il of rvf means to “activate.” Thus God will allow the Jews to participate in the punishment of the Phoenicians. This is a reference to the destruction of Sidon by Artaxerxes III in 343 BC; and the invasion and subjugation of Tyre and Gaza in 332 BC by Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great was favorably disposed toward the Jews and had Jewish administrators as governmental assistants. After he conquered Phoenicia, he turned the Phoenician slaves over to these Jewish assistants; they in turn sold them to the Arabs (called Sabeans in verse 8). The Sabeans inhabited the southern tip of Arabia.⁶¹

This completes the parenthesis of Joel 3:4-8.

Joel 3:9 “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.”

This marks that what follows is not for the Jews, but for the armies already mentioned in Joel 2:7, the armies of the King of the North. Jeremiah 6:4 makes a comparable statement: “Prepare for battle!” And the term “nations” refers to the

reached the transmitter of

the book of Ezekiel by way of Tyrian exiles; so Zimmerli, Ezechiel, 661.”

⁶¹Thieme, Robert. Joel.

Gentiles. Here is our Lord challenging, even provoking, the enemy armies to advance upon Jerusalem. The sarcasm of the challenge is apparent to us, but not the enemy armies; they are confident, they are arrogant, they are stalwart paladins nothing can withstand.

Joel 3:10 “Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, ‘I am strong.’”

In this verse the sarcasm is cogent: the arrogant ones, they are in reality the weaklings; but they believe they are “strong.” They are to convert their implements of peace into weapons; they are to manufacture arms rather than farm machinery. Their entire economy is to change to a warlike status. And only after this use of their farming tools as weapons, will the opposite be true: one final battle, Armageddon, will convert the arms to plowshares, but only Christ can accomplish this during the forthcoming Millennium. Compare Isaiah 4:2 and Micah 4:3 with this verse.

Joel 3:11,12 “Come quickly all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O Lord! Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side.”

Here, all the Kings of the four power spheres of the Tribulation are summoned to do battle with the Lamb of God. The gauntlet is thrown down! Assemble your armies at Jerusalem. They, the “nations,” the unbelieving Gentiles of the Tribulation, will be judged in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And the phrase “bring down your warriors, O Lord” might also read “cause the mighty ones to shatter (fall down), O Lord!”

Joel 3:13 “Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow -- so great is their wickedness!”

The “sickle” or “pruning knife” cuts down the fruit, which are the enemy soldiers. “For the harvest is ripe” refers to the end of the Tribulation. The time is right -- the time is now. The Second Advent occurs at precisely the correct moment. Anti-Semitism is at its pinnacle. And “great is their wickedness” means that evil, hate,

violence, and lawlessness have reached the saturation point -- it can get no worse.⁶²

The "winepress" is the treading basin of the vintner and it is filled with the enemy unbelieving Gentiles; below it is the "wine vat," where the grape-juice (blood) collects after the grapes have been trampled. And it overflows, just as the evil it represents has overflowed. And the white gown of our Lord as the vintner will be stained by the juice, as in Isaiah 63:1-6.

Joel 3:14 "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

The first use of "multitudes" refers to the evangelism of the Jews during the Tribulation; the second use refers to the evangelism of the Gentiles during this same period. And they are said to be "in the valley of decision;" the "valley" here is world evangelism during the Tribulation, and "the decision" is to believe in Christ or not. "What think ye of Christ?" Unbelieving humanity must decide. And the climax is judgment and destruction.⁶³

Joel 3:15 "The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine."

Here, once again, is the supernatural darkness just prior to the Second Advent of our Lord. And now we have another, and third, function of this supernatural darkness introduced: evangelism!

1. As we saw, the darkness protects the believing Jews.
2. It announces the coming of the "light of the world," our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. It provides a final, culminating opportunity for the unbelievers of the Tribulation to concentrate and decide about Christ. Remember, no light will light, no match will strike, no flashlight will work, no switch will produce light. Total, complete, unyielding darkness surrounds everything. Thus, people, when confronted with this supernatural darkness will have to contemplate and meditate upon the gospel and Christ.⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Thieme, Robert. Joel.

Joel 3:16 "The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel."

The Hebrew word for "roar" describes the victorious cry of a soldier as he destroys his foe. And "refuge" is a "hope;" while a "stronghold" is a "strength." These two terms are used together in Isaiah 25:4, which says, "You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall."

Joel 3:17 "Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her."

"Then you will know" is a reference to the full knowledge of Christ that will pervade the souls of all believers during the Millennial reign of our Lord. This 'full knowledge' has already been discussed in Joel 2:27-29. And God "will dwell on Zion, my holy mountain;" this statement is also found in Isaiah 8:18, which says, "Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion." The *Shekinah Glory* will dwell, not as an effulgence, but as a Person, the theanthropic Person, the God-Man, on Mount Zion.

And no "foreigners," i.e., Gentiles, will pass through the city of Jerusalem. Remember, the Jews inherit the land of the covenants; it belongs to them, and not to the Gentiles. And no foreign invader will ever again hold hegemony over it.⁶⁵

Isaiah 52:1 puts it thusly, "Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again." And Nahum 1:15 puts it this way, "Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, O Judah, and fulfill your vows. No more will the wicked invade you; they will be completely destroyed."

⁶⁵The interpretation, here, is based on the scholarship of Robert Thieme, and Hans Walter Wolff.

Joel 3:18 "In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the Lord's house and will water the valley of acacias."

This verse is echoed in Amos 9:13-15. And both writers, Joel and Amos, provide pictures of the tremendous prosperity that will constitute the Millennial reign of our Lord. And the "fountain that flows out of the Lord's house" will be *literal* waters, but they also imply great spiritual blessings and refreshment of soul and spirit. These waters manifest signs of life. This is in contrast to the words of our Lord in Jeremiah 2:13, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and they have hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which cannot hold water." There is a vast difference between water stored in a receptacle that grows stagnant, and living water from a cool, clear spring. One depicts the blandness of spiritual apostasy, the other presents the absolute Truth as it comes from God. One may slake the thirst, but it tastes bitter; the other refreshes as it restores vitality.⁶⁶

The "acacias" represent perfect prosperity to all mankind during the Millennial reign of Christ. The term 'acacia' refers to the *Shittah Tree*; its wood was used in the tabernacle, for the woodwork of the Ark of the Covenant, the altars and their staves, the table, the boards, bars and pillars, according to Exodus 25:5,10,13,23; 26:15,26,32; 27:1,6; 30:1,5. The wood was plentiful in the wilderness of Sinai and was prized for its strength and durability. In the Ark of the Covenant the gold represented the deity of Christ, and the acacia wood represented the humanity of Christ; and together they formed the God-Man, true God and true Humanity in one, unique Person. And during the Millennium, the Humanity of our Lord will be manifest to all of mankind, everyday.⁶⁷

⁶⁶The interpretation, here, is based on the scholarship of Merrill F. Unger and Hans Walter Wolff.

⁶⁷The terminology utilized here is borrowed from Robert Thieme.

Joel 3:19 "But Egypt will be desolate, Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood."

All the past enemies of the Jews will be shattered for their anti-Semitism, from which followed persecution and violence to the Jews. The first persecutors of the Jews are depicted by the term "Egypt;" and the last of Israel's persecutors are depicted in the term "Edom." For "Edom" came to be a Hebraism for all of the Roman Empire: "Edom was another anathema to Israel. It was personified by Esau -- in original Hebrew, GHASHU, the "Presser" or Incubus -- distinctively described as "SHA'IR" (goatish, hairy, satyresque, the "nature of the beast"). With the Judiazation of Edom, Esau becomes symbolic of the whole Roman Empire: its abolition of circumcision and its adulation of murder, rape, plunder, and homosexuality."⁶⁸

Thus all the oppressors of Jews are encompassed by these two terms, from the Egyptians to the Romans in 70 AD. And this analysis and interpretation is confirmed by Obadiah 1:9-14, from which verses 9 and 10 are herein quoted, "Your warriors, O Teman, will be terrified, and everyone in Esau's mountains will be cut down in slaughter. Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever."

Joel 3:20,21 "Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations. Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon. The Lord dwells in Zion!"

Here Israel will be gathered and restored forever and ever, as per the unconditional covenants. The phrase "their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon" (yTmqnv MmADA) would be better rendered, "I will avenge the blood which I have not avenged."^{69,70} [69,70] This is a prominent statement of judgment: God will deal with the enemies of Israel, his personal property, through His perfect Justice.

⁶⁸Edwardes, Allen. *Erotica Judaica*; page 74.

⁶⁹Owens, John Joseph. *Analytical Key To The Old Testament*; page 800.

⁷⁰Thieme, Robert. *Notes on Joel*; 1976.

"The Lord dwells in Zion!" is the permanent future of Israel. The people of God have an everlasting future in Zion. Jesus Christ controls history; and Israel's future history has already been written and is assured because of the One being called Faithful and True.