

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST
Joel 3:18-21

Intro: In many respects the prophecy of Joel begins and ends in the same way—with desolation. But there is a difference.

The desolations are at least 2800 or 2900 years apart (if the Rapture were to take place today).

Also, the desolation at the beginning of Joel's prophecy is in the land of Israel--the plague of locusts. But at the end of the prophecy the desolation is in the lands surrounding Israel --Egypt and Edom are singled out in particular.

Further, the desolation at the beginning is temporary; the desolation at the end is permanent.

In Joel 1 we have a judgment of God upon Israel for the way they have treated God; in Joel 3 we have the judgment of God upon the nations because of the way they have treated the people of God: Israel!

Three verses make it clear that Joel is talking about the time when the Lord, the Messiah, will be reigning upon the earth. Cf. 2:27; 3:17, 21 (read).

As we have noted, Joel does not talk about the first coming of the Messiah--only about His second coming. But it serves the same purpose as so many prophetic passages even in the New Testament where we are led to see the present more clearly through a proper understanding of the future.

As is most often the case in any passage of Scripture dealing with any doctrine, Joel does not tell us all about the Millennium, but just that part which is in harmony with the prophecy which he has written. Nevertheless, he tells us about four amazing things that will take place during the Millennium, things which have never taken place to this extent up to and including the present time!

Here they are!

I. THE AMAZING PRODUCTIVITY OF THE LAND (v. 18).

Some of you have visited Israel and have seen the transformations that have taken place over there. And from what I hear, it is wonderful! BUT IF YOU THINK THAT IS WONDERFUL, WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE LAND OF ISRAEL DURING THE MILLENNIUM. Places that have never produced a harvest will produce for the first time. The greatest possible

contrast will take place from what they experienced in the plague of locusts, and what will take place then.

Cf. Isa. 35. Note that "Edom" is mentioned in 34:5, 6, and that the time is designated in 34:8.

What do all of these blessings mean? Read Deut. 28:2-14, and then read v. 1. Then read Deut. 30:1-10.

II. THE POWER OF THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH REDUCED TO NOTHING (v. 19).

Can you believe that this will ever be true? All through our lives we have been faced with the activities of the nations of the earth. Our lives have been determined, humanly speaking, by the activities of the nations. There is an organization called, The United Nations.

Please do not interpret what I am saying as against the nations. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1b). We are living during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). BUT THESE "TIMES" ARE COMING TO AN END!

This has been Joel's whole point in Joel 3. It seemed remote then, and it seems just as remote today, but it will come to pass (cf. v. 18a). Cf. Matt. 25:31-46.

Cf. Psalms 2.

III. THE SPECIAL BLESSING OF ISRAEL--UNIQUE IN ALL HISTORY AND AMONG ALL NATIONS (v. 20).

It has always been God's way to bring grandeur out of that which is insignificant. Cf. Micah 5:2.

Cf. Jer. 30:7-17. Note: "This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (v. 17b).

See also Rom. 11:25-33. Therefore, as far as the earth is concerned, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee" (Psa. 122:6).

IV. FOR THE SECOND TIME--THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD AMONG CHRIST IN PHYSICAL FORM UPON THE EARTH (v. 21).

It is not only important to notice that He will come, but it is just as important to notice where He will come!

He will come to Zion, to Jerusalem. He is not coming to Washington, D. C., nor to Moscow, nor to London, nor to Paris, nor to Tokyo, nor to Cairo, but to Jerusalem!

Did the Jews expect that their Messiah would be the Lord? They should have. Note: "the Lord dwelleth in Zion." This is Jehovah, the God who established His covenant with Israel, who never changes, and who never fails to keep His promises. This One is coming, and He will take up His abode in Jerusalem.

Note the references to "Zion" in Joel: 2:1, 15, 23, 32; 3:16, 17, and here.

Zion is David's city (1 Kings 8:1). And see the covenant which God made with David in 2 Sam. 7:1-17, and David's response in vv. 18-29.

See the way the Lord brought this to the Pharisees from Psa. 110 as told in Matt. 22:41-46.

Cf. Zech. 12:9-13:1. And note the emphasis upon Jerusalem.

Concl: What practical lessons can we draw from this prophetic picture where Joel has placed so much in such a short space?

~~One~~ ^{Two} truths stand out above all else:

(1) The grace of God to His people.

This morning we sang that wonderful hymn, He Lifted

Me. The last verse goes like this:

"Now on a higher plane I dwell
And with my soul I know 'tis well,
Yet how or why, I cannot tell,
Through grace He lifted me."

Charles Gabriel wrote those words I have to come back to again and again:

"I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean."

If you and I feel like that now, what are we going to feel like when we see Him in His glory?

The second truth is this:

(2) The amazing power of God.

Joel could not have thought these things up from his own finite mind. This had to be of God, the One who is always going beyond the limitations that we have placed upon him.

If the Lord can do what Joel predicts by the Holy Spirit just in the last four verses of this prophecy, then He can do anything that I need in my life.

Was this not what Jeremiah was challenged with? Cf. Jer. 33:1, 4-8, then v. 3. Cf. also Eph. 3:20, 21; Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 19:26.