
THE BOOK OF JOEL

BILL HOLDSTOCK

Updated

Smith Wigglesworth, born in 1859 and died in 1947 was a British evangelist and was drawn to love the Lord Jesus as a young boy. He was greatly used of God in the area of healing. His great granddaughter Lil de Fin says that in 1939 he told her that in the last days there will be first an outpouring of healing, which happened after World War Two. Secondly there will be a charismatic outpouring in the churches which many have enjoyed. Thirdly he said he saw large congregations going to church with note pads and pens in their hands. My wife and I did that for years and sometimes still get those notes out and read them. Fourthly he said with great excitement "I see it, yes I see it I see the greatest most powerful out pouring of the Holy Spirit the world has ever known". I was particularly encouraged by the last vision the Holy Spirit showed Smith Wigglesworth.

The Lord has reminded me a lot lately of Joel and his prophecy that covers the "times of the Gentiles", from Nebuchadnezzar to the Antichrist. The name Joel means Jehovah is God, and his message was to Israel and in particular to Judah who once again were in rebellion to their God. The desolation of Judah by Babylon was imminent and God was using Joel to warn them to repent and turn back to God. So the Lord gave some strong words to His people through His prophet.

Joel Chapter 1:2

Hear this you old men and give ear all you inhabitants of the land.

Why were the old men to give ear? Why were the inhabitants of the land commanded to listen to the Word of the Lord?

In those days there were no newspapers, no radio or television, news was passed on by word of mouth. It was the older more experienced men who would spend the evenings, after the toil of the day, sitting round the fire teaching the children of the household the principles of life. This was also how the teachings of God were taught by respected men, this went on from generation to generation. It is vital that fathers and mothers teach their children the Bible and the ways of God and to pray with them daily. Joel is exalting these very men to take particular notice of what God is saying and to pass it on to the inhabitants of the land.

Joel 1: 2

Has this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

What Joel was about to tell these fathers from God would make their ears tingle, they would not believe it. Nothing like this had happened before and this judgement was so exceptional as to be without previous experience. The danger, therefore, was that they would dismiss out of hand what God wanted to tell them. Satan would blind them to the truth that had been shown to them. Sadly God is absent from a lot of our churches today. Many take the Holy Spirit for granted and expect Him to be in our church every Sunday like He always has been in the past, but that is not always the case. We go to church in our Sunday best, and look the part but God looks at the heart, our attitudes, and our behaviour throughout the week, our thoughts, conversation, and our prayer life. He seeks out any sin that would hinder the working of the Holy Spirit. To completely ignore the Holy Spirit when we come to worship is to also ignore the Trinity.

This happened in the time of Ezekiel 10 verse 18 when the leaders of Israel sinned greatly in the Temple right in front of the Holy of Holies. This action offended the Holy Spirit so much He departed from the Temple in Jerusalem. The wife of Phinehas just before she died named her child Ichabod saying “**The Glory is departed from Israel**” (see 1.Sam.4:21). Note, the Spirit first left the Temple but it wasn’t long before it left Israel altogether. This maybe a lesson for all of us that are concerned that our church membership is dwindling, bodies are not being healed and souls are not being saved. The Spirit knows when He is not wanted.

Verse 3

Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

Joel was to tell this message to the old men whose responsibility it was to tell the community they lived in. They were to gather the children around them and teach them the Word of the Lord and at this time the message from Joel. Those children were then to teach their children and so on. With the generations Joel mentioned this indicated there would be time (generations) involved, right up to and including our generation, but the message was not to be lost or changed but ever brought to mind and preparation made.

What Joel was about to tell the Fathers would make their ears tingle, they would not believe it. Nothing like this has happened before and this judgement was so exceptional as to be without previous experience.

The words “Hear this” and “Give ear” are meant to impress upon the hearers the importance of the message, in fact any message from God is very urgent and important. Judah was God’s chosen people. What was going to happen to them? Because of their rebellion and disobedience to God and after much calling and warnings from Him He felt He had to deal with their sin and waywardness.

The Lord laid out His judgement as follows:

A famine was to sweep the land and would have its climax in the dreaded “day of the Lord” in this case at the close of Judah’s history. In our day the Spiritual famine may last until Jesus comes, that’s up to us as it was up to Judah!

Joel 1:4

The palmerworm will eat your crops.

That which the palmerworm has left the locusts will eat.

That which the locusts have left the cankerworm will eat.

That which the cankerworm has left the caterpillar will eat.

The land was to experience a most devastating famine, one that would be uncontrollable as one pest finished doing its worst so the next pest would come and eat what little remained so on until the land was very dry and barren. Soon the stocks would run out and the cupboards would become empty, the babies and children would cry for food leaving the farmers in total despair not able to provide for the nation.

SO THERE IS A WAKE UP CALL

Joel 1:5

Awake you drunkards and weep and howl all you drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

The sad thing is that the drunkenness, weeping and howling has as much to do with the nation’s spiritual state than anything else. When the spiritual state of a nation declines it is not long after that everything else declines as well. The trouble is it is a slow process, very gradually we miss our prayer time, then we miss our Bible reading, then we miss church, and when Satan sees to it that it spreads round the nation weeping and howling is heard amongst the people. Don’t you hear it amongst your friends and neighbours, such howling as “there are killings every week now” “haven’t prices risen in the past month or so” “there is another kidnap, will she be found alive?” “another train fair rise, that’s the second this year” “it wasn’t like this in my young day” Israel could cry unto God from a position of strength had they all lived a life closer to their God. But their continued rebellion towards God

had led them downhill and left them in a bad condition of apathy, drunkenness, and howling. They had strayed far from the one true God who could have withheld His hand had He been worshiped and obeyed.

Joel 1:6

For a nation is come up upon My land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion and he has the cheek teeth of a great lion.

God warns Judah that a mighty army would come up and attack them, He even tells them who it would be, He says “*whose teeth are the teeth of a lion*”. Daniel 7v 4 tells us Babylon is like a Lion having Eagle’s wings indicating the speed with which the Babylonian Empire conquered its enemies. The phrase “*for a nation is come up upon My land*” has a two-fold meaning. First by the soon-to-come Babylon invasion of Judah symbolised by the lion, (see Dan. 7:4). Secondly “*and he has the cheek teeth of a great lion*” refers to the soon to appear Antichrist who may well come out of Syria. (Rev.13: 1-2, 2 Thess. 2: 3-4). The Antichrist will also invade God’s land and even come up against Jerusalem God’s Holy city, having cheated on the seven-year covenant he made with Israel.

The Bible scholars reading this will also realise that we are not only dealing with history which we can look up on our computers for confirmation, but the Lord is warning us today of our future and what will happen at the end of the age. We must take by faith the Word of God and His prophecies such as those given by Joel. God knew that Babylon would come against Judah and defeat them. He also knows that the end of days will be dominated by the Antichrist backed by Satan who will do their very best to cause trouble and tempt man away from the truth leading them to a lost eternity, don’t be one of them.

Joel 1:7

He has laid my vine waste and barked My fig tree: he has made it clean bare and cast it away; the branches therefore are made white.

Jesus often used the fig tree to illustrate His message to the people. The fig tree is the symbol of Israel as the eagle is the symbol of America or the oak leaf is to Canada. When a fig tree is barked, it means all the outward protection of the tree is stripped leaving the white clean inside heart of the tree open to the elements to be dried up and damaged. When this happens even the branches are starved of sustenance and made white and die. The Prophet Joel used the fig tree to show what their actions would lead to. The whole nation would suffer.

This tree produced two harvests each year, the early crop in the spring and the best juiciest crop about September. These plants take time to cultivate and mature, a good well grown fig tree indicates that the gardener has spent time, tending and nurturing steadfastly and continuously watching over the tree all the years of its growth. This fig tree story is symbolic of the Spiritual health of the nation, Jesus the Great Gardener has watched over Israel from its birth and will continue to do so but we are shown what will happen when we go our own rebellious way.

Hosea 9:10

When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your ancestors it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree.

Can you imagine the refreshing taste of grapes to a traveller or the lush fruit of the fig in the hot dusty desert? Such was Israel to God in Israel’s beginning. When they were slaves and under bondage in Egypt God saw their potential and wanted to make of them a great nation that would show other nations God’s ways. Israel brought joy, happiness and a smile to the face of God as He shared their sense of humour, and watched their unique dancing and singing. But they fell away from Him and served Baal, committed themselves to a false god indulging in shameful worship of the highest decree (see Num.25; Deut.4) The fig tree held great importance for the Jews, figs were eaten commonly as a snack or a meal supplement, they can be dried and stored for the winter. Even when the fruit was not yet ripe the tree produced edible buds that were eaten by the common people. Figs also have a medicinal value to cure skin problems like boils. The fig tree was generally considered a symbol of prosperity and wealth, those with mature fig trees in their gardens gave the best and juiciest figs to visiting distinguished guests. The fig tree gave excellent shade as they grew from a small shrub to a full tree upwards of about 15-20 feet high. (About 8 meters)

Joel prophesied that a severe plague of locust would devour all the plant life in Israel. He predicted that the fig trees would be stripped bare even to the bark that would be made white.

So in Mark 11:13 Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

Figs appear with the leaves, so having leaves was a good indication that the tree must have figs even though the time for the figs to be fully ripe may not have come yet. In any case as we have said even before the tree produced its fruit it produced edible buds which would sustain a weary traveller. The fig tree Jesus was attracted to from afar should have provided Him some form of sustenance to help him complete his journey, but it didn't, it was unable to do what it was supposed to do. The fig tree is the symbol of God's blessing to the nation of Israel, a testament to God's goodness, care and provision. But this tree that Jesus saw had leaves on it, so Jesus and His disciples went to it expecting refreshment. But when they reached the tree they found no fruit, not even edible buds so He cursed it. The tree gave out a false message and in the mind of Christ that is what Israel was doing. Jesus is saying that the nations would look to Israel for an example of God's provision, love and care but because of their spiritual condition and rebellion towards their God, their example was not just a poor one it was 'barren' stripped bare and of no use to anyone.

So here is the bottom line-

How do we stand up as followers of Christ, do we give off a false message, an unclear testament? Is the Cross at the centre of life in our churches; and I don't mean a wooden one stuck on a wall. I mean spoken about, believed in, sung about, read about. Is the shed Blood of Christ proclaimed each week for healing and salvation, is Jesus glorified in our hearts?

We have seen on television all sorts of animals, including horses and cows brought into churches to be "blessed" by the priest. Jesus turned the people out of the Temple in His day and using a whip in His wrath telling them they had made His house a den of thieves. Today He no doubt would say we have made His house, a farmyard or have we made it a social club! Seriously, what is the difference? We have seen all sorts of entertainment produced "for the mothers and children" but little if any place for the Christ of the Cross. Do we claim to belong to Jesus but like the fig tree we produce no fruit because we are spiritually barren? You may not like reading this but the strange thing is that many ministers on television have begun to say similar things just now. Many are looking to themselves and their church and what they are doing with what God has given them and some are quite challenged! After all we are told by Jesus to go into the world and make disciples not to go and entertain the masses!

This is a copy of an Email sent to me it is very thought provoking, the Pastor writes;

My first Sunday back from some time away, I sat in the worship service and wept. It struck me as such a production, so performance driven. In a word it was shallow. I couldn't believe this had happened on my watch.

On the surface, all was well. I was a mega church pastor with invitations to speak at conferences, write books and mingle with dignitaries. Our church had state of the art facilities next to a major freeway. But that was on the surface. Deep down inside I was mortified at what we'd become. We had to change. We just couldn't keep going like this, not anymore. Within a few years of assuming the helm at JOY, I was invited to a gathering of large-church pastors to dream about the future together. We envisioned what the church might look like for a new generation. We exchanged ideas about how to build a church for people who don't go to church.

Like men of Issachar (1Chron. 12:32) we understood our times. We knew that people didn't want to give anything, sign anything or do anything, they wanted anonymity not community. They didn't want theology lectures; they wanted to be entertained and inspired. So we set out to give them exactly what they wanted.

Entertainment evangelism

The concept came together for me while standing in a line at a Dallas Cineplex waiting to see the Batman premiere. The only way to capture people's attention is entertainment I thought. It was an epiphany, a breakthrough understanding for me. So our church revolved around entertainment for evangelism. We hired the best musicians we could afford; we used marketing principles and programming specialists all for the gospels sake. Attendance skyrocketed. More people meant more staff, more programs, more facilities, more land, and of

course more money. We became a program-driven church attracting consumers looking for the latest and greatest religious presentations.

For us worship was a show and we played to a packed house. We grew by the thousands, bought more land and positioned ourselves to reach even more people. Not that any of this was wrong in and of itself- people coming to faith in Christ isn't bad, I told myself, I told others it was good. But now I was beginning to wonder if I had led my church down a wrong path.

The show was killing me.

Attracting consumers was consuming me not in the way vision consumes a leader. It was the opposite of that I was losing sight of the vision. Our church was a great organisation, but something was missing. We weren't accomplishing our mission; we weren't creating transformed empowered disciples.

We had put all our energies into dispensing religious goods and services. If our church with its sheer number of people was populated with disciples, we would be feeding the hungry, building meaningful relationships with neighbours and transforming our community. But we were neither salt nor light. After pouring more than 25 years of my life into this church, I knew we were not developing disciples who were taking up their crosses to follow Jesus.

Too many in our church were observing the show but not meeting God, they sought their spiritual fix but didn't give themselves fully to Christ. And me, I was running through a maze too, constantly busy, doing God's work. I led a disciplined life; I had a consistent daily prayer and devotional life. I jogged, I ate right, I did everything a healthy person is supposed to do to have the stamina to keep running at 100 miles an hour. But no one was close enough to see that I was losing it. My wife would tell me to slow down, but no one said "Walt you're out of control, you are a workaholic"

Then it happened.

I had a heart attack! After a six-way bypass surgery and at the prompting of my board, I took time to recover and reflect. That's when I realised we had a huge church, a thriving school, a pristine memorial garden, and an influential leadership centre. We had it all but in the process of getting it all I had lost the most important thing my first love.

At that time we serviced a \$12 million debt, pay the staff, and maintain the property. We had to spend a million before we could spend a dime on our mission. We had plans for a spectacular worship centre with a retractable roof.

Then at one of our events Robert Schuller said, "You must die as a church and be born as a mission" I couldn't shake that statement from my mind, I was not sure what he meant but I knew we needed to change.

This Pastors testimony is rather long but it explains the challenge he felt, he visited several churches and spoke to many other Christians, he visited some in England where he saw God move in apostolic ways, the blind were healed, the lame walked, and people worshipped with their whole hearts. He wrote;

"I witnessed raw, unscripted, genuine movements of God; their worship was inspired, God breathed, it inhaled God's presence and exhaled His will. These people were not attending a show; they were crying out to God, seeking Him wholeheartedly."

Needless to say the Pastor, his family, his church board, and congregation came to a greater personal experience with Jesus. Yes some of the members missed the entertainment, some complained and some left the church but the rest found Jesus, His blessings, and His love and found a richer walk with God. And better still God found them!

Satan will use all manner of ways to distract us from the Father's will, some are so subtle that we are ignorant of the fact that Jesus removes Himself when we start to tamper with sin and rebel like Israel or to do things our own way. The Children of Israel were like this, they walked a different path to the one the Lord wanted them to follow and although God gave them water in the desert, provided food when they had none, made a dry path through the sea and killed their enemies and much more. But this stubborn lot rejected their Lord provider to the point that the Prophet Joel had to warn them strongly that there was coming a day of reckoning.

Deuteronomy 32:10.

He found him in the desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of his eye.

God found the Jews in a desert land, slaves for hundreds of years but He led them out and led them about the wilderness teaching them obedience, faith and trust in God. He loved them so much He called them the apple of His eye. Then He made them into a nation called Israel.

LAMENT AND HOWL

Joel 1: 8

Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. The meat offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord's ministers mourn. The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languishes.

Israel could not see it but God knew the Babylonians would soon come upon the land and destroy it. They would destroy all the tidy rows and rows of vineyards which produced the wine they all loved so much and got drunk on. The enemy would destroy the animals that supplied the Temple sacrifices and the priests with their food. The fields and the land round about, the Lord's land He tells us in verse 6, will mourn because there is no corn, the new wine is dried up and there is no oil. Just like that fig tree the Lord wanted fruit from, Israel would become barren, stripped of the bark unable to even feed themselves let alone minister to others. Needless to say the economy would suffer greatly, money would be meaningless, businesses would fail and no doubt crime would increase. (Do you recognise Britain here?)

They would lament and howl like a virgin would if she lost the husband of her youth on the night of her wedding. Judah was exulted to mourn and pray and ask forgiveness, but she would not listen to Joel, she would not repent to her God but continued in her sin and rebellion. Incidentally it is believed the prophet Jeremiah told them the same thing about the same time. Israel had plenty of time, opportunity and reason to repent and save themselves from the awful judgement ahead, but they ignored the warning, rejected the prophet and continued in their sinful ways. Between Jeremiah and Joel the Israelites had more than enough warning of their coming plight.

Jeremiah bursts out with great distress and urgent heartfelt pain for the calamity that was to come upon Judah. As you read this chapter you can feel the heartache of the man, desperate to save Judah from a lost eternity. But they would not listen. Jesus feels the same, He shed His blood on the Cross and died a horrible death that man could be freed from the curse of sin, but He is ignored, and man still goes his own way. Do we as Christians feel like Jeremiah concerning the lost in our town?

Jeremiah 4. 14

O Jerusalem wash your heart from wickedness that you may be saved. How long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you.

Jeremiah 4.22.

For My people are foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish (stupid) and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Joel 1: 11/12

Be you ashamed O you husbandmen; howl, O you vinedressers for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. 12 the vine is dried up, and the fig tree languishes; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Bear in mind all this is also a sign of coming judgement for our world today. The Western world is far from God, much of the church is far from God, the churches are empty on Sundays while mankind who need God play football in the park. The hearts of men are spiritually barren and they are like the cursed fig tree that had leaves,

a form of religion, but no fruit. There will come a time when “The day of the Lord will come” (Joel Chapter 2:1) and Joel tells us it is near at hand. Are we taking any notice of that warning? Are we putting it off for another day? Do we really think Jesus won’t come again...oops too late He is here, were you ready No? Oh dear you are left behind!!!

The Prophets of Joel’s day were preaching to Israel and particularly Judah and warning them of the devastation that was to come. Joel was telling them they would be ashamed that they would not be able to prepare the land for a harvest of wheat or barley; they would not be able to dress the vine. There would be no wine, figs or pomegranates and grapes; they are warned that all the trees of the field will be withered, no more palm trees, no more apple trees, and no more oil. No more oil would mean no more light! The earth just would not produce any more. But still they would not repent!

They would not repent because the farmers and the husbandmen had always been able to farm and dress the vine. Year after year for generations the land had produced, why would it stop now? They just would not believe such a thing could happen because such a thing hadn’t happened before. They could not envisage such devastation that would bring economic depression which always follows spiritual decline.

Joel 1: 13

Gird yourselves and lament you Priests: howl you ministers of the Altar: come lie all night in sackcloth, you ministers of my God: for the Meat Offering and the Drink Offering is withheld from the House of your God.

The people of Judah went to the house of God as usual and continued worshipping God obviously unaware that their sin offended God so much, or else they didn’t care! But God still loved them and was calling them to repentance, to obey God and truly repent would avert terrible trouble ahead.

“Gird yourselves” is a Bible phrase for “pull yourselves together” Joel says in Chapter 1:5, *Wake up you drunkards*, and he not only is addressing the nation, he addresses the Priests also. They were to be awake all night and lament over the situation. After all they were the leaders, the examples to show the nation the way to please Almighty God and worship Him, but even they were spiritually asleep. This reminds me of a phrase that is framed on the wall of a Pastors office I know.

There they go I am their leader, I must hurry.

The Priests of Judah were told they must be the first to repent to lead the nation back to God. They were to lie before the altar all night and weep and plead for the people. Not in their splendid colourful clothes lined with Gold, but in rough, itchy, and uncomfortable sackcloth, so the reason for such discomfort becomes heavy on their hearts and so the Meat Offering and the Drink Offering would not be withheld from the Temple.

Leviticus 2:1

The Hebrew for Meat Offering is Minchah which means a gift offered by an inferior to a superior. So any individual may bring a gift of gratitude to the Priests at the altar and bring his Meat Offering of thanksgiving to the Lord. This offering was made up of fine flower, oil, and frankincense. It is the only sacrifice where blood is not shed in its preparation as it is offered in recognition that only the blood of Jesus Christ washes white as snow. The Meat offering was offered by fire and was a “sweet Savour” (smell) to the Lord in recognition of the sovereignty of God and His bounty in giving all earthly blessings (see 1Chronicles 29: 10-14). It was offered every day with the burnt offering. Israel was to bring the offering to the Priests at the altar, but the spiritual state of Israel was such that the Priests were not at the altar to accept the offering to God on behalf of the people anyway. “The greatest sorrow to the mind of a religious Jew, and what ought to impress the whole nation with a sense of God’s displeasure, is the cessation of the usual temple worship.” (*Bible Study Tools*)

Joel 1:15

Sanctify you 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. 15. Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand and as destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

These two verses should shout out from this page with all the urgency possible. The Holy Spirit was telling Judah step by step what she must do to avoid disaster but sadly it was not heeded. Joel was pleading to Israel who had

backslidden from their God, O yes it is possible to backslide from your faith and ignore God, please yourself, go your own way that is just what this whole book of Joel is about. If it was necessary for God to chase down the nation that He created when they disobeyed and rebelled and offer them correctness and forgiveness and call them back into His loving arms, what makes you think you are so different that you can go your own way rebel against God and expect continued salvation without repentance.

Sanctify a fast! Call a solemn assembly!

A fast is “A day of restraint” where no work is to be done so all might give themselves to supplication and prayer. (see 2 Chronicles 20:3-13 and 1 Samuel 7:5) What do you think might happen if the Pastor of your church stood up and announced “For the next two weeks we are, as a church going to fast and pray for the spiritual condition of our individual lives, for the spiritual condition of our church and the spiritual state of our nation?” How many of the church would ‘go on holiday?’ How many would be upset and tell the Pastor he is out of order, how many would leave the church! No don’t get upset with me just think about it. That is what God was telling Joel and Joel was telling Israel and they got upset too. I have read this study over and over; I have been on the point of swiping it all from my computer, but I am, as God is my judge writing what the Spirit is laying on my heart, and anyway if you read Joel carefully you will see I am only confirming God’s word and what He told Joel so if you get upset or annoyed with anyone, get upset and annoyed with God!

Israel did not heed the warning Joel gave them from God and from verse 16 to 20 was the result; let me write it down for you;

16. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?

We have no meat to feed our children, or to offer to the Lord and the Priests in sacrifice.

Joy and gladness from the house of our God.

The Bible says the joy of the Lord is our strength; this had gone from God’s house and the hearts of the people.

17. The seed is rotten under the clods the garnerers are laid desolate,

The seed will not produce its fruit so the gatherers are made redundant.

The barns are broken down and the corn is withered.

The farms are becoming a mess, barns falling down; only decay everywhere, the corn has gone bad.

18. How do the beasts grown! The cattle are perplexed, they have no pasture, and the sheep are desolate.

Think how annoying all the cattle and sheep are everywhere groaning and crying for water and food. We gather from this and other verses that animals suffer because of the sins of man.

19. O Lord to you will I cry: for the fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and burned all the trees of the field.

Remember Israel enjoyed hot sun all day and the people needed the trees for shade and more so the animals. Fire has destroyed much of the land and people’s homes in parts of the world today because of the very hot sun.

20 The beasts of the field cry unto thee for the rivers are dried up, and the fire has devoured the pastures.

Another verse telling us animal life suffers because of man’s sin.

Joel Chapter 2

Although Joel is warning Israel of the pending famine caused by the invasion of the Assyrians, the book of Joel also begins to Prophecy of the Day of the Lord in the end times. The message given out to Israel applies to us today regarding the rise of the Antichrist and the troubles that will befall those who reject Christ and the Cross.

Joel 2:1

Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound the alarm in my holy mountain: let all the habitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord comes, for it is near at hand.

The words “Zion” “My Holy Mountain” and “My Land” leave no doubt that it is Jerusalem and Israel that is the area that is referred to here. It is this area that will be attacked by the Assyrians. It is also this area that will be attacked by Antichrist. To blow the trumpet was an alarm call, this was urgent; it was the responsibility of the Priests to sound the alarm but as we have been told they were not at their posts they were asleep! All the people would tremble and fear they would be out of control with no one to lead them. God was giving notice to Judah and Jerusalem of the approaching judgement, and that they should prepare to meet their God with prayer and repentance. It was the responsibility of the priests to recognise the signs, hear from God and sound the warning trumpet, (Num.10:8) and to summon the people to come together and seek His face. It is the responsibility of the Pastors and Ministers of today to give warning from the Word of God, of God’s judgement of the fatal consequences of sin. The Lord knew the Assyrians would bring Israel into a very dark place; the quiet peaceful life they lived would soon be turned into chaos. Soon they would wish they had listened to Joel and repented to God. He also uses the prophecy of Joel to Israel to tell us today of the events and the beginning days of the Battle of Armageddon and the rise of the Antichrist. Ezekiel also confirms this day in Chapter 38.verse 9 speaking of Antichrist he says;

You shalt ascend and come like a storm; you shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, you and all your bands, and many people with you.

2 Thessalonians 2: 8/9.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him (the Antichrist) whose coming is after the working of Satan (the Antichrist is sponsored by Satan), with all power and signs and lying wonders.

The Armies of God at Armageddon

Joel 2:2

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 strong; there has not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it even to the years of many generations.

There is no doubt that the Antichrist will mean business, backed by Satan he will come against Israel and when he comes his antics will affect everyone who has not been born again. He will be a deceitful dictator, he will not let you buy or sell without his mark in your forehead or your hand. You will go to the supermarket to get food for your children and push your trolley up to the checkout and the first thing the checkout lady will do is not add up your items but she will ask to see the Mark of the Beast and if you do not have his mark, you don’t get any food!

This is not an idea of mine it is written specifically in the book of Daniel and Revelation. God is warning His people of today of future events just the same as Joel was warning Israel of the coming destructive famine. They did not believe him, “things have always been the same, the ground has always produced, and the Priests have always been there for us don’t disturb us Joel with your ranting”

“For the day of the Lord comes, for it is near at hand”. These are the words of the Lord Himself, the very one who is coming for His own. He cannot lie, He will keep His word, and modern preachers must sound the alarm at the condition of the modern church and come before the altar of God and intercede for the people put in their charge.

People will be attacked with all the force of the armies of the 10 nations the Antichrist has mustered to be on his side. (See study of Daniel www.wordlightmypath.com The Antichrist will have made a seven year covenant with Israel so they will feel secure, but the Antichrist will break his agreement halfway through and invade the city of Jerusalem with the intention of sitting on God’s throne and calling himself God. The antics of the Antichrist are given in the studies of “Revelation” and “Satan’s Ambition” in www.wordlightmypath.com so read these studies along with Joel to help understanding. It’s interesting to note that Satan has always wanted God’s throne, he said right at the beginning that he wanted to exalt himself higher than God. (Isa 14:12-14) and even now at the beginning of this final battle, through the Antichrist, he invades the city of Jerusalem to take God’s place and His throne.

Joel 2:2

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 has not been ever the like; neither shall there any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

This describes what the world will be like as a result of Antichrist's rule, much the same as that which Israel experienced in Joel's time at the hands of the Assyrians. But it introduces "a great people and strong" a great army who will come with the return of Christ to defeat the Antichrist, no one and nothing will have happened like this before "even to the years of many generations" which refers to the time span of Christ Second Coming with His mighty army, and the end of the millennium. Days of darkness and gloominess, days of thick darkness all over the land, days will run into night and people will not know what to do or where to go. (Ezekiel 38.)

As we have seen Satan, from pre-adamic times wanted to take the place of God and rule God's Kingdom that is why he was cast out of heaven Isaiah 14:12. At the Cross he again thought he had won waiting for Jesus to die until he saw the shed blood of Christ and a way made for man to repent, and again he knew he had lost to Jesus. Now through the Antichrist, Satan thinks he will take Jerusalem and reach his ambition to sit on the throne of God at last. He will be successful in taking half of the Holy City but Jesus will return with His Saints and defeat him and stop him in his tracks and deal with him. (See study "Satan's Ambition" www.wordlightmypath.com.)

A careful read of our studies of Daniel, Revelation and Satan's Ambition you will notice that Satan desperately wants to sit on the throne of God. The city of Jerusalem is where God will set up His Kingdom and rule the world from. The people of Israel will be surrounded and when all looks as if the Antichrist has won the battle for Jerusalem and the throne of God taken, Christ will return with splendour, glory and power. This is what John saw in his vision; God showed him how He will come.

Revelation 19:11 to 16.

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war.

His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no-one knows but He himself.

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God.

The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF KINGS

At the second coming to earth Jesus will come as described in the verses above. He will be as lightning illuminating the whole earth and sky. (Matthew 24:27.) With Him will come all the saints of God who ever lived from Adam onwards, also in splendour and God given power. It will be spectacular and every eye will see Him.

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

When I was in Sunday school, a few years ago now, my teacher read this verse to us all and we pondered how all the world could see Christ coming in Glory at the same time. How could people one side of the earth see Jesus in the clouds on the other side of the earth at the same time? We could not find an answer even our lovely old teacher admitted he did not know. But in the space of only a few years and in my lifetime television has been invented, satellites have been shot up into space and the people the world over can see pictures from anywhere in seconds...and at the same time! Prince William's wedding drew over 3 Billion viewers worldwide and we all saw it as it happened and at the same time. When Jesus comes the entire world will see it, it will be spectacular. I believe that even God has waited for such a time as this.

Make no mistake Jesus Christ is coming back again to earth with all His saints, millions of them. Even the nations of the earth will mourn, why will they do that? Well just think about it for a moment. The heads of the nations

will be so busy, as they are now arguing over bits of land, showing the world their military strength. They are busy making money for their own use, fighting one another over positions in Parliament and so on. The people of the nations will also be busy at work typing, answering the telephone, delivering goods to the shops, factories churning out goods to sell and make more money and much more, and not giving God one thought. When all of a sudden the skies will rip apart with thunder and lightning much brighter than the sun and a Man dressed in white with blazing eyes that look straight through you reading all the sinful hearts everywhere, and you will not be able to hide. The Bible says man will cry for the rocks to fall on them, but you will not be able to hide from The King of Kings it will be the Day of the Lord a day of reckoning, you will have to give account of yourself to God!

Ezekiel 38:22/23

And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his bands and upon the many people who are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstones. 23. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Don't think this will not affect you; billions of people will be involved in the Battle of Armageddon because billions of people will have taken the mark of the beast showing allegiance to Antichrist, you may be one of them. The nations will mourn because they know it will be too late, Jesus has returned and the day of reckoning has come, the great Battle of Armageddon has arrived when all unbelievers will be destroyed. There is no doubt these days will be frightening for those who do not know the love of Christ.

Joel 2:8

Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone on his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

The army of the Lord will have Glorified bodies which cannot be harmed in any way and they cannot be killed. How do you handle a foe that will not die no matter how many times you strike him with your sword or send a bullet through his heart? Jesus will come from heaven with such an army and His feet will rest on the Mount of Olives just outside of Jerusalem. (Zachariah 14: 4). Such will be the power of His coming that a great valley will open up splitting the Mount of Olives in two. A great new river will flow from Jerusalem, half will flow to the Eastern Sea believed to be the Dead Sea and the other half will flow into the Western Sea believed to be the Mediterranean Sea. (Zechariah 14: 8.).

The magnificence and splendour of the Lord God Almighty will be such that much of Jerusalem will be changed to accommodate the King of Kings and His throne from where He will rule the world. After the Battle of Armageddon Satan will be seized by a mighty angel from heaven he will be bound with a great chain and cast into the bottomless pit reserved for Satan alone for one thousand years.

Joel 2:11

And the Lord shall utter His Voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong who executes His Word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible and who can abide it?

This is the Word of the Lord, He cannot and will not lie, what He says He will do He will do. He says His army is **very** great and although very great the whole army can hear His voice. The verse says He is strong, not as we count strength, He is mighty and nothing can stand in His way. He has the Power to back up His Word remember He spoke the Word and the sun, moon and stars were flung into space. He made man from the dust of the earth, He breathed into him His own breath and man lived, got up and walked. After the many years of waiting "the day of the Lord" will arrive and we are warned it will be very terrible and no one can abide it. Well what do you think of that? Just because nothing like this has happened up to now do you think it won't happen at all? Do you think the world as we know it will continue in sin and wickedness for ever? Thousands will reject the warnings of God, thousands have already rejected Him. I asked a relation of mine who had only days to live if he would like me to pray for him, and would he ask Jesus into his life as he would soon see his maker. He turned his head away from me and said no! He was dead within a few days and his rejection of Jesus sent him to a lost eternity. As far back as Lot's sons in law in Genesis 19: 14 were warned of pending destruction of Sodom but they thought he was joking! Satan will blind your eyes and ears to the Word of God and what He says right up until it is too late.

Joel 2:2 through to verse 11 speaks of the second coming of Christ, verse 12 through to verse 17 speaks of Israel at Christ's second coming and Israel's call to repentance and her future restoration as well as events surrounding Christ's return.

Joel 2:13

And rend your heart and not your garments and return unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repents Him of the evil.

The custom was to tear ones clothes as an outward sign of grief or distress. It was to show the public that the person was in grief, sorrow and regret, shame or mourning. (Genesis 37:18-35). It was all an outward show and to draw sympathy from the passer by. God doesn't want an outward show He wants a complete change of heart, He wanted the hearts of Israel to be broken, He wanted genuine regret, shame and repentance from His people. He told them He was merciful and gracious slow to be angry with them and full of kindness and love. He wanted dealings with them personally not to make a show but to seek His face and repent with all their hearts.

Joel 2:14

Who knows if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a Meat Offering and a Drink Offering unto the Lord your God?

The Righteousness of God demands Judgment upon unconfessed sin, but when that sin is repented of and turned away from, that same Righteousness demands a blessing and your offering unto the Lord will be accepted.

Joel 2: 15/16

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast call a solemn assembly, Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the Elders, gather the children, and those who suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

We remind ourselves these last few verses refer to Israel to whom God is calling through the Prophet Joel. These verses do not refer directly to the church, however the principle involved here does apply to the church and all who reject the calling of God. Most of verses 15 and 16 refer to events just after the return of Christ and His victory over the Antichrist. When Israel sees how victorious Christ is they recognise Him as their Messiah, recognise Him as the one they crucified and welcome Him as Saviour and Lord, crying "**blesseD is He who comes in the name of the Lord**"

Joel 2: 18

Then will the Lord be jealous for His land, and pity His people.

This LAND has belonged to God and His people ever since Moses brought the Children of Israel out of bondage and slavery of Egypt and led them to the boundary of this Land, where he left them to cross over into their inheritance and become God's own people. This land has been claimed by the heathen, fought over, and occupied by intruders, until in 1948 it became Israel in its own right. God gave Israel a mandate to build Him a sanctuary that He may dwell among them (Exodus 25:8. Deuteronomy 12:5-12). In our day blood had been shed and battles raged over a piece of ground that is only 85 miles (136km) wide at its widest point. But it is believed that Jerusalem is the centre point of the world. In any event it is God's land and no one will take it away from Him that is why He calls it His land.

Whereas once the Lord sought to destroy Israel because of sin, He will bless and prosper the land and all that is in it upon the repentance of Israel and restore them to their rightful place in the world.

He said "*behold I will send you corn, and wine, and you will be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen*" This applies to us all, when we fully repent of our sin, turn to God, and follow Him, He will forgive us our sin and cleans us from all unrighteousness making us sons and daughters of the most high God.

Joel 2:20

But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and I will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the uttermost sea and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he has done great things.

This talks about the rising of the Antichrist who will come against Christ in the great Battle of Armageddon but he will be defeated and be removed far off to a land barren and desolate.

Ezekiel 39:11

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog (the Antichrist) a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there they shall bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it the valley of Hamon-gog.

The army of Antichrist has not been chosen yet, but if the Bible, which is God's word and will not lie, was read more carefully it shows the outcome of that last battle and what will happen to Satan's army of upwards of 200,000 men. They will not be buried quickly enough so the whole area will stink of the dead bodies of the Antichrist army, half eaten by birds and wild animals and rotting in the hot Middle East sun. So much so the travellers will have to hold their noses as they pass by. One might have the sense not to join such an army and come over to the side of Jesus!

Revelation 19:19.

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse, and against His army.

God showed John the vision of this mighty battle being arrayed in the valley outside of Jerusalem. The "kings of the earth" are the 10 kingdoms of Daniel 2: 41- 43 represented by the 10 toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image which are yet to come will gather in this great valley ready to do battle. But they will be defeated.

A stone not made with hands smote those feet on Neb's image and broke them into pieces. This Stone we know is the Lord Jesus, and He will return to earth with His saints to defeat the Antichrist, Satan and the false Prophet and all who reject the son of God and bring peace on the earth.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. *The Latter Rain.*

Zechariah 12:9-10

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication. And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for his firstborn.

We noted above that a stone not made with hands (which is Jesus Christ) came and smashed the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image and brought the earthly kingdoms to an end. And in Zechariah 12 God confirms that He will destroy those nations that come against His city, His people and His land. This is yet to come of course. Thus God confirms His word given to David concerning his seed upon the Throne of Israel (2 Samuel 7: 12-16) When Israel sees the Lord coming in great power and glory against the army headed by the Antichrist, Israel will shout a welcome and honour Him as their Messiah. God says "*And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his firstborn*" (Zech. 12:10)

Israel will experience exactly that which God himself experienced when He gave His Son to die on the cross. They will know the pain, the anguish of the loss of a son, more so the firstborn, God calls it "bitterness". This will cause them to cry for forgiveness and repentance and God will get His people back.

Joel 2:23

Be glad then you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He has 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.

Be glad then you children of Zion refers to Israel now restored as the premier nation of the world from which Jesus Christ the King of Kings will rule.

The verse also speaks of the former rain and the later rain; the former rain was given at Pentecost moderately, we all have enjoyed the outpouring of the Spirit since then but according to Joel it has been given moderately. There will come a time when, just before the final harvest we shall see a mighty outpouring of God's power and authority that will bring much of the world to its knees, this is called the latter rain. In Israel the former rain comes in October to soften the ground and germinate the seed. The latter rain comes in April and matures and ripens the crop and makes them ready for harvest.

Deuteronomy 11:13-14

And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn and your wine and your oil.

It is important to note that the later rain was to do with the harvest "*that you may gather in...*" the rains are provided by the Lord for the preparation and the gathering of the harvest. Spiritually the Lord will provide the latter rain for the final gathering or harvest of souls into the kingdom. We can judge any "move of God or the Holy Spirit" by this criterion: The Spirit's work is always focused on the harvest of souls! Jesus confirmed this in

Mathew 9:38.

Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into the harvest.

We can all recognise a true outpouring of the Holy Spirit if it is based on this prayer of Jesus, there must be a harvest of souls. That was why Jesus went to the cross, and why He shed His blood, it is so important to Jesus that the harvest is plentiful.

All the graces and ministries of the Holy Ghost in our lives as believers have to do with the latter rain and that last harvest of souls. I believe that all the suffering, pain, heartache and trials and troubles we go through teach us to be overcomers in Christ Jesus and fine tune us to be labourers in His vineyard both now and when the latter rain falls.

Joel 3:2

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.

I believe this verse refers to the last of the last days and the completion of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's and its fall. Look up our study of Daniel in our web site www.wordlightmypath.com which gives much more detail of the image and the nations represented. Briefly, Daniel 2: 32 interpret for us who these nations were.

The head of gold was king Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire.

The breast and arms of silver was Medo-Persia.

The belly and thighs of brass was Grecian.

The legs of iron are Rome.

The feet of iron and clay represent the revised Roman Empire or Europe

The stone is Jesus Christ

He will come from the glories of heaven with His saints who will come to the valley of Jehoshaphat bringing all the nations referring to soldiers from all parts of the world who have joined the massive army of the Antichrist. Nebuchadnezzar's image had ten toes left after the demise of all the other nations represented in the image, it is believed the armies of 10 nations will join with Satan and the Antichrist to the tune of about 200,000 to go up against Jerusalem to take the throne for Satan.

Incidentally the name Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah has judged" and at this time in our history after centuries of the message of the gospel being preached with the help of the former rain from Pentecost to the present day, the latter rain is about to start and the last great gathering in by the Lord will begin.

Most of chapter 3 talks about the preparation for war, a big war! Verse 9 calls upon all the Gentiles to prepare for war, the Antichrist calls the mighty men to wake up, he calls for them to gather at Jerusalem. He tells them to beat their ploughshares into swords, and their pruning hooks into spears. During the last war the nation was asked a similar thing. An official came round to our houses and took the iron gates and iron fences or anything made of iron to make weapons, tanks, airplanes and the like in the war effort, you can still see the iron stumps on the concrete walls in front of some houses today. There will be massive preparation for this war against Israel.

This is Satan's last chance to be equal with God. It's his last chance to try and replace Jesus on the throne, he said he would exult himself above God and he believes he can do it. What he will do is bring to pass the prophecy of that battle, that "Day of the Lord" and the Lord has made the decision to meet Satan and his mates to battle which will instigate the Second Coming. The last three and one half years before the return of Christ will be the most terrible the world has ever known. Today we are shocked at the pictures on our televisions at the result of war in places like Iran, Iraq and Syria and Ukraine. The displacement of families' mothers and children with no homes, walking, just walking with nowhere to go. No shops, no food but begging from the rest of mankind. The last days will be like that and worse, Israel was warned in the first chapter of Joel of the devastation that was to come upon them as we have studied at the top of these pages. Jesus is warning us in the pages of the Bible we are reading now what will happen soon, but do we believe it?

The abomination of desolation

The world will be in such a mess having rejected Christ and chosen the Antichrist, history repeating itself when Israel chose Barabbas over Jesus; this is what it will be like.

Matthew 24:15-22

When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the Holy Place (whoso reads let him understand) Dan. 8:9-14; 9:27; 11:45; 12:1, 7, 11. Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them who are with child and to them who give suck in those days. But pray you that your flight is not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath Day. For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved.

As we see on our news programmes the men women and children from far eastern countries in total despair, with homes shelled to the ground and in rubble that is what the end of days will be like. Everybody running in every direction with no purpose or meaning having rejected Christ and what He did on the cross, now Christ, reluctantly, rejects them. The Antichrist (Matthew 24:15.) breaks into the Temple and stands in the Holy Place! I am not a Jew but that sends a shiver down my spine, how dare he!

It is about this time that lightning comes out of the sky shining from east to west, yes there will be signs in the heavens and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Men and women everywhere shall see the Son of Man descend to the Mount of Olives to deal with this imposter and his master once for all.

I particularly like this verse in Joel 3:16

The Lord also shall roar out of Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

When all seems to be lost, when Israel has fought with its best and most modern weapons the Antichrist overcomes them and enters the Holy City and stands in the Temple right next to the Holy Place. The despair, the heartfelt disappointment of Israel is broken by a cry so loud heaven and earth begin to shake; everyone stops what they are doing because Israel's hope has come! The Almighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ has come to defend Israel and defeat the Antichrist, Satan, the false Prophet and indeed all their fallen spirits and banish them to a lost eternity.

Joel 3:17

So shall you 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.

God promises material blessings for Israel and as He has made us one in Christ at Calvary, we the gentiles are included.

Joel 2:30-32

And I will show wonders in the Heavens and in the Earth, blood, fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord. 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 has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Do you remember the vision that Smith Wigglesworth had at the beginning of our study? He saw the greatest most powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit the world has ever known. Peter, in Acts Chapter 2:16 told the people assembled there that what they were seeing, people of all ages speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit came and rested upon them, was a foretaste of what we are studying now. Peter enjoyed the Former Rain of the Holy Spirit and we have enjoyed that Holy Spirit and His work right up to the present day. But we learn that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days, called the Latter Rain will be much greater, dreams and visions given to the young and old, the sick and ill will call on the name of the Lord and they will be saved. Not "come to faith" there are lots of faiths, all religions have a faith but only one can save your soul, renew your heart, change your life and give you eternal life and that's Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We are warned that there will be many "Christ's" coming in the name of Jesus but the born again Christian will recognise the one true Saviour, not only by the nail prints in His hands but by His own name **Jesus Christ and Him Crucified** what other god has died on a cross to save those he loved?

Smith Wigglesworth saw, and greatly rejoiced, the end time outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the future Great Tribulation (Acts2:16-21) When Israel will be restored and recognise her Lord, Satan and his team will be put away to do no more harm and all things will become new. As a very young lad I remember Smith Wigglesworth spoken about and my prayer is that before I go to be with the Lord I will see and feel what he saw. I want to see men and women coming to Jesus under this power just as Peter did. You can be ready to meet Jesus now, don't wait, the speed with which God moves today you could miss Him. Eternity without God would be Hell!

There are lots of opinions and views on this subject which can lead to confusion. I have done my best to stick close to what the Bible says but open it up with everyday language. There is no doubt that Jesus is coming back very soon and I don't want you to be left behind, so search your heart, ask Him to forgive you of your sin and live for Him every day then I will see you later...literally!.

God bless you,
Bill Holdstock
bill@holdstock.com

