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## **THE BOOK OF JOEL**

The Book of Revelation provides a general framework for end-time events, by providing a chronological sequence of seven seals, followed by seven trumpets, followed by seven plagues, followed by the millennial rule of Jesus Christ, followed by future eternity beyond that millennial rule.

The Old Testament contains many prophecies. Whole books are devoted to prophecy. One key to a better understanding of all the Old Testament prophecies is to learn how and where all those prophecies tie into the chronological framework presented by the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation enables us to see Old Testament prophecies in their proper perspective. The Old Testament prophecies, in turn, provide many more details for the framework that is presented to us in the Book of Revelation.

So let's briefly look at that framework before we examine the Book of Joel.

### **THE REVELATION FRAMEWORK**

Without going into details here, the framework presented in the Book of Revelation is as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Seal = False prophets and false religion

2<sup>nd</sup> Seal = Wars and constant warfare

3<sup>rd</sup> Seal = Famines

4<sup>th</sup> Seal = Pestilence and plagues

5<sup>th</sup> Seal = the Great Tribulation

6<sup>th</sup> Seal = Upheavals in the heavens before Christ's return

7<sup>th</sup> Seal = 7 Trumpets are revealed

1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet = 1/3 of all vegetation is destroyed by fire

2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet = 1/3 of all the oceans is destroyed

3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet = 1/3 of all rivers and fresh water supplies is destroyed

4<sup>th</sup> Trumpet = more upheavals in the heavens; 1/3 of sun and moon ...

5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet = also called the 1<sup>st</sup> Woe, a war

6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet = also called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Woe, another war with a huge army

7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet = the 3<sup>rd</sup> Woe = 7 Plagues, Christ returns & 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection

1<sup>st</sup> Plague = a physical affliction poured out on rebellious mankind

2<sup>nd</sup> Plague = the rest of the oceans are destroyed

3<sup>rd</sup> Plague = the rest of all fresh water supplies are destroyed

4<sup>th</sup> Plague = the sun scorches remaining vegetation with excessive heat

5<sup>th</sup> Plague = a period of total darkness

6<sup>th</sup> Plague = 3 demons gather together rebellious mankind for destruction

7<sup>th</sup> Plague = enormous earthquake and hail destroy everything still left

Then = Satan is bound for 1000 years and Christ rules for 1000 years

Then = Satan is loosed for a short while

Then = rebellious human armies are destroyed and Satan is bound again

Then = 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection takes place; Christ rules for another 100 years

Then = 3<sup>rd</sup> resurrection & the lake of fire burning up the whole universe

Then = new heaven & a new earth & the New Jerusalem

Then = future eternity in the Family of God

That's the basic framework for end-time events that is provided in the Book of Revelation. All of the Old Testament prophecies that apply to the end-time will in some way fit into that framework. So now let's look at the Book of Joel.

## **JOEL CHAPTER 1**

Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath **this** been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? (Joel 1:2)

This verse is the purpose statement for this whole book. By "this" it is referring to all the things that will be described in this Book of Joel. And the unequivocal answer is: **No, these things have never happened before** because they are a description of end-time events. So "the old men" cannot recall ever experiencing the things Joel will now present.

What this statement tells us is that this book will now discuss many of the things that apply to the seals and trumpets and plagues of Revelation. And while this discussion will leave out certain ones of the seals, trumpets and plagues, it will nevertheless keep things almost chronological. Here in Joel there is no going back and forth, as for example in the Major Prophets.

Where the account in Revelation is basically presented from the perspective of how the whole world is affected by these end-time events, in the Book of Joel the perspective is basically from the area of Palestine, and how these events will affect the greater area around Jerusalem. I suspect that the seals,

trumpets and plagues that are not mentioned here in Joel are the ones that have less significance for the specific area of Palestine, though this is only a guess on my part.

So let's now see the chronological progression presented by Joel.

That which **the palmerworm** hath left hath **the locust** eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath **the cankerworm** eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath **the caterpillar** eaten. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth. (Joel 1:4-5)

This is a reference to **the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seal** of Revelation, which refers to **famines**. This is the equivalent of Revelation 6:5-6. Joel is speaking about four different types of insects, which collectively have wiped out all of the crops. There is no hidden meaning in these verses, as many commentators try to tell us. This is not talking about "invading armies"; it is simply a reference to devastating famines brought on by insect plagues.

Later references to "armies" have nothing to do with these "locusts" here in verse 4.

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

This is a reference to **the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal** of Revelation, which refers to **the Great Tribulation**. This is the equivalent of Revelation 6:9-11. This is speaking about "a nation" coming up and conquering the land. God does not refer to grasshoppers and locusts as "nations". Any such claim is false. The expressions "laid My vine waste" and "barked My fig tree" refer to Israel being put into servitude during the tribulation.

Note also that the comparison is now to lions and not to locusts. There is no connection or comparison between lions and locusts, and no way does God compare locusts to lions. So verses 6-7 talk about something completely different from what is discussed in verses 4-5. The discussion has moved from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seal to the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal.

When the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal starts, then God's people will already be in the place of safety. And so verse 14 now applies to God's people at that end-time.

**Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD, (Joel 1:14)**

This is a reference to **the first fast** at the place of safety. It will be a time when "the elders" and "all the inhabitants" will be "gathered". That's exactly what happens at the place of safety, God's people will be gathered there under God's protection. The time in the place of safety will start with a fast, and it will also end with a fast, as we'll see in a little while.

The Hebrew word for "house" in the expression "the house of the LORD your God" is "bayith". While this word most assuredly does mean "house", it is also used 54 times to mean "**household**". And in 16 verses this Hebrew word is appropriately translated as "**place**". Examples include 2 Samuel 15:17 ("tarried in **a place** that was far off"), 1 Chronicles 28:11 ("and of **the place** of the mercy seat"), Nehemiah 2:3 ("when the city, **the place** of my fathers sepulchres, lies waste") and Exodus 25:27 ("shall the rings be for **places** of the staves to bear the table").

The point is that the expression "gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God" can equally correctly be translated as "gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the

land **into the place of the LORD your God**". And that is precisely what will happen when God's people will be gathered at the place of safety. Can you see how this verse applies to the end-time?

Let's continue.

Alas for the day! for **the day of the LORD is at hand**, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. (Joel 1:15)

This is a reference to **the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal** of Revelation, which refers to **the Day of the LORD**, also referred to as the day of God's great wrath. This is the equivalent of Revelation 6:17. And once the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal has been opened, then the Trumpets follow.

Let's continue.

The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O LORD, to thee will I cry: for **the fire hath devoured the pastures** of the wilderness, and **the flame hath burned all the trees of the field**. (Joel 1:17-19)

This is a reference to **the 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet** of Revelation, which refers to **1/3 of all the vegetation being destroyed by fire**. This is the equivalent of Revelation 8:7. The destruction will be 1/3 from a worldwide perspective, but for certain areas of the world that will represent 100% of their vegetation. These verses focus on the consequences of that 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet. Can you see that?

To continue:

The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for **the rivers of waters are dried up**, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness. (Joel 1:20)

This is a reference to **the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet** of Revelation, which refers to **1/3 of all the fresh water supplies being destroyed**. This is the equivalent of Revelation 8:10. Again, for some areas 100% of their fresh water supplies will be destroyed. This verse focuses on the consequences of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet, that all the animals suffer because of a lack of water, in addition to the pastures having been destroyed.

Can you see how chapter 1 has presented a steady progression through the framework for end-time events presented in the Book of Revelation? This process continues in chapter 2.

## **JOEL CHAPTER 2**

**Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is nigh at hand*; (Joel 2:1)**

This is a reference to **the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet** of Revelation, which refers to **the 2<sup>nd</sup> Woe**. This is the equivalent of Revelation 9:13-19. The statement "blow you the trumpet" is intended to show us that this is a reference to one of the Trumpets in Revelation. Could it be plainer?

Joel 2:1-10 presents a discussion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet. This is a description of the 200 million strong army of Revelation 9. Some people and some commentators think that Joel 2 is a discussion of locusts, which is totally wrong! My article "80 Mistranslation in the Bible and Their Significance" discusses Joel 2:2, 25

and Joel 2:8 under mistranslations #50 and #51. If you have any questions in this regard, please refer to the Mistranslations article.

We might just briefly look at verse 2.

A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; **there hath not been ever the like**, neither shall be any more after it, **even to the years of many generations**. (Joel 2:2)

That army of 200 million at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Woe will be without precedent in human history. And it will indeed be "many generations" before another army of that magnitude will come together again. Specifically, the army of rebels referred to as "Gog from the land of Magog" in Ezekiel 38 that will attack the area of Jerusalem during the millennium may or may not exceed 200 million people? But the army of rebels **at the end of the millennium**, when Satan is loosed for a short while, will certainly exceed 200 million people. That army is also referred to as "Gog and Magog" in Revelation 20:8-9. So it will indeed be "to the years of many generations" before another army of that magnitude will come along.

Let's continue in Joel.

And **the LORD shall utter his voice before his army**: for his camp *is* very great: for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it? (Joel 2:11)

By "His army" God does not mean a bunch of grasshoppers! By "His army" Jesus Christ means "the armies which were in heaven" (Revelation 19:14), those who are with Christ at the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

Christ "utters His voice before His army" means that He "utters His voice" just before He returns, like an announcement of things to come. What He says is basically **a call to repentance**. That is what "turn you even unto Me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning" in verse 12, and "rend your heart" in verse 13 mean. Verse 14 then asks the question: who knows if God won't decrease the punishment if we repent?

These verses after the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet are a clear parallel to Revelation 9:20-21, but from a different perspective. In Joel 2:12-14 the perspective is one of looking forward to perhaps decreasing the coming punishment by repenting. Revelation 9:20-21 then has the perspective of after the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet has been completed, and men still don't repent. But both sections (i.e. Joel 2:12-14 and Revelation 9:20-21) immediately precede the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet.

Let's continue in Joel 2.

### **Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: (Joel 2:15)**

This is a reference to **the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet** of Revelation, which refers to **the 3<sup>rd</sup> Woe**, as well as the time of the return of Jesus Christ and the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection.

This is a reference to **the second fast** at the place of safety. My guess is that when the two witnesses are killed, then the leaders of God's people in the place of safety will call for a fast, as well as daily church services for those last three days before Jesus Christ's return. Everyone in the place of safety will then know that Jesus Christ's return is very imminent.

Can you see how "blow the trumpet in Zion" is a reference to the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet specifically? That's about as plain as we could ask for. Joel 2:15-27 is a discussion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet from a specific perspective.

Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: **let the bridegroom go forth** of his chamber, **and the bride** out of her closet. (Joel 2:16)

Exactly! That is the time when Jesus Christ, the bridegroom, comes from heaven (i.e. "out of His chamber"), and those in the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection, the bride, come out of the place of safety (i.e. "out of her closet").

So far the Book of Joel has discussed things in a strictly chronological order, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seal down to the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet, presenting a list of one major problem after the other. Now the account introduces a positive element for a few verses by getting ahead of events that still have to happen first. This getting ahead of the story is introduced with the expression "and it shall come to pass afterwards".

And **it shall come to pass afterwards**, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (Joel 2:28)

So verses 28-29 introduce a brief focus on the millennium, followed by a brief recap in verses 30-31 of things already described earlier in this book. Joel 3:1 still has this brief reference to the millennium. Then in chapter 3 the account gets back to where it had left off, i.e. the 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet.

### **JOEL CHAPTER 3**

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

The 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet having been blown in Joel 2:15, the account now skips over the first five plagues. So Joel 3:2 is a reference to **the 6<sup>th</sup> Plague**. This is the equivalent of Revelation 16:12-16, which basically amounts to **the gathering together of all the rebels** that want to fight against Jesus Christ.

This discussion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Plague goes all the way to Joel 3:14, with the expression "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision".

Let's continue in chapter 3.

**The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. (Joel 3:15)**

This is a reference to **the 5<sup>th</sup> Plague**, the equivalent of Revelation 16:10-11, which is **darkness**. So here we have the 5<sup>th</sup> Plague mentioned after the 6<sup>th</sup> Plague has already been discussed.

We should note that in the Hebrew text the verbs "shall be darkened" and "shall withdraw" are both in **the perfect tense**. The Hebrew perfect tense expresses a completed action. So where in our English text we read the future tense (i.e. "shall be darkened" and "shall withdraw"), in the Hebrew it does in fact refer to something that has already been completed. It would be better to say: **"the sun and the moon had been darkened, and the stars had withdrawn their shining"**.

So even though the reference to the 5<sup>th</sup> Plague is only presented after the 6<sup>th</sup> Plague has been discussed, the form of the verbs makes clear that this had in fact happened before the 6<sup>th</sup> Plague began.

I suspect the reason why this plague of darkness is only mentioned after the 6<sup>th</sup> Plague has been discussed is because this darkness will affect the battle that is about to take place. There is the contrast of darkness immediately before the armies are destroyed with the brilliant light that will accompany Christ's powerful intervention in destroying those armies.

Let's continue.

**The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. (Joel 3:16)**

This is a reference to **the 7<sup>th</sup> Plague**, the equivalent of Revelation 16:17-21 and also Revelation 19:11-21, **Jesus Christ and His armies making war** against the rebellious human armies.

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

This is a reference to **the millennial rule of Jesus Christ**, which lies beyond that 7<sup>th</sup> Plague. That is when Jesus Christ will be "dwelling" in Jerusalem. So Joel 3:17-21 apply to the millennium.

And that covers the Book of Joel. But it is the Book of Revelation that enables us to see all of the things in the Book of Joel in their correct perspective.

So why not take the opportunity to now go through the Book of Joel on your own?

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