

(Through the Bible) Joel 1-2

by Chuck Smith

Joel's prophecy warns of God's judgment and desolation that will come upon the land, and the importance of oral tradition in transmitting knowledge and faith.

Duration: 1:15:51

Scripture: Psalm 79:9, Joel 1:2-4, Joel 2:1-2, Joel 2:15-17, Joel 2:28-29, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:14-15

Topics: "End Time Prophecy", "Israel Restoration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the book of Joel in the Bible and how it describes a future battle. The nation of Israel needs to be established again in order for the prophecies of the last days to be fulfilled. The speaker emphasizes the tragedy of wasted potential and the negative influence of surrounding nations on Israel. The description of the invading army in Joel's vision aligns with modern warfare, highlighting the prophet's ability to describe something unknown in his time.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to the book of Joel? Joel is a prophet of which we have no light of his background, except what he gives to us. He is the son of Pethuel, but who Pethuel is, we don't know. So it really doesn't help us that much.

Joel was a prophet to Judah, that is the southern kingdom. He probably was familiar with Elijah, and no doubt was well acquainted with Elisha, because the time of his prophecy pretty much corresponds to the time that Elisha was prophesying to Israel, the northern kingdom. Joel was prophesying in Judah, the southern kingdom.

And in those days they did have schools for the prophets, where the prophets would gather together in these schools. Elisha conducted a school for the prophets, and so Joel was no doubt acquainted with Elisha. But of his background, nothing is really known.

Now in chapter 1, he speaks of a plague of locusts. And in the text, we read the palmer worm, the locusts, the canker worm, and the caterpillar. Actually, these words have been translated from the Hebrew words, and rather than being different insects, in the Hebrew, all of them relate to the different aspects of the locusts in its developing stages.

When it is first born, eating the small little things, and then as it grows and develops, finally consuming everything that is in the land. So, they had probably had one of the terrible plagues of locusts that in history often times afflicted that land. And after this terrible affliction of the locusts, Joel speaks, and he takes and likens it unto the coming judgment of God that will be coming upon the land.

So, in chapter 1, there is an immediate reference to an experience of desolation that the land has just experienced as the result of this plague of locusts. There are spiritual analogies that are made to it, and then he uses that as the springboard to go in to tell of the desolation that is going to come to the land in the last days, as there will be armies that will be coming, covering the earth like locusts cover the earth, and just desolating the land. So, this is the word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel, 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? Do you ever remember anything quite like this? Do you ever remember such a desolation? Tell to your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. Now, in those days, of course, most of the history was passed by word of mouth, as the fathers would relate to their children, and then the grandfathers would relate to their grandchildren, and then the grandchildren would say, well, my grandfather told me, you know, and thus the oral traditions and the oral history that was passed down. And much of the history was preserved through this oral tradition, as they would pass from one generation to another, the knowledge of the things that had transpired.

Now, it was the purpose of God that there be the transmission of knowledge within the families. Oftentimes, there were things that were established as memorials, the feast that God had ordered. All of them were for the purpose of remembering their history, to remember the work of God.

And so, the feast of tabernacles, they were reminded of how their forefathers were preserved through the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. So, they would build these little booths, and move out of their houses into these little makeshift lean-tos next to their house. And as they were building them, of course, the children would participate.

They would go out and gather the palm branches, and come dragging the palm branch with their dad. Daddy, what are we doing with this, you know, palm branch? Why are we making this little house here? And of course, the kids would always be excited about making a house to move into. You know how children are on things like that.

But the father would say, well, there was a time when our forefathers, first, were coming to the land. As they came out of Egypt, they spent 40 years out in the wilderness. But the whole time they were in the wilderness, God fed them, God cared for them, God watched over them.

And it gave the fathers a chance to talk to their children about how God had so moved in the history of those people. The Passover, the same thing. And even at the Passover, they developed the traditional question.

The child would say, Daddy, what makes this night different from all other nights? And then the father rehearses the history of their deliverance out of Egypt. And the purpose was to transmit the faith and the trust in God from one generation to another generation. And God looked at the home as the place for the transmitting of this information down the line.

And surely the home should be the place for the children to learn and to understand of the things of God. And you should be rehearsing and relating to your children that work of God that went in your own life, that work of God that you have seen. One beautiful thing about my mother was she was a good storyteller.

And she was always telling us the stories of how God answered prayer, how God had worked in her life and in the family history, the work of God. And she would rehearse it for us and it was embedded in our hearts, that learning to trust in God. If we were sick, then she'd tell us of how God had healed us in the time past.

When I had a terrible fever and my brother had asthma and things of this nature. And she'd rehearse to us the work of God in the past and thus it is implanted in the heart and in the mind of the child and then of course they carry on. So I rehearsed to my children many of the stories that my mother rehearsed to me of the work of God in our own family in times past.

When the children of Israel came through the Jordan River, God stopped the Jordan River at flood season and they were able to pass over the Jordan River without getting wet, without going into the water for God stopped the flow of the Jordan River in the flood season. Now, as they came through, they had men from each of the tribes take stones from the bottom of the Jordan River and put a pile of stones on the bank of the river when they came up out of the river. They laid up this pile of stones and the purpose was in the future as you're coming with your children, you're walking along this way and they see this strange pile of stones and your children say, Daddy, what is that pile of stones there? Then the daddies had the opportunity to tell their children how God had worked a miracle in bringing them into the land for the Jordan River that they saw them flowing by was stopped and the people came through on dry land because God stopped the flow to bring them into the land and they were able to rehearse for their children the things of God and it is God's purpose that this transmitting of knowledge, the knowledge of Him, should be within the family from generation to generation.

So it is our obligation to transmit it to the next generation and it then becomes their obligation to transmit it to the next generation and on down the line, this oral tradition and the transmitting of knowledge within the families.

Unfortunately, with the advent of radio, much of this transmission was lost and in my days, the kids were listening to Lux Radio Theater and Gangbusters and all of these radio serials, Little Orphan Annie and Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy and the tradition of conversation began to suffer with the advent of radio and of course TV almost has devastated the tradition of oral transmission of knowledge and now the children are entertained by the TV and there's very little just conversation within the family where you spend a whole evening just sitting and talking, sitting and telling stories, sitting and that and something vital I feel has been lost from the family unit by the invasion in our homes of radio and of television and of these other things that have taken away from the real

honest relating heart to heart to people and that oral communication and all and I think that a part of the breakdown of our society is surely traceable to the advent of entertainment in the home by way of radio and television but Joel encourages this oral transmission of knowledge now he begins to tell about this terrible plague that which the palmer worm hath left the locust has eaten and that which the locust has left the canker worm has eaten and that which the canker worm has left the caterpillar has eaten as I said these Hebrew words are devour and chewer and all and they are referring to the stages of the development of the locust so awake ye drunkards weep and howl all of you drinkers of wine because of

the new wine for it is cut off from your mouth so the first people to be

affected evidently the plague began in the fall now the last harvest gathered is the grape harvest in the land it's the last crop to be harvested so the plague began at the time of the grape harvest and devoured all of the grapes so that there was no new wine drinking had become a very great problem in Israel it is referred to by many of the prophets the drunkenness of the people had become a severe problem they were the first that were going to suffer as the result of this plague the other crops had already been harvested but the grapes but in the spring the new infestation you see all of the eggs were left and in the spring even a new and greater infestation that absolutely destroyed everything come springtime we don't yet know what is going to happen in California come springtime when

the larvae of these medflies began to hatch there are many who are predicting an infestation far worse than we experienced this last summer because of the larvae that is in the ground already of the medflies and it there are dire prophecies being made by many of the scientists of even a worse infestation this next spring and summer and it makes things look even worse for our governor I saw a bumper sticker a while back that I was found very amusing it said the fruits got him in and the flies will get him out now the Lord immediately likens this plague to a nation that is coming upon the land strong and without number whose teeth are like the teeth of a lion and the jaw teeth like a great lion and God cried out He hath laid my vine waste God often times likened Israel unto a vine Isaiah

the sixth chapter a whole chapter devoted to God's vineyard the vine that he planted hedged it about put a wine press in and all and how it failed to bring forth fruit Jesus said I am the vine, ye are the branches every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit and so this likeness of God's people to the vine but there is also a likeness of Israel to the fig tree and in the prophecy of Hosea he likens them to the first ripe of the fig tree in the ninth chapter the tenth verse in the book of Jeremiah God likens Israel to a basket of figs so rotten that they are good for nothing they have to be thrown out here again God cries they have barked my fig tree I believe that when Jesus in talking to his disciples about the end times and the signs of his return when he said to them you can now learn

a parable of the fig tree that he is making reference to the nation of Israel which God has likened unto a fig tree and thus I believe that that parable that Jesus made of the fig tree has tremendous significance in this day in which we live as he said that the sign of the budding of the fig tree would be one of the final signs of the nearness of his return happening within the generation that sees it bud so that the birth of the nation Israel is surely a remarkable sign that we need to be watching that signals the nearness of the Lord's return they've barked my fig tree that is they've eaten the bark they've made it clean bare the branches thereof are made white all of the bark has been chewed off and of course just that white under branch is visible lament like a virgin that is girded

with sack cloth for the husband of her youth that is the old maid who never got married she is lamenting over her plight the meal offerings and the drink offerings are cut out from the house of the Lord and the priest and the Lord's ministers do mourn now the meal offering was where you brought the fine flour which of course came from the wheat but the locusts have devoured the wheat field so there's no flour to bring an offering unto the Lord there's no there's no wine to bring an offering to the Lord from the vine so the priest are to mourn the field is wasted the land mourns for the corn is wasted the new wine is dried up the oil languishes be ye ashamed oh ye husband men you farmers actually how old you vine dressers for the wheat and for the barley because the harvest of the field

has perished the vine is dried up the fig tree languishes the pomegranate tree the palm tree also the apple tree even all of the trees of the field are withered because joy is withered away from the sons of man gird yourselves and lament ye priest how old ye ministers of the altar come and lie all night in sackcloth ye ministers of my God for the meal offering and the drink offering is withheld from the house of your God 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 and so they are calling for a fast among the people crying out unto God for help from this great calamity that has befallen them alas for the day the day of the Lord is at hand and as a destruction from the Almighty

shall it come so he takes that plague and now he moves prophetically to another day in which the land is to be devastated through the judgment of God the great day of the Lord and the day of God's judgment alas for the day the day of the Lord is at hand and as the destruction from the Almighty it shall come there is coming God's judgment upon the earth known in the scripture as the time of the indignation of God in the Old Testament or in the New Testament is called the time of great tribulation tribulation when God is going to judge the earth when God is going to send plagues upon the earth when again God is going to devastate the crops the food supplies and the famine will persist throughout the entire earth Book of Revelation describes the black horse of the famine the scales and a

measure of wheat or that is about a quart of wheat for a day's wage a man will work all day and his pay will be half a pound of flour for a whole day's wage and so the terrible devastation that is coming from the Lord now that is something that you need to know this great tribulation as destruction from the almighty there are people who have confused the whole prophetic issue as they have made the church Israel and thus they place the church on the earth during the great tribulation and they use such scriptures as Jesus warning his disciples that they would have tribulation but there is a vast difference between the tribulation that we experience as God's people and the great tribulation that is coming upon the earth the basic difference is the origin the tribulation that you experience

as a child of God has its origin in your enemy Satan he is the one that brings tribulation upon you in your endeavor to serve the Lord the great tribulation that is coming comes direct from God now that I am attacked by the enemy I can well understand I can accept but I thank God that even in those attacks from the enemy I have the power and the strength of the Holy Spirit within me so that I can overcome through the power of the Spirit within me however I cannot accept that God would attack me in as much as he is my father he loves me I love him and there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus so the fact that the great tribulation emanates from God precludes the church being a part of the great tribulation period it comes as destruction from the almighty is

not the meat cut off before our eyes yes joy and gladness from the house of our God the seed has rotted under the 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 oh Lord to thee will I cry for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness and the flame hath burned all of the trees of the field 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 and so we see a land in a very desolate condition no pasture for the cattle no crops they've been destroyed now he uses this as the springboard and he begins to speak now of a yet future

day of devastation that is coming from armies that are to invade the land and in this second chapter as he describes this invading army it is interesting to notice the description that he gives because it is not much

of a stretch of the imagination for us to see that he is describing modern warfare the things that he described were things that were totally unknown and unheard of in his day but yet there are things that are common in modern warfare now if you were Joel the prophet and God gave you a vision of a battle that would be taking place with modern warfare but all you knew was a battle with the armies with swords and spears and all how do you think you could describe a modern battle with helicopters, gunships and with the transporting of troops through planes with paratroopers and

so forth if you had a vision of this kind of a battlefield and tanks the cannons and so forth, the fire and all how would you describe it? probably much like Joel did here in chapter I think he did a tremendously commendable job in describing something he had never dreamed of and yet the Lord gave him an insight into the battle of the future day now the nation of Israel needed to be established again in order that the prophecies of the last days be fulfilled because in the prophecies of the last days there is that presupposition in all of the prophecies that Israel does exist as a nation again in fact not only existing as a nation but their worship is to be reinstated now as the nation Israel is to be reborn according to the prophecy one of the first of the real obstacles that they are

going to face will be their immediate surrounding nations according to the prophecies of Zachariah when Israel becomes a nation once more and they did and have faced the opposition from their surrounding neighbors but then a greater test is going to come and this will be when Russia invades the Middle East and in this invasion God will show his hands strong on behalf of the people and their eyes will be opened unto God like never before and then there is to be one final conflict as the Antichrist comes into the land with his armies of the federated nations of Western Europe and at this time the Jews will once more be driven from the land and find refuge in the wilderness, the rock city of Petra for three and a half years until God's wrath that He is going to pour out is completed it would

seem that chapter 2 is describing the Russian invasion in as much as the Lord refers to His removal far off from you to the northern army and in Ezekiel 38 it is mentioned that this army will be coming from the north interesting in the descriptions of Ezekiel as a cloud to cover the land and Joel also uses the pictures of the clouds and the darkness and so forth that will be created by this invading army blow the trumpet in Zion sound the alarm in my holy mountain let all the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord comes it is near at hand now the day of the Lord does encompass a period of time the great judgment that God is going to bring upon the earth is known as the day of the Lord the day of His fierce anger the day that God establishes the new kingdom of

righteousness through the reign of Jesus Christ is also known as the day of the Lord the day that the Lord gathers the nations for judgment is known as the day of the Lord so it encompasses the period of these last days so the day of the Lord is near a day of darkness and of gloominess so this is not the day of the triumphant reign of Christ that will be following the day of darkness and gloom a day of clouds and of thick darkness as the morning spread upon the mountains a great people and a strong there has not ever been the like neither shall there be any more after it even to the years of many generations a great army like has never been assembled in the history of man Russia today has some 80,000 tanks ready for battle never in the history of man has so much armament been created over

80,000 tanks and as he goes on to describe the invasion surely tanks are involved a fire devours before them behind them a flame burns the land is like the garden of Eden before them and behind them a desolate wilderness nothing shall escape them now when the Jews came back to the land one of the marvelous things that they did was take this land that had been like a barren wilderness and they began to

develop the land of Israel from an agricultural standpoint beautiful farmlands beautiful orchards beautiful avocado grows mile after mile stretching out of beautiful land like the garden of Eden and the hillsides which were too rocky to cultivate they planted with trees and millions upon millions of trees have been planted in the land so the barren hillsides are now beautiful forest and with

the planting of all of these trees they've been able to affect a change of the weather patterns and they've been able to increase the rainfall the annual rainfall in the land has been increased dramatically because of the extra humidity that has been put in the air through all of the trees that have been planted the forest that have been planted and their whole project of taking this land that was barren wilderness and planting it and developing it is really a marvel to everyone who visits they have developed marvelous new innovations in agriculture as far as irrigation and all the drip system of irrigation and the sprinkling systems and all they really just have proved to be fantastic farmers they've transformed the land and you'll hear the statement quite often they have made the land

like the Garden of Eden and it is true and here the prophecy said the land before them is as a Garden of Eden you could not have said that 50 years ago for 50 years ago the land was still the valley of Megiddo was still a swamp the Hula Valley was all swamp their Shiva Shiva was all barren desert and wilderness the Sharon Plains were just beginning actually at the turn of the centuries when they started developing in the Sharon Plains they bought the swamp land and then they began to create new ditches and all to drain the swamp land and then planted eucalyptus trees because they drink so much water out of the ground and then they began to plant the orange orchards and all and now it's a veritable Garden of Eden through their careful planning and wise development of the land but the fact

that he refers to the land before them like the Garden of Eden hey that took the present day that didn't happen until Israel became a nation and really began then to bring the Jordan water down to the wilderness areas for their irrigation and turning the land into a Garden of Eden but behind this invading army it's like a desolate wilderness war is such a horrible thing the devastation that it brings the Jews have taken a desolate wilderness and made it a Garden of Eden but these invaders are coming to take the Garden of Eden and again turn it into a desolate wilderness nothing shall escape them now he describes the appearance of this invading army and listen this is to me quite interesting the appearance of them is as the appearance of horses and as horsemen so they run like the noise of

chariots on the tops of the mountains shall they leap like the noise of a flame of fire that devours the stubble as a strong people that are set in battle array before their face the people shall be much pained and all faces will gather blackness they will run like mighty men they will climb the wall like men of war they shall march everyone in his way and they shall not break rank neither shall one thrust another they shall walk everyone in his path and when they fall upon the sword they'll not be wounded they shall run to and fro in the city and shall run upon the wall they shall climb upon the houses they shall enter into the windows like a thief the earth shall quake before them the heavens shall tremble the sun and the moon shall be dark and the stars shall withdraw their shining so

he describes this awesome invading army that is coming to desolate the land but in verse 11 there is another army and the Lord shall utter his voice before his army for his camp is very great for he is strong that executes his word for the day of the Lord is great and very awesome who can abide it and so he speaks of the Lord's army in contrast now the Lord is going to stop the Russians in Ezekiel chapter 38 God declares that when Russia and her allied nations invade Israel that God's fury is going to arise in his face and he is going to turn them back the battle of Armageddon which people are much more familiar

with than this battle of Russia when it invades the Middle East the battle of Armageddon will pit the forces of the Western world against the forces of the Eastern world primarily

China and Russia pitted against the forces of the Western world in the battle of Armageddon but here as this invading army has come the Lord speaks of repelling it with his army his mighty host and of course the description of the destruction of the Russian army by the host of the Lord is given to you in Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39 now because of this great desolation this great war that the people are going to face therefore because of this saith the Lord turn ye even to me with all your heart now one sad commentary that must be made against the modern nation of Israel is that the people really haven't turned to the Lord with all their hearts the people are not really very religious it is estimated that less than 10 percent of the Jews that are in the land are really religious at all and

we have observed this while we were there now they do observe religious observances that is the Sabbath day but so many of the Jews that we have conversed with in Israel claim to be atheist but though they claim to be atheist they keep Sabbath and they keep kosher as far as they will not eat dairy products with meat products and they're almost insulted when people do a lot of times when we are over there people unknowingly ask for a glass of milk when we've had a dinner with meat and they are polite but they let you know you can't have any milk when you've had meat and they keep this kosher kind of law yet they really don't know why many of them that we've talked to said they were atheist we said well why don't you eat bacon you know why don't you eat a ham sandwich well they you know ham

and cheese oh man so they are as those that were described in the New Testament they have a form of godliness and yet they deny the power of God they deny God in their lives but God is calling for them to turn unto Him with their whole heart with all of your heart the problem with many people is that they turn to God in a half-hearted way and this you might say is true in Israel people have turned to God in a half-hearted way turn to me God said with all your heart with fasting weeping and mourning that speaks of a real desperation before God it is sad that many times God has to bring us into desperate straits before we really seek Him there have been only a few times in my life when I was really desperate before God but I will testify to you each time I was really desperate before God

God met me in a very dramatic way when my mother was in our home and was dying this one who had made such a positive input for good in my life this person who had more influence on my life than perhaps anyone else one who I love so deeply appreciated so much and yet I knew I was losing her and as she was suffering in pain almost constantly one morning as I went into the room I just became so desperate before God as I saw her in this condition that I kneeled there at the foot of her bed and just cried out to God with my whole being and God met me in such a dramatic way as the Lord came and stood right beside me and began to talk to me about myself and about my mother and even in that same time he laid his hand upon her and touched her it was a marvelous experience but I had been brought to

the place of desperation our youngest daughter who has been such a joy to our lives such a blessing to us I don't know there's something about that you know you've had your family and then you have another one years later there's something that's sort of special you're older you're more mature you're able to enjoy them more you're not so nervous and all and they just are such a sunshine and a light and she was to us such a pretty little child so vibrant so full of life and as I held her in my arms all night long her body racked with fever and she was so sick so listless my heart was so desperate before God I cried out unto God with my whole heart she went into a convulsion I really thought this was it but I had said Lord you know that this little daughter is just the joy of life she means

so much to us we love her so deeply Lord if you want her and if it's your purpose to take her that's your business Lord we give her to you her life is yours and she went into that convulsion and I thought well this is it we called the doctor we bundled her up and we started to rush up to the doctor and on the way the Lord healed her by the time we got to the doctor she was perfectly well her little bubbly bright cheerful self again the doctor looked at her and said there's nothing wrong with her she's a good person said has she had a tetanus shock lately and he gave her a tetanus shock he said you know you should get them renewed every once in a while but it was that desperation of seeking God and God has never failed to come through when I really sought Him with all my heart but it isn't

often that I get in such a desperate strait God says rend your heart not your garments we read many times in the scriptures where problems came and the people would tear their clothes to show how upset they were or how deeply emotional they were touched and so they ripped their clothes and it was an outward demonstration of a deep emotional feeling but like all outward demonstrations people begin to abuse them you can go through the outward motions but not really feel it within it becomes sort of a thing of a hypocrisy where I look like I am going through it but it's just a it's just a display just a show and so it became a common place thing oh you can't go with me tonight oh you know and you rip your clothes and you know it was it didn't really show that deep deep deep grief sorrow that

the act originally intended to manifest so God says hey look I want to see your hearts ripped not your clothes I want to see your heart really torn before God rend your heart tear your hearts not your garments God doesn't want any sham when you come to Him God wants you to come to Him with your whole heart doesn't want to play games with you He wants you to be honest and sincere He wants you to rend your heart not your garments turn to the Lord your God the second call to turn to God and of course things are desperate that's the time to turn to God of course any time is a good time to turn to God but especially when things are desperate turn to God for God is gracious and God is merciful that's why we turn to Him that we might receive His mercy that we might receive His grace He is of

great kindness He is slow to anger and God doesn't like to use judgment to get people's attention it repents Him of the evil that is of the judgment that was necessary to get you to wake up to get you to turn around to get your attention God doesn't like to use harsh means He only does so because He loves you so much that He can't let you just destroy yourself so when you are head strong going your own path of destruction God will sometimes use very severe means to stop you and to get your attention maybe the death or the illness of someone that is very dear and close to you God is seeking, God doesn't like to use those means but unfortunately many times we are so dull in our spiritual sensitiveness that God has to use stringent measures before we ever respond it repents Him though, He

doesn't like using these kind of measures, turn to God for who knows just what God will do in helping you, blessing you who knows the blessings that God has in store for your life who knows what glorious things God has in mind for you surely I never dreamed in my wildest dreams all of the glorious blessed things God had for my life oh how thankful I am I turned my life over to God, oh what a blessing has been mine because I turned my life over to God, far more than I ever dreamed or thought, who knows what God has in mind for you as Dwight Moody was challenged by the statement, the world has yet to see what God will do through a man who will totally surrender his life to God who knows what God wants to do in and through your life you'll never know until you totally surrender yourself to

Him turn to God with your whole heart for who knows just what blessing God may have in mind for you blow the trumpet in Zion sanctify a fast call a solemn assembly of the people gather the people and

sanctify the congregation assemble together the elders and gather the children and those that are nursing let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber and the bride out of her closet and let the priest, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar and let them say spare thy people oh Lord and give not thine heritage to reproach that the heathen should rule over them, wherefore should they say among the people where is their God and so it is a time of national revival, call the people together before God and this day will come in Israel as they are threatened by this

insurmountable foe from a natural standpoint they'll be forced to cry out unto God and of course God calls upon the ministers to pray between the porch and the altar that God would spare His people from the devastation and the destruction of this enemy and as a result the Lord will be jealous for His land and pity His people yes the Lord will answer and say unto His people behold I will send you corn and wine and oil and you will be satisfied therewith and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen but I will remove far off from you the northern army and I will drive Him into a land that is barren and desolate and with His face toward the east sea and the hinder part towards the utmost sea and His smell shall come up and His ill seaver shall come up because He hath done great

things fear not O land be glad and rejoice for the Lord will do great things.

When we were over in Israel in 1973 and the Yom Kippur war broke out we did not at that point know just how deeply Russia may become involved any one of those skirmishes have the potential of escalating into a full scale invasion by Russia of the Middle East.

1973 almost did. The Russians were poised to send troops into the Middle East to bring a peace what they called a peace but what was really entailed was an invasion of Israel. They were planning that in 1973 when President Nixon called for a worldwide alert of all of our armed forces and Russia turned back.

When we were there in Israel I felt just as safe as a child in its crib because I knew that God was going to protect the land. I didn't know about the United States. I sort of felt sorry for you here at home.

There may be some stray nuclear weapons sent this direction but God is going to protect the people, the land, when Russia invades. People say, oh aren't you afraid to go over there with all the turmoil? I feel safer there than I do walking the streets here. God's watching over that land.

God's going to take care of them. Be not afraid. Fear not O land.

Be glad and rejoice for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid ye beasts of the field for the pastures of the wilderness do spring for the tree bears their fruit and the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then ye children of Zion and rejoice in the Lord your God for he hath given you the former rain moderately and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month.

Now the interesting thing is that one thing that has happened in Israel is the return of what they call the former and the latter rains. They begin to get their first rain sometime in October, late October, November and now they are beginning to get good heavy rains in the springtime and it is causing the land to just produce so abundantly all of the rain that they are now giving and God promised that he would restore again the former rain and the latter rain. Something that the land did not have for over two thousand years but now again is experiencing each year.

Tell me that God's word isn't true. Tell me that God doesn't know what he's talking about. The evidence is the nation of Israel.

All of the evidence anybody would ever need. The floor shall be full of wheat. The vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

And I will restore to you the years that the locusts has eaten, the canker worm, the caterpillar, the palmer worm, my great army which I sent among you. God's promise of the restoration of the years that were destroyed when they were away from God. You know this is what the prophet was saying.

God is gracious. God is merciful. It's tragic what we do with our lives.

I think one of the saddest things in the world is wasted potential. I see young people with such tremendous potential. Good minds.

Good personalities. Talented. And I see them just wasting their lives.

Doing such foolish things. Doing things that for years they will suffer the consequences. And I think of the wasted potential and I think that that's one of the greatest tragedies of our day are the lives, the wasted potential of lives.

Today when we got home from church, we looked out the window and in the school yard behind us we saw these young boys on their bicycles. Little boys. Ten, eleven years old.

And they looked up and they saw my wife looking at them out the window and so they sort of ducked aside because they just struck a match and Kay said, those little kids are getting ready to smoke marijuana. And sure enough in a moment the old smell you know came in the window and so I went down and I said to the kids, you know, hey don't appreciate that around here. But I looked at these little kids and I thought, oh how sad, how tragic that on a Sunday afternoon these little tiny boys have nothing better to do than to get a joint and get loaded.

What a waste of life. I've seen just too many people with altered personalities and diminished capacities as a result of smoking marijuana. To think that here they are starting so young in a pattern that can just diminish their entire future, the capacity for the future.

Don't tell me it isn't habit forming. I've met too many who can't quit. Don't tell me it doesn't alter the personality.

I've met too many altered personalities. I've observed too many people who they are not aware that their personality is altered. But it's obvious to anyone standing apart and looking at them, they still think they're cool.

They still think that they're handling things. They still think that everything is alright. But they have an altered personality.

Very observable to someone on the outside. And I think of wasted potential, wasted life, how tragic it is. But then, the glorious gospel that we have.

God restores to a person those wasted years. That's so beautiful. Therein is the grace of God.

I look at so many of the young men who are in the ministry today, who began that path of wasted lives. I think of Mike McIntosh down there in San Diego. When Mike first came, he was so spaced out.

He had so destroyed his brain with acid and speed that I wondered if Mike would ever be normal. He went around for over six months in a paranoid state. He thought that someone was holding a .45 and pulling the trigger, and he heard the sound of the explosion of the gun for six months.

So spacey. I wondered, will Mike ever recover? And I saw a handsome young man. And I thought, oh, what a wasted life.

Clever young man. Personable young man, but destroyed himself. But then we saw the work of God, and we saw God begin to restore those wasted years.

His wife had left him, figured that he was just down the path and no value, no good, and it was all over for Mike as far as she was concerned. And she was right. She took the little child and left him rather than trying to hang on any longer and couldn't stand to see him destroy himself.

But God restored his wife. Gave him, now he's got five children, I think. And God restored his sanity.

God restored Mike in such a beautiful way, and now pastors that highly evangelical assembly of people there in San Diego, reaching out to the world for Jesus Christ. That glorious work of God restoring to man the things that he destroyed by his own stupidity. And so God says, I will restore to you those years that have been devoured.

Therein is the grace of God. And you shall eat plenty and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God that hath dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never be ashamed.

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel. Now the Lord tells us in Ezekiel 38 when he destroys the invading Russian army that his name will be sanctified before the nations of the earth, and they will know that he is God. And they will know that God will fight and does fight for his people Israel.

And that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward or in the last days that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your old men shall dream dreams. And your young men shall see visions.

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out of my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. And the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and the awesome day of the Lord comes.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance as the Lord hath said. And in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. Now this prophecy of Joel really pertains to these last days.

It has often been misunderstood because Peter went on the day of Pentecost and the spirit was poured out upon the gathered church and there was the accompanying signs of the pillars of fire, the speaking in other languages and a noise like a mighty rushing wind that when the people assembled and they heard these people speaking the various dialects from the nations from which they came, they marveled and wondered greatly at what was going on as they heard them glorifying God in their various dialects. And

they asked the question, what does this mean? And others who were standing around sort of Marxist and man, they've gotten hold of some new wine someplace. They're really drunk.

And so Peter stood up addressing himself to the gathered multitude. He said, men and brethren, hearken unto me. Listen to me for these men are not drunken as you suppose.

It's only nine o'clock in the morning too early to be drunk. But you remember what their question was. What does this mean? Peter said, this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel and he quotes this prophecy now because Peter quoted it and declared that what they were seeing was what Joel had spoken about.

People have assumed that it was the complete fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. Not so. In fact, Peter didn't even say it was the fulfillment of the prophecy.

You see, the fulfillment indicates a complete filling. It wasn't. It was just the beginning of the outpouring of God's spirit.

But the real prophecy of Joel does not pertain to the day of Pentecost, but the real prophecy of Joel pertains to the last days. It pertains to the nation of Israel when God restores to Israel his position of divine favor and blessing and Israel will once be again the instrument of God to bring light into the world. And it shall come to pass afterward after Israel is restored.

None of them are ashamed that God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams.

Your young men shall see visions. And upon my servants and handmaidens will I pour out of my spirit. And I will show wonders.

And of course, the Bible speaks of these wonders that will happen in the Great Tribulation. The wonders in the heaven. The sun darkened.

The moon turned to blood. These are referred to by Jesus as a part of the period of the Great Tribulation. And these things will all happen before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

That is the day of the glorious return of Jesus Christ in power and glory. And it shall come to pass that even in that day during the Great Tribulation, whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Will be delivered.

For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance as the Lord has said. And in the remnant God's faithful remnant whom the Lord will call. So this is yet to be fulfilled.

It is a prophecy that is yet future. And it's real fulfillment is yet to take place.

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