

Session 8 God's Zeal to Release Blessing

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

God says in Joel 2:12-17, "Come, have a solemn assembly, pray and fast" (paraphrased). Verses 18-27 are the next portion of Scripture. The theme of this passage is the material physical blessings that God releases. In other words, God changes the condition of nations physically. Then in the verses right after that, the famous ones, He says, "And I will pour out My Spirit." He changes the conditions of the nations spiritually as well. Fasting and prayer does make an actual impact on the physical, the financial, the agricultural, the animals, the atmosphere. All of it is impacted by the covenant people living in obedience to God and in their priestly role of intercession. What happens sometimes when people read the book of Joel is that they skip verses 18-37, the passage immediately after the call to prayer. They think, "That doesn't really matter." It totally matters; it's part of the forerunner messenger calling, to put this part in, that nations are impacted in the natural realm.

HE'S COMING TO RULE THIS WORLD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

There are two principles that I will repeat over and over; I'll just give them to you on the front end. First I'll say this. This passage, Joel 2:18-27, is talking about physical blessings to Israel in the age to come. The millennial kingdom is what it's talking about, the physical blessings that come to Israel when Jesus returns. In session notes fifteen, I give an overview of the millennial kingdom. Because for some of you that's a new idea, that Jesus is literally coming back, physically coming back to the earth with a physical, material, resurrected body, to rule on a physical earth. He will literally restore all the nations of the earth in the natural arena. Every realm of society will be brought to full maturity and full righteousness. What He's going to do in the age to come, in that 1,000-year kingdom, has dynamic continuity with what's happening in this age. That's a very important reality. What we are doing today actually has continuity with what happens in the age to come.

EVEN NOW WE CAN SEEK A PORTION OF WHAT HE HAS PROMISED IN THE AGE TO COME

Here are the two principles I want to lay out right from the beginning: The extravagant blessing, blessings in the natural arena of agriculture and economics, and then the spiritual blessings of prophecy, dreams, visions, power; whatever happens in the age to come in fullness, we can believe God for it to be released in part in this hour. Let me say that again: Whatever happens in the age to come in full blessing, we can believe for it to be released in part in this age. Why? Because if it's in God's heart to release it at any time, we know it's in His heart. If it's in His heart and He never changes, it's in His heart. If God cares about economics, agriculture, animals, and atmosphere, if He ever cares about it, then He always cares about it, because God never changes. If God thought to ordain blessing, extravagant blessing in those arenas in the age to come, then you can be sure the God who never changes is thinking about those blessings in this age right now. Of course there are many Bible verses from Genesis to Revelation that prove He's thinking about them in this age as well.

We study this passage and we see how extravagantly God is going to release His power and blessing on the natural realm, on agriculture, atmosphere, healing the land, economics, rain, animals, and we can say, "Lord, if it's in Your heart to do that in extravagance in the time when your Son returns, we know it's in Your heart to do it in part now, far more than it's already happening right now."

When I read these promises, I don't just think, "Well, when I get a resurrected body in the age to come it's going to be great." No, "This is in Your heart, this is what You are like; this is who You are. This is what You

gave Joel as a motivation for prayer and fasting.” He was to tell the people to pray and fast so that this would happen. So we can believe for every one of these realms of blessing to be released in this age in part, far beyond what we experience where there are pockets of mercy. Again, that’s not a theological term. Wherever these geographic areas are, whether five miles or five hundred miles in diameter, no one knows. I’m believing God that through fasting prayer and true wholeheartedness, that priestly role of intercession to release the angels and blessings in the spiritual realm and bind the work of the enemy, we will experience the healing of the land in this age. Because whatever is in His heart for the age to come, we know, because He never changes, that it’s in His heart for now. When you read these, don’t put these all off for the future, because God gives a grand description of where they’re going. Let them resonate in your heart even now. We are believing God for a release of these in part, even in this age, while we wait for the fullness in the age to come.

That’s principle number one: What’s released in fullness in the age to come will be released in part now, even in physical natural realms of blessing.

THE GENTILE NATIONS RECEIVE JUDGMENT AND BLESSING, BUT IN LESSER DEGREE

Number two I call, “In like kind, but to a lesser degree.” God gives Israel greater blessings and greater judgments. All the other nations will have the same blessings in like kind, but to a lesser degree. The blessings won’t be as extreme and the judgment and discipline won’t be as extreme. They’ll still be significant, but not to the same measure.

“I’m reading about Israel in the age to come. What does a Gentile in this age care about what’s going to happen to Israel in the age to come?”

The King of the nations is talking to us about how He views the earth. He’s saying, “Whatever I’ll do to Israel in judgment, watch out, because I’ll do the same to the Gentile nations, lesser, but in like kind. Whatever I’ll do to Israel in blessing, Gentile nations, believe Me for them, because you’ll get them in your nations. Because I’m the God who doesn’t change and I’m the God who blesses. Whatever I’ll do in the age to come, I’ll do in part in every arena now.” When I read these, I translate these promises into our time and our day for individual life as well as corporate geographic regions. What God says about geographic areas here in this passage, He feels the same way towards individuals. If God thinks this way about collective groups, then He thinks this way about individuals because He never changes. God never changes. He has the same heart. That’s the how we approach this very relevant passage. Again, we are looking at God’s blessing in the natural arena.

THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE THE FRUIT OF SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES

Then the next passage, verses 28-32, is God’s blessing in the spiritual arena of dreams, visions, prophecy, signs and wonders. Both the natural and spiritual blessings are the fruit of solemn assemblies. They’re the byproduct of people who cry out to God with wholeheartedness and take their place in intercession to loose the blessing of God. So we have to believe God for natural blessings and for spiritual blessings. That’s how we’re reading this passage and that’s how we apply it.

THE LORD WILL BE ZEALOUS AND HAVE COMPASSION ON HIS PEOPLE

He says in verse 18, “Then the Lord will be zealous for His land” (Joel 2:18). When is *then*? “After you fasted and prayed and cried out to the Lord and asked Him for blessing and to relent of judgment. Then the Lord will be zealous for the land.” “Then He will have pity” (v. 19, paraphrased), or another translation says *compassion*

on His people. Fasting and prayer releases God's zeal for His land and it releases His compassion on His people. It causes the release to increase.

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE GRAIN FOR HIS PEOPLE IN THE LATTER DAYS

He goes on to say in verse 19, "The Lord will answer"—meaning answer the fasting and prayer of verses 12-17—"and say to His people, 'Behold, I will send you grain'" (Joel 2:19). This is agricultural blessing. Some people want to spiritualize all of this; we don't need to spiritualize it. He's talking about real grain. He's talking about food. The reason they spiritualize it is because they're trying to make sense of this passage. Who wants real grain? People who are hungry want real grain. Most of the earth is hungry right now. Literally most of the planet is hungry. They don't have a surplus. Where we're going in the generation in which the Lord returns, there will be great famine all over the earth and these passages will really, really matter in the days to come, even in the countries in the West. When famine and drought begin to happen, a lot of believers will pull these verses out and dust them off, and they won't spiritualize them away. *Grain* will really mean grain. The good news is that it does.

"Behold, I will send you grain; I will send you the new wine and the oil. You will be satisfied." He's talking about physical satisfaction. "You will have enough to eat, enough to supply physical food for your family." Because the war that the Babylonian army brought, brought devastation and famine all throughout the land. It brought hunger and desolation. This is not a small thing to a war-torn nation, or to a land with famine and drought; this is a huge problem that's being answered. "Your families will have plenty to eat," is what He's saying. If we know that God thinks enough about this to tell a prophet about it, as He does many prophets, we know it's on His heart. As we get closer to the hour where things become more desperate and more desolate, we'll say, "God, did You remember that people are hungry?"

"Oh yes, I remember. I've put it in My prophets many times. It's on My mind; it's in My heart. I didn't forget."

"Good." Again, in affluent Western nations, when things are going well, these verses don't mean much. They'll mean a whole lot in the days to come, not just for geographic areas, but for individuals. You know that God cares about food; He cares that you eat. Look at Matthew 6: He feeds the birds of the air; He will feed you. He cares about you (Mt. 6:26). He's telling the prophet Joel here, "This is on My mind; this is part of My mindset. When I think of you, I think of your physical needs."

"I WILL REMOVE FAR FROM YOU THE NORTHERN ARMY"

"Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, and you will be satisfied by them" (Joel 2:19). In other words, "Your hunger will be satisfied." Then He says, "I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations" (ibid). Now He's moving to a military and political scenario. He just went from an agricultural and economic scenario to a military and political one. He says, "I will remove far from you the northern army (v. 20). There's a northern army that attacked Israel. It was Babylon in Joel's context. There's a northern army, the Antichrist's army, that will come from the north to attack Israel in the last days. But not just Israel; in that hour, he will attack many nations of the earth. This promise is not only for Israel. Again, like kind but lesser degree. The blessings God bestows on Israel, He bestows on the nations of the earth in lesser measure—both blessing, discipline, and judgment. It's the same kind, but in lesser measure.

What do you want? More blessing and more discipline or less blessing and less discipline? If you are a normal American, you say, "I want more blessing and less discipline. I want the high of the one and the low of the other." But it doesn't work that way.

THE BODIES OF THOSE THE LORD DESTROYS WILL LIE ON THE GROUND UNBURIED

Verse 20: "I will remove far from you the northern army." Again, that northern army will rise up against the nations of the earth. "And I will drive him away into a barren and desolate land" (Joel 2:20). In other words, "I will defeat the armies of the Antichrist."

"His face will be toward the eastern sea, the Dead Sea, and his back will be toward the western sea, the Mediterranean sea. His stench will come up and his foul odor will arise because he has done monstrous things" (Joel 2:20b, paraphrased). We know from Ezekiel 39 that this means God is going to kill so much of their army that they will lie on the ground for seven months unburied. The stench of the rotting corpses of the millions of this hostile army that God supernaturally destroys will arise and it will be a horrible thing. What God is really telling them through Joel is, "I will utterly defeat the armies of the Antichrist and they will have no honor." In ancient Israel, in Israel's mindset, to lie on the open field with no graves was an insult and a mockery and a reproach, even worse than losing in battle. They will be reproached openly and utterly destroyed. The reason why, Joel says, is because he has done monstrous things.

HE WILL TERRIFY THE NATIONS, BUT HE WILL NOT TERRIFY THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The point is, there's a monstrous army that will rise up to attack Israel. That's the point here, but we know he's going to attack many nations of the earth. That monstrous army is already defeated. He will terrify the nations, but he won't terrify the people of God. Though we will take him seriously, we will not fear him; he has already lost. We can begin to decree these prophecies against him as he rises up in the earth. If you see him in your lifetime, and I believe that many of you will, these prophecies will really matter. Remember, these prophecies are in the context of solemn assemblies of fasting and prayer. Remember the very first verse, verse 18, which says in essence, "After you fast and pray, then all this stuff happens."

"THE OPEN PASTURES ARE SPRINGING UP, AND THE TREE BEARS ITS FRUIT"

He goes on to say in verse 21, "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done marvelous things" (Joel 2:21). The land was thinking, "We're barren, we're burnt, we're destroyed. What do you mean 'fear not'?" Don't worry; God has marvelous plans in store for healing the land entirely.

"Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field, for the open pastures"—instead of being barren and starving to death—"are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength" (Joel 2:22)—instead of the drought and famine. He says, "Don't worry, beasts of the field; there will be food for you as well. There will be food everywhere." Again, if God will do that in fullness in the age to come, we know He will release this even now in a time of famine, in a time of difficulty. It's related to the people who seek Him with all their heart and rise up into that priestly position of intercession to release blessing and to stop the work of the enemy.

"BE GLAD, THEN, YOU CHILDREN OF ZION, AND REJOICE IN THE LORD YOUR GOD"

"Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month" (Joel 2:23).

He's telling the children of God, "Be encouraged. Rejoice in the Lord. Even though you see the opposite for a season, don't worry; full blessing is in God's heart to release." Again, God will release pockets of blessing, pockets of mercy all over the earth, even ahead of time, to the people who believe Him for it.

"I WILL RESTORE TO YOU THE YEARS THAT THE SWARMING LOCUST HAS EATEN"

He goes on in verse 24 and says, "The threshing floors shall be full of wheat" (Joel 2:24). This is food. "I will restore to you all the agricultural damage of the locusts, and the crawling locusts, and the consuming locusts. Whatever was destroyed in your past, I will make it up to you" (v. 25, paraphrased). Even though it's generations in the past, God says, "My accounting is up to date. I see the judgment that came on you and I'm actually going to make it up to you as a nation. I am the God who restores."

THE LOVE OF THE GOD WHO RESTORES

You may say, "Why do you care if God compensates Israel for a locust plague that destroyed the land, generations after the event?" Why? Because He's the God who makes things up to people. He's the God who restores; He's the God who sees pain and destruction. When He sees wholeheartedness, He takes that pain and destruction and restores it; He multiplies the blessing. That's why you would care about that just in your own individualistic way. You care about it as well because we love God's purposes for the nation of Israel. But say that you don't even get that yet and you're reading this thinking, "I don't get the Israel thing; why do I even care about this passage?" It's because God is the God who restores. When He sees humility and meekness, even from destruction that was years ago, His accounting is up to date. He will make it up to you if you'll respond to Him, because He has so much mercy and so much kindness. That's the kind of personality He has.

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you" (Joel 2:26). He's talking about physically eating; this provision of the Lord will touch your spirit. Instead of making you greedy, instead of making you turn away from God, it will actually energize your worship life because you'll interpret it in the right way.

EVEN IN JUDGMENT, HE WILL RESTORE ALL HE HAS TAKEN AWAY IF WE ONLY REPENT

He goes on to say that God has dealt wondrously with you. It's in God's heart to deal wondrously with all His people; He wants to deal marvelously and wondrously. Those are the two terms. This is in His heart for you, for Israel, for anyone who will come. He has wonderful plans, marvelous plans, if we will say yes to Him. Even if we have come under judgment and discipline, if we repent, He says, "I can restore it all back to you; I absolutely can. It's in My heart to do this. This is the kind of God that I'm."

THE GOD WHO RELEASES JUDGMENT WILL REMOVE SHAME FROM HIS PEOPLE

Look at what it says here at the end of verse 26: "My people shall never be put to shame" (Joel 2:26). "Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame" (ibid). Twice He makes this point, "I don't want My people in shame." Do you know that He cares about you being in shame? Twice He told Israel, "You think I don't care that you're in shame and in need. It bruises My heart, even though I've allowed it to happen. In some cases I've sent the destruction Myself; in other cases it was the enemy. In some cases there was an overlap. I care that you are in shame. It touches My heart that you feel shame. I don't want you in shame; I want you confident. I want you bold before Me; I want you filled with honor." The God of judgment is the God who doesn't want shame on His people. As a matter of fact, He releases judgment to awaken love so that His people can walk in agreement so that shame and lack would be far removed from their lives. That's what He's saying in this session here.

GOD'S ZEAL IS AROUSED WHEN WE COME BEFORE HIM IN WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

I'm just going to say some of the points again. A few of them I'll skip. Middle of page ninety-one. Paragraph A. The transition in Joel occurs right here with this little verse. "Then the Lord will be zealous" (Joel 2:18). When is *then*? It's when the people cry out with all their heart in fasting and prayer. God will be zealous. Paragraph B. God's zeal is aroused when the people come before Him in wholeheartedness. It really does make a difference if we do this. It really matters that we go into IHOP-KC, into our little world here and do our sacred trust, and come before God and talk to Him, the invisible God. It really matters; it really, really does matter. I want to encourage people, when you are in the prayer room, don't play video games, this, that and the other. Talk to God; get in His face. Put your face before His. Get rid of that stuff. I really mean that. Get rid of the games in the prayer room. The reason I'm saying that is because it's not a game, what we're doing.

"Well, I'm at IHOP-KC for six months, a year, two or three years, so I have to be in this prayer meeting." Forget all this stuff. You have a few hours; you're before God; talk to Him. Get before His face and talk to Him. It's not a game; you're not just biding time. It really matters when weak and broken people sit in a room and talk to God. It really does arouse His zeal and release His blessing.

THE SECOND HALF OF JOEL: THE BLESSING OF GOD ON HIS COVENANT PEOPLE

Paragraph B. The first half of Joel, which we have looked at already, is the crisis and the call to wholeheartedness so that the crisis can be fixed. The second half of Joel, we begin right here in Joel 2:18; we have now begun the second half. It begins with, "Then." It's God's blessing. This blessing, which happens in fullness in the age to come, reveals what God's heart is like when He thinks about His people. So we know that God thinks about these things in our life because this is what He thinks about when He considers His people.

Top of page ninety-two. Joel describes God's salvation and deliverance; salvation meaning the release of blessing, deliverance, the removing of the negative, the imparting of the positive. I just say in paragraph D and E what I've already said. What happens to Israel happens to all the people of God in the nations. It's a similar kind of blessing because it reveals the nature of God, what He's like, what He does for His people. It happens to the Gentile nations in lesser degree. What He does in the land of Israel in the millennial kingdom will be chief among the nations. It will have more blessing, more authority, more power because He wants it that way. All the other nations will be blessed beyond measure, beyond what they can imagine, second only to the capital city of the earth which is called the City of the Great King (Mt. 5:35), Jesus' own city.

THE LORD HAS LONG BEEN ZEALOUS FOR THE LAND ON WHICH ISRAEL RESTS

Let's look at Roman numeral II. Joel 2:18. "Then the Lord will be zealous for His land." The Bible says that a number of times, that His zeal is aroused when His people respond. I will make a second point, a very important point: God is zealous for the land of Israel. That's a point that's new to some of you. God is zealous for this little piece of geography. He wants it; He chose it. He chose Jerusalem as a city and the land of Israel before anything ever happened in history. He picked it and then built history around it. He didn't pick Jerusalem when He picked Abraham; He picked Jerusalem long before He picked Abraham. As a matter of fact, Abraham had to walk a long way from the Ur of the Chaldeans, which was Babylon or modern-day Iraq. He had to leave Iraq to go to Israel because God said, "I have chosen you. You're in the wrong piece of real estate because that's the land I picked."

Abraham said, "Where am I going?"

God said, "Well it's not on the map yet;" so He led Abraham where Abraham didn't know. Abraham went forth not knowing where he was going. There was no city there, it wasn't on the map yet. There was no land of Israel there; the land was there, but there was no nation. He wandered around and he couldn't ask someone, "Where is Jerusalem at? That's the city of the great King." He was led by the Lord and he didn't even know where He was going. The testimony of Scripture makes clear that God chose that land long before anything else; long before He raised up Moses or David He had already chosen the land of Israel.

Paragraph B. Jesus chose the land He would be born in, would live and die in. Back in Genesis 1 He said, "When I become a man, I shall live in this land." He chose the land in which He would make His grand entrance back into the human race. He chose the land in which He would place His capital city of the earth, Jerusalem. The rest of world history was built around that land. It's very, very important to the Devil. He wants to rule it; if he can't rule it, he wants to destroy it.

THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS FOR JERUSALEM, HIS BELOVED CITY

Paragraph C. This might be new to some of you, but it's a revelation of God's heart. In Zechariah God says, "I am zealous for Jerusalem" (Zech. 1:14). God really, really cares about that city. He cares about all cities, but He has plans for Jerusalem second to no other in the earth. It will be the city Jesus rules from forever. He really is zealous for that city. By the way, Jerusalem and Zion is the same. Technically, Zion is a subunit of Jerusalem, like a little subdivision in Jerusalem, to use funny language. From the biblical point of view, you take a step back. When God says, "I love Zion and Jerusalem," it's often synonymous, talking about physical Jerusalem. Yes, in Hebrews 12 we see that we, the people of God, are part of Zion, the capital city of God, in the spiritual sense (Heb. 12:22). But He's talking about physical Jerusalem, physical Zion; it's the same place. God says, "I am zealous for it."

I tell other believers around who don't think much about it, "If God is zealous for a city, you at least want to ask the question, 'Why?' And, 'Should I be?'" Of course if you stay with that question long enough, the Lord will begin to impart some of His passion for that city. Because He wants us all involved in what's going to happen in the great drama surrounding that city in the end times.

"I AM ZEALOUS FOR ZION WITH GREAT ZEAL; WITH GREAT FERVOR I AM ZEALOUS"

"Thus says the Lord, 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her'" (Zech. 8:2). How could He say it more strongly? With great zeal; with great fervor. Again, I've heard the question for a number of years, "What's the deal with Israel?" You take someone to Zechariah 8:2 and say, "Well I don't know everything that's going to happen, but the Man I love with all my heart, fully God, fully Man, His name is Jesus, and He is really captivated by this city with great zeal and with great fervor."

They say, "Hmmm... I wonder what that means. Maybe that He's zealous for the Church?"

No, that's not what He's talking about, though He is zealous for the Church. But when you read Zechariah 8, He's talking about the city of Jerusalem specifically. You don't want to spiritualize it; He has great zeal. The enemy will rise up and attack this. In some of the other sessions, we'll look at the attack the enemy has planned for the city of Jerusalem in order to annihilate it. The Lord will draw the nations to the city of Jerusalem, not to annihilate it, but to cleanse it. God is drawing the nations to cleanse Israel; Satan is drawing the nations to destroy Israel.

“Who will win? What’s going to happen?”

Well, we already know who is going to win and what’s going to happen. The city will be saved and purified as all the nations gather around the city of Jerusalem.

JERUSALEM, THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING, FROM WHICH HE WILL REIGN FOREVER

Paragraph D. The whole earth is the Lord’s, but He has one city that is called the city of the great King. Jesus said it Himself in Matthew 5 when He spoke of Jerusalem. He said, “This city is My city; this is the city of the great King. I am the great King and this is My city. This city doesn’t love Me right now, but it will before it’s over” (Mt. 5:35, paraphrased). He will set His throne there, and bring the New Jerusalem down to natural Jerusalem in the Millennium. He will rule in the city of Jerusalem forever. It’s the capital city forever. He has chosen a place to rule forever.

Look at Psalm 132. “The Lord has chosen Zion” (Ps. 132:13). He desires it; He has chosen a geographic area as His central place of government.

Paragraph E. Jerusalem is the center of the earth. From God’s point of view, it’s where three continents join, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Apart from that, God organized the earth around the city of Jerusalem. In Ezekiel 5:5, we read, “Thus says the Lord, ‘This is Jerusalem: I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her’” (Eze. 5:5). The NIV and NASB and many translation don’t put the word *midst*, but say rather, “I have set Jerusalem in the center of the nations.” I believe that’s what God’s intent is: “All the countries are all around her and Jerusalem is the center of the earth from My point of view and I built history around it.”

SATAN WANTS TO PREVENT THE RETURN OF JESUS BY DESTROYING THE JEWISH RACE

Paragraph F. Satan wants to rule Jerusalem. I’m saying this sort of tongue in cheek, but Satan believes Jesus backed Himself into a corner when He prophesied in Matthew 23. Right before Jesus went to the cross, He gave this prophecy. I believe Satan heard it, and liked it, and said, “Ahh, I’ve got You now!”

When the scribes and Pharisees rejected Him, just days before He went to the cross, they said, “We don’t want You.”

Jesus said, “I’m finished with you right now. I’m leaving this city and this place to you desolate” (Mt. 23:38, paraphrased). He said, “You shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Mt. 23:39, NKJV).

What Jesus did was, He bound Himself. He said, “Jerusalem, I won’t come back to you again”—by which He meant the second coming— “until you as a city call Me your King.”

I believe the enemy, the Devil, said, “I got you. You can’t come back to Jerusalem until the Jews say Jesus of Nazareth is God. Awesome. That means You can’t come back! Because I will see to it that they’ll never say that Jesus of Nazareth is God and their Messiah. Because I will completely annihilate the Jewish race! There will be no one there to receive You. If any remain, they will be so offended at Christianity, they will never, ever accept the Jesus of Christianity.”

SATAN'S 2,000-YEAR PLAN TO ANNIHILATE THE JEWS FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH

The enemy has been on a 2,000-year strategy to try to annihilate the Jewish race. That's what was really going on with Adolph Hitler: The Devil was trying to annihilate the Jewish race. It's not that Adolph Hitler had a racial problem; it was a religious issue. It was a Satanic plot to annihilate the Jewish race. That's what was on Hitler's mind, I believe. I believe that it was much more than political or economic tension or even plain hatred. He was involved with Satan in planning the annihilation of the Jewish people. The Antichrist will have the same plan; he will go further than Adolph Hitler went, but he won't complete it at all. All the nations will gather around to bring Jerusalem nearly to extinction. But it won't happen. Joel 2 tells us the whole story: That monstrous army will be destroyed; the drought will be reversed; the economy will be restored, and it will be the city of the great King. The world will be filled with the glory of God from that city. It's all there in Joel 2. Joel lays it out one, two, three, one after the other.

Throughout history Satan has tried to destroy the Jewish people, because if the Jewish people don't exist, then Jesus is a liar if He comes back without the Jews receiving Him. If there are no Jews in the earth, how can they receive Him? If Jesus comes back and violates His own prophecy—"Well, Satan you killed them all, you cheated, so I'm just going to come back anyway"—the Devil would say, "You're a liar; your own prophecy didn't come to pass. You can't judge me as a liar if You're a liar."

Satan is really taking this thing to task; he desperately wants the Jews to hate Jesus. Because if Jesus is received in Jerusalem, then Jesus will return and then what happens to Satan next? What's the next thing on God's agenda related to Satan when Jesus returns to Jerusalem? He's sent to prison for 1,000 years. That's on his mind. Satan doesn't want to go to prison for 1,000 years. His only way out of prison, in his own mind, is that the Jews don't receive Jesus and so he's not able to come back. He is creating havoc worldwide to destroy the city of Jerusalem. The Body of Christ is God's answer, for they will be the messengers and intercessors for the battle of Jerusalem in the end times.

It's a lot bigger story; I just snuck it in here. That's not even really my point here, though I have several teachings on this. If you've never heard this, I have quite a bit of stuff on the internet about it. It's a vast subject, but it's all related to a praying and fasting people. The point I'm making is that this great reversal and this great turnaround in Israel will be related to Gentile believers in the earth fasting and praying. There will be Jewish believers as well, but I'm talking about a hundred million Gentile believers in the earth fasting and praying and engaging in the battle for Jerusalem and crying out according to these promises of Joel, for Israel and even for their own nations as well, that God releases the same blessing—in like kind, but in lesser degree.

ONCE YOUR PARADIGM SHIFTS, YOU WILL FIND THE COSMIC DRAMA EVERYWHERE

Top of page ninety-four. Roman numeral IV. I realize that for some of you it's the first time you've ever read the book of Joel. You say, "I think you're really excited about the last ten minutes; I don't get any of that." I get that; I really do understand how you feel. The ideas are so dramatic. If they're new, what I'm asking you to do is read through the notes, take a little time, get together with some friends and say, "What? What does that mean? Does that make sense to you?" When you start talking about it, get a few Bible verses out and then you'll become familiar with the ideas. Once you become familiar with the ideas, you read the Bible and you find them from Genesis to Revelation. You say, "I never knew those verses were there!" Once your paradigm shifts, you find this drama everywhere. It's the praying, fasting people, engaged in the battle of Jerusalem, defeating the enemy, prophesying ahead of time of the victory that's coming and receiving part of the blessing ahead of time. That's the whole story line we're talking about. Even though we're laboring for our own city, we're also

laboring for Jerusalem. We're believing for the age to come, but we're receiving some of its benefits even now, ahead of time, through wholeheartedness that's strengthened by fasting and prayer. Then our intercession flows out of that wholeheartedness; we're shutting and opening gates in the Spirit, releasing angels and preventing demons. These blessings are multiplying related to our activity on the earth. It's really dynamic, what we're about—little, weak, broken human beings like us. Because of who we are in Jesus, our words matter. Who we are together matters, prophesying these truths ahead of time, and believing for a down payment now in our life and in our region. They're dynamic truths; they really are. That's why I'm zealous that we would get hold of them and latch onto them. You want to read it over and over and over. You want to really get this in your spirit.

THE ENEMY WILL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST ALL NATIONS, BUT MANY NATIONS HE WILL

Roman numeral IV. Again, this is the Antichrist's army. God says, "I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations. But I will remove far from you the northern army, and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land... His stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise" (Joel 2:19-20). It's the odor of millions of decomposing soldiers because so many millions were killed. It's because the Antichrist, the northern army, has done monstrous things to Israel.

Beloved, he will do monstrous things to other nations of the earth. He won't conquer every nation; but he will conquer a number of nations. He will be resisted by a number of nations as well. Yes, he will have a stronghold in every nation, because the Bible says he will have authority in every nation. It doesn't mean he will rule them in a complete way. He will have a beachhead in every nation, but not at all will he control every nation. It's my opinion, but I base it on several things that I don't want to go into right now, that in that day, the Antichrist will make inroads in America, but will never conquer America. That's a strong feeling I have. I believe that part of America's role is to be an intercessory nation. Not just in the natural by giving supplies of food in other places; I believe that will happen as well, but an intercessory nation in the Spirit, through houses of prayer, engaged in the battle of Jerusalem. We will be under the onslaught and the attack of this world government. In my strong conviction, they will never, ever conquer America. We will resist it and he will come up short before he takes it over. He will try, but he will fail. This will happen in many nations. He won't take over many nations, but many nations he will. When we read about this monstrous army, it's personal to all of us. Because we will all be affected by it, though Israel will undergo the most severe attack and assault. The nations of the earth will have a like attack, but of a lesser measure. We care about the ultimate destiny of this army being destroyed.

THE ARMIES WILL BE WIPED OUT, THE LAND CLEANSED, AND GOD WILL COME TO ZION

What God is telling Israel, paragraph A, is that Jerusalem will be the capital of the whole earth. In Jeremiah, He says, "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem" (Jer. 3:17)—to the name of Jesus. Here this northern army is assaulting Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is the throne of the Lord, which means the capital city where the throne of Jesus will be. All the nations of the earth will stream to that city as the capital city, as the chief governing city of the earth, because Jesus is there.

So look at the great reversal. This northern army will be destroyed, wiped out, the land will be cleansed, and Jerusalem will be strong, and the evil will be driven out of the land. Again, that's going to happen in an extreme way in Jerusalem. The same sort of victory will happen globally. When the Lord returns, the enemy's kingdom will be driven off the earth completely. Even the victories we gain in this age will have continuity in the age to come. That's a subject for another time.

THE LORD WILL DRIVE THE INVADERS INTO A DESOLATE AND BARREN LAND

Let's look at paragraph E. Joel highlighted an important detail of the end-time drama. He wanted us to know that God is going to remove this northern army. He's going to remove them; He's going to drive them away into a desolate land. He's going to drive this northern army into a barren and desolate land "with his face toward the eastern sea and his back toward the western sea" (Joel 2:20). That's the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. He will destroy him in that part of the earth which we know is around the city of Jerusalem.

Paragraph F. The northern army in Joel's day was understood to be Babylon. That was the near prophecy: that in a few decades or whenever, we don't know for sure, Babylon would come from the north. Now, 2,500 plus years later, with all the other prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah and the book of Revelation, we say, "No, Babylon wasn't the fullness of the Babylonian army. That was only a down payment; that was only a picture of a more severe army that's coming at the end of the age." Not only was Babylon destroyed eventually; we know as surely as Babylon was destroyed, this monstrous army will be destroyed one day.

Top of page ninety-five. Paragraph I. Ezekiel 39:12. Here is what it says: "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying this dead army in order to cleanse the land" (Eze. 39:12, paraphrased). There will be so many soldiers of this wicked army destroyed that it will take Israel seven months to bury the dead soldiers. Again, it's not just that the enemy is defeated; they won't have the honor. They'll have the dishonor of not being buried, which in that culture was a huge dishonor. That was understood not only as defeat, but open reproach and dishonor. That's the kind of dishonor this army of the Antichrist will have—Israel will spend seven months burying their dead.

"FOR THE INDIGNATION OF THE LORD IS AGAINST ALL NATIONS"

"For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations" (Is. 34:2). That means the anger, the anger of the Lord is against all nations, "and His fury against all their armies" (ibid). The Lord will be angry with all the armies that join with the Antichrist. "He has utterly destroyed them; He has given them over to the slaughter. Their slain shall be thrown out in the open streets; the stench will rise from their corpses. The mountains shall be filled with their blood" (v. 2-3, paraphrased).

WE WILL STRIKE BACK WITH HOLY ARSENALS AGAINST THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS

Isaiah 34 is describing the same thing that Joel is. Again, the point of it is, when you see the Antichrist's army rise up, if you see that in your day, you don't say, "Oh no!" You look at it and take it seriously, but you begin to prophesy what's to come for this army. The people of God, Jews and Gentiles alike that love Jesus, don't draw back and give up and give in and say, "Oh fear, fear, fear." They take a stand and say, "This will be a tough hour. But we're going to win; we already have victory assured." The people of God begin to declare and prophesy where this is going, in order to release the destruction in the spirit ahead of time. The people in the solemn assemblies, in the prayer gatherings, will use these verses and these promises like missiles; like a holy arsenal against the kingdom of darkness. This book is loaded with promises that we will use to strike back as the people of God against the kingdom of darkness.

WE DON'T DRAW BACK IN FEAR; WE REJOICE IN THE LORD

Roman numeral V. I'll just sum it up to you and end with that. It means, "Don't be afraid; be glad." God says this over and over. "Don't be afraid, O land; don't be afraid, O beasts; don't be afraid, but be glad, O people. Be glad, O land. Land, beast, people, be glad, don't be afraid, and rejoice in the Lord." They're told to rejoice in the Lord and not be afraid before the victory is manifest openly. When the trouble is all around, they're meant

to see that victory is sure—ultimate victory; to see that there will be pockets of victory even ahead of time as well. They can be huge pockets of victory, because the victory won't just come when Jesus returns. There will be all kinds of victories happening against the Antichrist throughout the entire years leading up to the return of the Lord. We don't draw back in fear; we rejoice in the Lord. We press in as the people of God, we prophesy, we stand strong. Some will die. But many will not die; many will walk in victory.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD ALONE SHALL STAND FIRM IN THE EARTH IN THAT FEARFUL HOUR

The nations will be fainting for fear. Jesus said, "The nations will faint for fear in that day" (Lk. 21:26, paraphrased). The people of God will be rejoicing. Not a cavalier, superficial rejoicing like we're out of touch with what's going on; rather, we will have a profound anchor rooted in the Word of God, in confidence in Jesus. We will be rejoicing, not in a glib, superficial, silly way, but with a profound confidence in that hour as the people of God. They will rejoice in the Lord and be glad and not fearful while the hearts of the nations are failing for fear. Because we as the people of God will be prophesying ahead of time, we will be bold in our spirits, not just for victory when the Antichrist is defeated when Jesus returns, but knowing we will have pockets of victory ahead of time, substantial pockets of victory over the Antichrist. We will believe not only for the ultimate victory, but also for the temporal victory ahead of time.

A CALL TO LIVE IN REJOICING, NOT FEAR, EVEN BEFORE THE VICTORY IS MANIFEST

If it's happening in geographic areas, it's happening in your individual lives. These aren't just promises to apply to geographic areas; you can believe God for every one of these promises for your life. You know these things are in your heart for you, for His people. He wants you to live, not in fear, but in rejoicing, even before the victory is manifest. He wants you to be bold. We know He wants you free from shame; we know He wants to make provision for us. All of these promises are clearly here in Joel 2, but it's the people who are moving into His heart, who are seeking Him with all their heart and pressing into this. He's in control. That's the message of Joel 2. In verses 17-27 He's saying, "I am in control; I am in control. Victory is assured and you can have it now in certain measure, even in the geographic areas of the nations. You can have victory even now in different measures." Yet it will be fully manifest when the Lord returns.

When we read this passage, our spirit is bolstered with strength as it gets into us and as we pray and fast. We speak these truths. We don't speak them right now against the Antichrist at that time. We can believe these truths now for an application of them in our lives in part, but there's coming a time when the Antichrist will actually be on the earth. The people of God will prophesy these things in prayer rooms across the earth. This is like a prayer manual written ahead of time which contains prophetic promises which are the arsenal of the end-time Church.

Amen.