

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***  
*107 East Austin*  
*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*  
*830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org*

**C0806 – February 13, 2008 – A Future Day Of The Lord**

Turn in your Bibles to Joel 1. **The word of the Lord that came to Joel**, the *dabar*, the word, the speech, this is verbal revelation, the language of God **that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel**. And that speech begins in v 2 **Hear this, O elders**, the speech is not directed to the king because more than likely this is the period after Queen Athaliah wiped out the royal house except for one little baby named Joash that was hidden in the Temple. During this time the nation was ruled by the **elders**, so the speech is first directed toward them. **And listen all inhabitants of the land**. Now, perhaps then the message is directed toward the northern and southern kingdoms, all who lived in **the land**. And this is followed by a series of rhetorical questions, these are the kinds of questions that make you think, ponder, they get the mental juices flowing. **Has anything like this happened in your days Or your father's days?** Surely they had heard of the locust plague in Egypt (Exod 10) now they were facing a locust plague. One of the questions commentators struggle over is whether the locust plague is past or future. It seems likely to me that the plague is past and they are in a crisis situation agriculturally and economically. So, the verses that follow describe a past day of the Lord. Obadiah had mentioned the day of the Lord (Obad 15) but Joel uses the phrase five times and develops the concept. It is a day when God catastrophically intervenes into history on such a scale that His sovereignty over all is undeniable and therefore He alone is God and He alone should be worshipped. These catastrophes are so great that people would like to forget about them and the carnal mind is prone to distorting the truth so God says, **Tell your sons about it, And let your sons tell their sons, And their sons the next generation**. Make sure this is remembered in history because it's a punishment for their sin and future avoidance of such plagues depends on obedience to God. So fathers should teach their sons and sons should remember history. What's the old saying, "Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it." Israel's history is to be remembered because it's a track record of Israel's failure to obey the Mosaic Covenant and God's faithfulness to discipline them. God had warned them in Lev 26 and Deut 28 that He would bless them if they obeyed but He would curse them if they disobeyed. One of the cursings was a locust

plague mentioned in Deut 28:38. v 4 describes it, “What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten.” There are four Hebrew words used here of the locust and these signify four successive waves of locusts that God sovereignly brought to the land of Israel to wipe out their agricultural produce. The effects of the devastation for four different groups begins in v 5 with the drunkards. They are commanded to **Awake**, drunks usually lay in bed all day, sleeping off their hangover, not caring what goes on in the world around them, only caring about themselves but now they are to **Awake, drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you wine drinkers, On account of the sweet wine that is cut off from your mouth.** Apparently the sweet wine was the most prized among the **drunkards** but now they can’t get drunk any more. They can’t anesthetize themselves to the pain. One of the key pagan tactics for coping with suffering situations is to anesthetize myself by taking drugs, getting drunk, musical ecstasy or sexual ecstasy, something that will numb my brain to the suffering situation, that’s what these Israeli’s were doing, anesthetizing their mind so they didn’t have to think about Bible doctrine but now they couldn’t get drunk because all the vineyards that provided the alcohol were demolished. Therefore weep and wail because you can’t get your anesthetic. **For a nation has invaded My land**, notice that God calls it His land and Israel were simply the tenants of His land. Of course the locusts here are figuratively called a **nation** for they are a destructive force like a human army. **Mighty and without number**, we said there can be billions of these locusts in a swarm. **It’s teeth are the teeth of a lion, And it has the fangs of a lioness**, they have little saw like teeth that rip apart vegetation like a lion rips apart flesh. **It has made my vine a waste And my fig tree splinters**, note again they are God’s vine and God’s fig tree. Symbols of blessing upon Israel now destroyed serving as signs of cursing. **It**, that is the nation of locusts, **has stripped them bare and cast them away Their branches have become white.** The fourth locust targeted the bark.

Second group addressed in v 8, probably Jerusalem or the inhabitants of Jerusalem, these city dwellers are **To wail like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth.** This is the extremely rare and bitter event of a **virgin** losing her **bridegroom** on her wedding day. She was all dressed in her wedding gown but now it is replaced **with sackcloth.** The parallel is clear, they had seen and heard of locust plagues before but none as terrible as this, this was an extremely rare and bitter event. Why is it so horrible, verse 9, **The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord.** These daily sacrifices in the temple set the rhythm for the nation’s life but the locusts had so devastated the land that the rhythm had been interrupted. **The priests mourn, The ministers of the Lord.** The priests mourned for themselves because they

lived off their portion of the daily offerings but they also mourned for those who could not approach God through the sacrificial system. **The field is ruined, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine dries up, Fresh oil fails.** Grain, wine and oil were all essential to temple worship. Some commentators think a drought accompanied the locust plague but it seems to me that what they had stored away to use in the temple was used up.

The third group in v 11 are the **farmers and vinedressers**. They were peasants who worked the surrounding land. **Be ashamed, O farmers, Wail, O vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley, Because the harvest of the field is destroyed.** There would be no **wheat or barley**. **Wheat** was more valuable than barley and was used to make good bread. **Barley** was the grain used by the poorer people. **The vine dries up**, that is, it withers after the locust destruction. **The fig tree fails**, it becomes exhausted and doesn't produce. **The pomegranate, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, All the trees of the field dry up.** These are the orchard's that produce wonderful fruit but they too wither. **Indeed rejoicing dries up from the sons of men.** Since harvest time was a time of great **rejoicing** when there was no harvest there was no **rejoicing**.

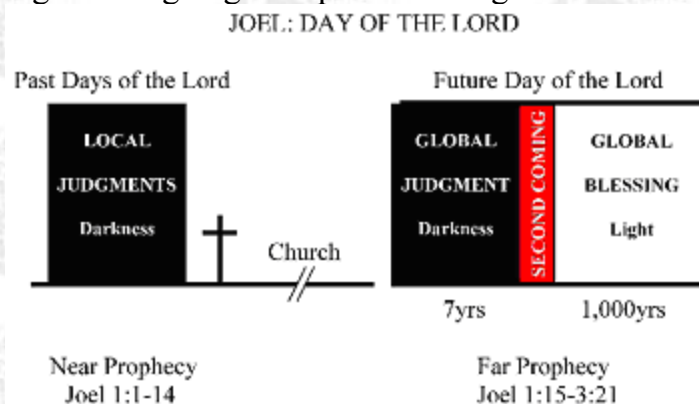
The fourth group are the priests in v 13. **Gird yourself with sackcloth, And lament, O priests.** They were to take off their ceremonial garments and put on **sackcloth**, a coarse black garment that signified deep inner remorse. They were to **lament** because due to the locust plague no sacrifices could be offered and that meant fellowship with God was cut off. **Wail O ministers of the altar! Come, spend the night in sackcloth O ministers of my God,** Joel here is exercising his prophetic authority over the priests, commanding them to extend their sackcloth wearing even through the night. Prophets had authority over all because they were the mouthpiece of God. Verse 14, the priests were to **Consecrate a fast, Proclaim a solemn assembly.** The whole nation was to rush to Jerusalem without stopping to eat for this was a solemn situation. Only one other day of the year were they required to fast and that was Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. So the priests were to **Summon the elders, All inhabitants of the land** to the temple in Jerusalem. **And** there they were to **cry out to the Lord** in godly repentance that He might forgive them and restore them. A **fast** also symbolized submission to the calamity.

So, vv 1-14 describe a past day of the Lord when the land was invaded by four successive waves of locusts that caused agricultural and economic losses. But something greater was also lost. The center of Jewish culture and life was the worship of God at the Solomonic Temple. Every daily activity surrounded the worship of God. But the locust invasion resulted in such a desolation of the land that grain was not available for the grain and

drink offerings. The nation was cut off from fellowship with God. Their hearts were so rotten that He could not accept their offerings, so He destroyed them by the locust invasion. The whole purpose was to stimulate a deep seated national repentance. If they did God would restore them to fellowship and divine blessing.

## II. The Future Day of the Lord (1:15-3:21)

Now, there's some disagreement on vv 15-20. Most say this is descriptive of the past day of the Lord, the locust invasion. A few take it that this is describing the future day of the Lord. I take it as referencing the future day of the Lord because while things in vv 16, 17 and 18 could refer to a locust plague the barns being torn down in v 17 and the fire devouring pastures and flames devouring trees in vv 19-20 sound more like the fiery judgments of the Tribulation. The difficulty with this view is the perfect tenses that would point to a past devastation and Joel's cry in v 19. But both of these can be explained by the prophetic perfect. So, I think v 15 is shifting from Joel's day to a future day but I'm not going to be dogmatic about that. **Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near**, Notice it hasn't come yet, the locust plague has come but **the day of the Lord is near**, that's the Hebrew word *qarob*, when you read it you think it means it's going to happen in the next few days but the noun actually has the meaning of "an imminent event", some event that is certain to occur but uncertain when it will occur. So, it could happen in the near future or the distant future but it will occur, it's imminent and that's the sense of the day of the Lord in v 15. It's an imminent event from God's perspective. **And it will come as destruction from the Almighty**. The Hebrew word for **destruction** is *shod*, the Hebrew word for **Almighty** is *Shaddai*, a play on words. **The day of the Lord will be shod from Shaddai**. Anyone see what attribute of God is being brought out here? Sovereignty. God is sovereign. So **the day of the Lord** here is the future Tribulation, the judgment phase of the Broad Day of the Lord. So, this is the picture Joel's painting. We're going to expand our diagram a bit.



So that now you can see Joel 1:1-14 deals with a past day of the Lord, those were local judgments, days of darkness, example, the locust plague but now in Joel 1:15-3:21 he's dealing with a future day of the Lord, global in scale, global judgment, a day of darkness and gloom. Within the future day of the Lord you have two phases, the Judgment Phase and the Blessing Phase. The Judgment Phase lasts for 7 years and it's consistently called a day of darkness and gloom, Joel 2 opens with such a description.<sup>1</sup> The Blessing Phase lasts for 1,000 years and it's consistently called a day of light, we know it as the Millennium or the Kingdom of God or the Messianic Kingdom. We also mentioned a third aspect called the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. This is the literal day of the Second Coming of Messiah that divides the Judgment Phase from the Blessing Phase.

#### A. The Devastation (1:16-20)

**Has not food been cut off before our eyes**, that happens with the locusts but it also happens in the future Tribulation (Rev 6:6, 8). But what about the past tense. Well, in the Hebrew the past tense here is the perfect tense. The perfect usually means past completed event with ongoing results. But it could be a prophetic perfect. The prophetic perfect is a common way of speaking because the events are so certain to take place they can be spoken of as already accomplished. That's the sense of the prophetic perfect and that's what I think is going on here. Joel has been launched into the future day of the Lord and can speak of it with absolute certainty because the past locust plague day of the Lord already happened. Not only will food be cut off but also **Gladness and joy from the house of our God?** If this is the future Tribulation then this refers to the future Tribulation Temple. At the mid-point of the Tribulation, Temple worship will be shut down by the Antichrist and then all hell will break loose on earth. Verse 17, **The seeds shrivel under their clods**; that doesn't sound like what locusts cause but what lack of rain causes and we know the two witnesses will be able to shut up the sky so that the rains do not fall from heaven (Rev 11:6) and that could be the cause of this drought. We said a few weeks ago these two witnesses could be Moses and Elijah, we don't know for sure but odd things happened to both of these guys bodies, Elijah never died and Michael and Satan argued about Moses' body. They're also the last two people mentioned in the OT. So they're two of the better candidates for the two witnesses. **The storehouses are desolate, The barns are torn down** because of the drought brought on by the two witnesses during the Tribulation people will savagely steal food and destroy the storehouses and barns **For the grain is dried up**. There's nothing to eat. This could be referring to the third seal of famine in Rev 6:6 which affects the wheat and the barley. Verse 18 has an interesting note about the effects of human sin on nature. **How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle wander aimlessly Because there is no pasture for**

**them; Even the flocks of sheep suffer.** When man fell nature fell and when man sins nature is affected by sin. Man's sin is the ultimate cause of suffering and pain. We are responsible for it because we sinned in Adam and we commit further sin and everytime we sin we add misery upon misery and don't think it just affects you, when God judges man's sin nature also suffers, that's what we're seeing here, nature suffering because of man's sin. Verse 19, **To You, O LORD, I cry;** This is Joel removed to the future crying as if he were in the midst of the Tribulation judgments, the locust plague of his day pales in comparison. **For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness And the flame has burned up all the trees of the field.** This could be a direct reference to the first trumpet judgment of Rev 8:7 where a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees and all the green grass but I doubt it could refer to a locust plague. Verse 20, **Even the beasts of the field pant for You; For the water brooks are dried up And fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.** Notice how even nature here, the beasts are panting for God due to the devastating Tribulation judgments. It's as if the Messiah's coming is just around the corner and nature is longing for Him who will restore all things. This is a stark reminder of Rom 8 where the whole creation groans as it suffers the pains of childbirth and longs to be set free from the futility. When man fell nature fell and when man is judged nature is judged.

## **B. The Demon Invasion (2:1-11)**

### **1. The Alarm (2:1)**

Verse 1, **Blow a trumpet in Zion,** that's the shofar. The shofar is usually a bent ram's horn that was blown for several reasons. Here the next phrase is in Hebrew parallelism and indicates it is to sound an alarm; **And sound an alarm on My holy mountain. in Zion on My holy mountain** refers to the Temple Mount where Solomon's Temple was located and where today you have the Temple Mount with the Dome of the Rock in the center, the Al Aqsa mosque on the south end and a Muslim school running along the northern wall and in the future where the Tribulation Temple will be built right on that mountain. **Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,** let them quake, **For the day of the LORD is coming;** this is the worst holocaust of all human history even far surpassing the global Flood of Noah because everyone died rather quickly in the Flood but in the Tribulation there are all these 21 judgments and they're spread across seven years. **Surely it is near,** that's the Hebrew *qarob* for imminence, it is certain to occur but uncertain when it will occur.

### **2. The Cosmic Phenomena (2:2a)**



Verse 2, **A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness.** Now, people like to get real spiritual at this point. **Darkness** means evil and gloom means spiritual depression and all that. Now, that may be true but this is not a spiritual description, this is a literal, physical description of the cosmos during the Tribulation. Look down at Joel 2:31, “The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.” Joel 3:15, The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.” Joel’s not alone, turn over to Zeph 1:15. This is all over the Bible. It really will be **dark**, it really will be **gloomy**, it really will be **a day of clouds and thick darkness.** Probably the light of the sun will be impeded from reaching earth. Zeph 1:15, “A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,” If you turn over to Amos 5:18. There were some Jews who were longing for the day of the Lord because they thought it was going to be a big party or something. But look at what Amos says, “Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose *will* the day of the LORD *be* to you? It *will be* darkness and not light;” Of course, this is a description of the Tribulation period. There will be several blackouts during the Tribulation. For the first one turn to Rev 6:12 “I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth *made* of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;” That’s blackout number one. Blackout number two is in Rev 9:2, “He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.” Blackout number three is in Rev 16:10, “Then the fifth *angel* poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,” Finally, blackout four you have to turn back to Matt 24:29, this is the day of the second coming, it’s actually the very next day after the 7 year tribulation has expired, ““But immediately *after* the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” There are many other passages describing this cosmic phenomena of darkness (cf. Isa 13:10; Amos 5:20). Turn back to Joel 2 to see that this is going to be global in scale.

**a. The Invasion (2:2b-9)**

**i. The Unparalleled Force (2:2b-c)**

Middle of verse 2, **As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people;** This is a difficult analogy but just think when the sun is rising and it

begins to spread illumination over the **mountains** of the whole earth, enlarge the mental imagery of what you see in your limited experience when the sun rises to the whole earth, so, in the same way **there is a great and mighty people** coming across the surface of the whole earth. This is clearly global just as the dawn is global. This is the greatest army numerically ever to walk the face of the earth. Now, the question here and many expositors disagree on these things, but here the issue is this. Is this another locust plague? Lots of commentators hold that position, a second opinion says, “No, this is a human army that came in the past”, namely Assyria and Babylon and there’s a third view and it says, “No, it’s a demonic army” and that’s my view. I don’t think there’s much to vindicate a natural locust or ancient army here. This is something far beyond the natural, it’s supernatural and it’s global in scale just as the dawn. Now, the obvious question everyone has then is “Well why does it say **people**?” And the answer to that question is that word is *am* and it refers to “the solidarity of a group, the unity of a group.” There are a number of passages where this word has the sense of “troops” who operate in unison (e.g. 1 Sam 11:11). And that’s the description we read in Joel 2:8, “They do not crowd each other, They march everyone in his path...They do not break ranks.” They function as a unit, that’s why the word *am* is used here but it does not designate them as humans necessarily. I’d translate it a “great and mighty force”. I think they are a demonic force but let me hearken to add that I don’t think Joel or Joel’s contemporaries could have known that. You have to have future revelation to know that for certain, you have to have the Book of Revelation. We have that vantage point, they did not. Now, he concludes verse 2 with these important words, **there has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.** In other words, again this is pointing to the global scale of the conflict. This is a totally unique and unparalleled period of history. It is the ultimate holocaust. When I did the math several years ago to calculate the death toll of Hitler’s holocaust as compared to the percentages in the Book of Revelation, if you work those out you have at the minimum, at the very minimum ½ of the earth’s population decimated, and quite frankly I think it will be much closer to total, but at the minimum of ½ of the earth’s population and you compare that to Hitler’s 6 million, he only killed 0.2% of the people that will die in the Tribulation. The death toll is unfathomable. I hope you’re seeing that this is a completely unique and unparalleled holocaust. This makes Hitler’s Germany look like a pinprick in humanity. But most importantly, I hope you are realizing the hostility of sin, the violence of sin, the wickedness of sin as contrasted with the holiness of God. Sin is an outrage, it is detestable. Now, when is this unique period? Three other passages speak about an unparalleled period of judgment. Since there can only be one such time all four passages must be referring to the same time. First, Jer 30:5-7. “For thus says the LORD, ‘I have heard a sound of terror, Of dread, and there is no peace. <sup>6</sup>‘Ask now, and see If a male can



give birth. Why do I see every man *With* his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And *why* have all faces turned pale? <sup>7</sup>Alas! for that day is great, *There is none like it*; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it." Second, turn over to Dan 12:1. Daniel is often thought of as a prophet but the Hebrews classified his book as a part of the wisdom writings. Daniel was a man of wisdom. But here's one of his prophecies, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. *And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time*; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued." Finally, Jesus spoke of this unparalleled time of distress in Matt 24:21. V 15 sets the context with the act of the abomination of desolation. We know from Dan 9:27 that this occurs at the mid-point of the Tribulation. Then Jesus says in v 21, "For then there will be *a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.*" So, Jesus coined this unparalleled period of time as the "great tribulation", Jeremiah called it the "time of Jacob's distress", Daniel called it a "time of distress". Both Daniel and Jesus indicated this was the second half of the Tribulation. That's why you can't say this is a natural locust plague and you can't say this is the human army of Assyria or Babylon. **there has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it.** The only period of history described that way is the second half of the tribulation, that is what Jesus called "the great tribulation".

## ii. Their Devastation (2:3)

Verse 3, let's see if this sounds like a human army. Here's a description of their devastation. **A fire consumes before them And behind them a flame burns.** Fire goes forth to destroy. **The land is like the garden of Eden before them,** this shows agricultural development in the land of Israel, the land is fruitful, it's productive, it's blossoming and if you were in the land of Israel 150 years ago this is not what you would have seen. It was a swamp land. Only since Israel has become a nation in 1948 has the land been developed primarily in the north. Currently they are planning to develop the southern Negev, that's actually where David ben Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel was born and after his political career he spent his time farming in the Negev. So, I think the agricultural development of Israel that will result in this description is occurring as we speak. **But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them.**

## iii. Their Appearance (2:4)

Verse 4 is a description of their appearance. **Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;** Alright, they look like horses. How many humans do you know that look like **horses? And like war horses, so they run.** How many humans do you know who run **like war horses?** They are not humans and they are not horses, they are something like horses, they run like horses.

#### iv. Their Sound (2:5)

Verses 5 describes the noise they make. **With a noise as of chariots** that's a deafening sound, a swarm of locusts is loud but this is much greater. **They leap on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people arranged for battle.** Note that it keeps using the prepositions "like" or "as" to indicate similarity not identity. They are something like a horse, they sound like a chariot, they are arranged like a mighty people for battle.

#### v. Their Terror (2:6)

Verse 6 describes the terror they evoke. **Before them the people are in anguish;** this means they writhe in fear. **All faces turn pale,** they lose their color for fear as when one faints (Lk 21:25-26).

#### vii. Their Speed and Agility (2:7)

Verse 7 describes their speed and agility. **They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths.** This is describing the rapidity of the attack, their agility in scaling obstacles and their obedience to the task at hand, they do not turn aside from their mission.

#### viii. Their Discipline and Unity (2:8)

Verse 8 describes their discipline and unity. **They do not crowd each other,** everyone is perfectly spaced out, **They march everyone in his path; When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks.** They are highly disciplined and operate as a single force, as a single organism.

#### vix. Their Attack (2:9)

Verse 9 describes their attack, **“They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter through the windows like a thief.** The language is borrowed from locust invasions and applied here to this force. Who are they? Turn to Rev 9. This chapter describes the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet judgments. We said when we studied the Revelation that the 7 seals occur in the first half and the 7 trumpets and 7 bowls occur in the second half of the Tribulation, the great tribulation. So this is clearly in the second half as Joel 2:2 demands, this is during the unparalleled day, the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, there can be no other day like this one, Dan 12:1, Jer 30:7; Matt 24:21. Note the similarities starting in v 16, “The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.” So we have a unified army of horsemen. v 15 says they are under the command of four fallen angels which hints that all 200 million are fallen angels. Joel described the army as appearing like horses and running like horses and John describes them as an army of horsemen. No one has ever seen an army of 200 million but it would certainly fit with Joel’s description of a mighty force that spread over the earth like the dawn (Joel 2:2). Their goal; extermination of 1/3 of the human race.

	Joel 2:1-17	Rev 9:13-22
Number	“a great and mighty force”	“the number of them was 200 million”
Destruction	“fire consumes before them”	“fire proceeds out of their mouths”
Appearance	“their appearance is like horses”	“I saw horses with heads like lions and tails like a serpent”
Immediate Call	repent	repent

Verse 17, look at the description, “And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: *the riders* had breastplates *the color* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.” Some people have tried to say these are the Chinese but as Arnold Fruchtenbaum said, “A person would be hard pressed to find just one Chinaman who looks like this, let alone 200 million of them.”<sup>ii</sup> Clearly this force led by four fallen angels are themselves fallen angels. These are clearly not literal horses, these breathe fire and smoke and brimstone. Their tails are described in v 19 as like a serpent with multiple heads. The fire that comes out of their mouths would explain Joel 2:3 where the fire burned up everything before them and consumed everything behind them. This description is followed in verses 20-21 with a call to repentance just like Joel 2:1-11 is followed by a call to repentance. So, the similarities are striking and what we might say is that Joel gives us a description of this and John gives an amplified version of the same event, a demonic invasion, the 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet. This is a normal aspect of progressive revelation, that God did not reveal everything at one time but bits and pieces

until we get a fuller picture. John is giving us the fuller picture. Joel is giving us some introductory information but they both refer to this future demonic invasion during the future day of the Lord, a global invasion of 200 million horse like demons that breathe fire, smoke and brimstone and have tails like a serpent with heads that bite who attack in immaculate unison destroying 1/3 of mankind.

#### **b. The Blackout (2:10)**

**Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.**

Verse 10 reports the cosmic phenomena accompanying the attack, both on earth and heaven. **Before them the earth quakes** due to the immense number of demons in the attack. **The heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness**, this is the second blackout of the Tribulation. It will be a darkness that can be felt and which will only increase the terror.

#### **c. The Lord's Judgment (2:11)**

Verse 11 reveals that this is the Lord's judgment, this is His army. **The LORD utters His voice before His army**; This is the shocking note and this is why Joel is written, to demonstrate that Yahweh is sovereign. Even though this army of 200 million demons is led by four angels who released them? Who is sovereign over them? Go back to Rev 9:13-14. "Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." The command to release comes from heaven. They can't do a thing until God says so. He and He alone is sovereign. Nothing happens in the universe without God's approval. So that this army of demons is actually His army used to accomplish His purposes. **Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word.** This army of fallen angels is carrying out the word of God. **The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome.**

Friends, it's hard to imagine all this when we live in a relatively tranquil world; yes we have tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, hurricanes, but this is something indeed **great and very awesome**. About 50 people died last week in a tornado. This is not talking about 50 people, this is not talking about 6 million people, this is not talking about 300 million people, the population of America, this is talking about billions of people. And this gives us something to very seriously ponder. One, the wickedness of sin; the rottenness of human depravity. Two, the graciousness of God. He's extended His arm

of salvation to all the nations that are at enmity with Him. Christ died for all men. Anyone who believes in Him receives eternal life. And three, if you are saved, if you do possess eternal life, what are you doing with your life? People you know, people I know, people all over the world made in God's image will enter this time of terror if they don't believe, if you and I don't take the message to them or provide funds for missionaries who are taking the message to them. What in the world are we here for if not to live everyday for the glory of God? How much of your life is just being wasted on piddly things? Why should God give you another day in this world? **The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome And who can endure it?** That's the question Joel leaves us with. Who can physically survive the future day of the Lord? Next week we'll get the answer. There will be those who escape, those who survive the great tribulation and enter the Messianic Kingdom. So, if you want to avoid the suspense read on.

---

<sup>i</sup> There is a question as to when precisely the day of the Lord begins. It's a difficult question. Some say it actually begins with the pre-trib Rapture (2 Thess 2:1ff), others say with the beginning of the Tribulation when the anti-Christ signs the peace covenant with Israeli leaders (Dan 9:27). I'm probably alone in holding that technically it begins shortly thereafter between the first and second seals (Rev 6:1-4) but I take it that way because the 1<sup>st</sup> seal is cold war, it will be a time of world peace and 1 Thess 5 says this period of peace and safety will be suddenly broken like a thief.

<sup>ii</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah*, (1984), 156.

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2008