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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON
JOEL

by Adam Clarke.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

HOLY BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JOEL

JOEL, the son of *Pethuel*, the second of the twelve minor prophets, was, as is said, of the tribe of *Reuben*, and city of *Bethoran*; or rather *Betharan*, for *Bethoran* was on this side *Jordan*, in the tribe of *Ephraim*, and *Betharan* was on the other side of the river, in the tribe of *Reuben*. Joel prophesied in the kingdom of Judah; and it is the opinion of some critics that he did not appear there till after the removal of the ten tribes and the destruction of the kingdom of *Israel*. We do not know distinctly the year wherein he began to prophesy, nor that in which he died. He speaks of a great famine, and an inundation of locusts, which ravaged *Judea*; but as these are evils not uncommon in that country, and all sorts of events have not been registered in history, we can infer nothing from thence towards fixing the particular period of *Joel's* prophecy.

St. Jerome, followed by many others, both ancients and moderns, believed *Joel* to have been contemporary with *Hosea*, according to this rule laid down by him, that when there is no certain proof of the time wherein any prophet lived, we are to be directed in our conjectures by the time of the preceding prophet, whose epoch is better known. But this rule is not always certain, and should not hinder us from following another system, if we have good reason for doing so. The *Hebrews* maintain that *Joel* prophesied under *Manasseh*; and as collateral circumstances seem to preponderate in favour of this hypothesis, it has been accordingly followed in the margin. Under the idea of an enemy's army, the prophet represents a cloud of locusts, which in his time fell upon *Judea*, and caused great desolation. This, together with the caterpillars, and the drought, brought a terrible famine upon the land. God, being moved with the calamities and prayers of his people, scattered the locusts, and the wind blew them into the sea. These misfortunes were succeeded by plenty and fertility. After this, the prophet foretold the day of the Lord, and the vengeance he was to exercise in the valley of *Jezreel*. He speaks of the *teacher of righteousness*, whom God was to send; and of the Holy Spirit, which was to descend upon all flesh. He says that *Jerusalem* will be inhabited for ever; that salvation will come out from thence; and that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. All this relates to the new covenant, and the time of the Messiah. See *Calmet*.

Bishop *Lowth* observes that “the style of Joel differs much from that of Hosea; but, though of a different kind, is equally poetical. It is elegant, perspicuous, clear, diffusive, and flowing; and, at the same time, very sublime, nervous, and animated. He displays the whole power of poetic description in the first and second chapters; and, at the same time, his fondness for metaphors, comparisons, and allegories; nor is the connection of his subjects less remarkable than the graces of his diction. It is not to be denied that in some places he is very obscure; which every attentive reader will perceive, especially in the end of this prophecy.” Præl. xxi.; and see *Dodd*. The two first chapters are inimitably beautiful; and the language, in force, and often in *sound*, well adapted to the subject. **See Clarke’s note on “^{<2010>}Joel 1:1”**.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JOEL

Chronological Notes relative to the commencement of Joel's prophesying, upon the supposition that this event took place about six hundred and ninety years before the commencement of the Christian era.

- Year from the Creation, according to Archbishop Usher, 3314.
- Year of the Julian Period, 4024.
- Year since the Flood, 1658.
- Year from the foundation of Solomon's temple, 322.
- Year since the division of Solomon's monarchy into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 285.
- Year since the extinction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, 31.
- Third year of the *twenty-second* Olympiad.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Varronian computation, 64.
- Year before the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 690.
- Cycle of the Sun, 20.
- Cycle of the Moon, 15.
- Third year of Eryxias, the last decennial archon of the Athenians.
- First year of Anaxidamus, king of Lacedæmon, of the family of the Proclidæ.
- Thirty-fifth year of Eurycrates I., king of Lacedæmon, of the family of the Eurysthenidæ.
- Eleventh year of Deioces, the first king of the Medes.
- Fortieth year of Perdiccas I., king of Macedon.
- Twenty-ninth year of Gyges, king of Lydia.
- Ninth year of Manasseh, king of Judah.

CHAPTER 1

This and the beginning of the next chapter contain a double prophecy, applicable in its primary sense to a plague of locusts which was to devour the land, and to be accompanied with a severe drought and famine; and in its

secondary sense it denotes the Chaldean invasion. Both senses must be admitted: for some of the expressions will apply only to the dearth by insects; others to the desolation by war. The contexture of both is beautiful and well conducted. In this chapter the distress of every order of people is strongly painted; and not only does the face of nature languish when the God of nature is displeased, 1-19; but the very beasts of the field, by a bold figure, are represented as supplicating God in their distress, and reproaching the stupidity of man, 20.

NOTES ON CHAP. 1

Verse 1. The word of the Lord that came to Joel] See the *introduction* for some account of this prophet, whose history is very obscure. Bishop *Newcome* thinks that he prophesied while the kingdom of Judah subsisted, and refers to ^{<2001>}**Joel 2:1, 15**, (see also ^{<2014>}**Joel 1:14**, and the note there,) but not long before its subversion as his words, ^{<2001>}**Joel 3:1**, seem to imply that its captivity was approaching. See ^{<2210>}**2 Kings 21:10-15**. He therefore favours the conjecture of *Drusius*, that this prophet lived under *Manasseh*, and before his conversion, ^{<4313>}**2 Chronicles 33:13**; that is, some time from before Christ 697 to (suppose) 660.

Verse 2. Ye old men] Instead of **μynqzh** *hazzekenim*, *old men*, a few MSS. have **μynhkh** *hacchohanim*, *ye priests*, but improperly.

Hath this been in your days] He begins very abruptly; and before he proposes his *subject*, excites attention and alarm by intimating that he is about to announce disastrous events, such as the *oldest man* among them has never seen, nor any of them learnt from the histories of ancient times.

Verse 3. Tell ye your children of it] To heighten the effect, he still conceals the subject, and informs them that it is such as should be handed down from father to son through all generations.

Verse 4. That which the palmerworm hath left] Here he begins to open his message, and the words he chooses show that he is going to announce a devastation of the land by *locusts*, and a *famine* consequent on their depredations. What the different *insects* may be which he specifies is not easy to determine. I shall give the words of the original, with their etymology.

The *palmerworm*, **μzg** *gazam*, from the same root, *to cut short*; probably the *caterpillar*, or some such *blight*, from its *cutting the leaves of the trees into pieces* for its nourishment.

The *locust*, **hbra** *arbeh*, from **hbr** *rabah*, *to multiply*, from the immense increase and multitude of this insect.

Cankerworm, **ql y** *yelek*, from **ql** *lak*, *to lick or lap with the tongue*; the *reference* is uncertain.

Caterpillar, **l ysj** *chasil*, from **l sj** *chasal*, *to consume, to eat up*; the *consumer*. Bishop Newcome translates the *first, grasshopper*; the *second, locust*; the *third, devouring locust*; and the *fourth, consuming locust*. After all that has been said by interpreters concerning these *four* animals, I am fully of opinion that the *arbeh*, or *locust* himself, is the *gazam*, the *yelek*, and the *chasil*; and that these different names are used here by the prophet to point out the locust in its different states, or progress from *embryo* to *full growth*. See Clarke's note on "~~אמ~~ Joel 2:2".

Verse 5. Awake, ye drunkards] The general destruction of vegetation by these devouring creatures has totally prevented both *harvest* and *vintage*; so that there shall not be *wine* even for *necessary* uses, much less for the purposes of *debauchery*. It is well known that the ruin among the vines by locusts prevents the vintage for several years after.

Verse 6. A nation is come up upon my land] That real *locusts* are intended there can be little doubt; but it is thought that this may be a *double prophecy*, and that the destruction by the *Chaldeans* may also be intended, and that the *four* kinds of *locusts* mentioned above may mean the *four* several attacks made on Judea by them. The *first* in the last year of Nabonassar, (father of Nebuchadnezzar,) which was the *third* of Jehoiakim; the *second* when Jehoiakim was taken prisoner in the *eleventh* year of his reign; the *third* in the *ninth* year of Zedekiah; and the *fourth, three* years after, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Others say that they mean *four powers* which have been enemies of the Jews: 1. The *palmerworm*, the Assyrians and Chaldeans. 2. The *locust*, the Persians and Medes. 3. The *cankerworm*, the Greeks, and particularly Antiochus Epiphanes. 4. The *caterpillar*, the Romans. Others make them *four kings*; Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and

Nebuchadnezzar. But of such similitudes there is no end; and the best of them is arbitrary and precarious.

Verse 7. He hath laid my vine waste] The locusts have eaten off both *leaves* and *bark*.

hpcj ācj *chasoph chasaphah*, he hath made it clean bare; hdc ddc *suddad sadeh*, the field is laid waste, ^{<2010>}Joel 1:10; and ydvm dck *kesod mishshaddai*, a destruction from the Almighty, ^{<2015>}Joel 1:15; are all *paronomasias* in which this prophet seems to delight.

Verse 8. Lament like a virgin—for the husband of her youth.] *Virgin* is a very improper *version* here. The original is hl wtb *bethulah*, which signifies a *young woman* or *bride* not a *virgin*, the proper Hebrew for which is hml [*almah*. See Clarke's notes on "^{<2074>}Isaiah 7:14", and "^{<0023>}Matthew 1:23".

Verse 9. The meat-offering and the drink-offering is cut off] The crops and the vines being destroyed by the locusts, the total devastation in plants, trees, corn, &c., is referred to and described with a striking variety of expression in this and the following verses.

Verse 12. The vine is dried up] Dr. *Shaw* observes that in Barbary, in the month of June, the locusts collect themselves into compact bodies a furlong or more square, and march on, eating up every thing that is green or juicy, and letting nothing escape them, whether vegetables or *trees*.

They destroy the *pomegranate*, the *palm*, the *apple*, (j wpt *tappuach*, the *citron tree*.) the *vine*, the *fig*, and every *tree of the field*. See Clarke's note on "^{<2002>}Joel 2:2".

Verse 14. Call a solemn assembly] hrx[*atsarah* signifies a time of *restraint*, as the *margin* has it. The clause should be translated—*consecrate a fast, proclaim a time of restraint*; that is, of total abstinence from *food*, and from all *secular employment*. All the elders of the land and the representatives of the people were to be collected at the *temple* to cry unto the Lord, to confess their sins, and pray for mercy. The *temple* was not yet destroyed. This prophecy was delivered before the captivity of Judah.

Verse 15. Alas for the day!] The *Syriac* repeats this, the *Vulgate*, *Septuagint*, and *Arabic*, thrice: "Alas, alas, alas, for the day!"

As a destruction from the Almighty] The destruction that is now coming is no ordinary calamity; it is as a signal judgment immediately inflicted by the Almighty.

Verse 17. The seed is rotten under their clods] When the sprout was cut off as low as possible by the locusts, there was no farther germination. The seed rotted away.

Verse 18. How do the beasts groan!] I really think that the *neighing* of horses, or *braying* of asses, is wonderfully expressed by the sound of the original: **hmhb hj nan hm mah** NEENCHAH *behemah*, how do the horses *neigh!* how do the asses *bray!* **hmhb** *behemah* is a collective name for all *domestic cattle*, and those used in *husbandry*.

Cattle are perplexed] They are looking everywhere, and wandering about to find some grass, and know not which way to run.

Verse 19. O Lord, to thee will I cry] Let this calamity come as it may, *we have sinned*, and should humble ourselves before God; and it is such a calamity as God alone can remove, therefore unto him must we cry.

The fire hath devoured the pastures] This may either refer to a *drought*, or to the effects of the locusts; as the ground, after they have passed over it, everywhere appears as if a *sheet of flame* had not only *scorched*, but *consumed* every thing.

Verse 20. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee] Even the cattle, wild and tame, are represented as supplicating God to have mercy upon them, and send them provender! There is a similar affecting description of the effects of a drought in Jeremiah, ^{<24406>}**Jeremiah 14:6**.

The rivers of waters are dried up] There must have been a *drought* as well as a *host of locusts*; as some of these expressions seem to apply to the effects of *intense heat*.

For **rbdmh** *hammidbar*, “the wilderness,” one of my oldest MSS. reads **rbdm** *midbar*, “wilderness” simply, as in ^{<23019>}**Joel 1:19**. *Eight* or *ten* of Dr. *Kennicott’s* have the same reading.

JOEL

CHAPTER 2

The prophet sounds the alarm of a dreadful calamity, the description of which is most terribly worked up, 1-11. Exhortation to repentance, fasting, and prayer, that the Divine judgments may be averted, 12-17. God will in due time take vengeance on all the enemies of pure and undefiled religion, 18-20. Great prosperity of the Jews subsequent to their return from the Babylonish captivity, 21-27. Joel then makes an elegant transition to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, 28-30; for so these verses are explained by one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. See ⁴⁴²¹⁶Acts 2:16-21. Prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, which was shortly to follow the opening of the Gospel dispensation, 31. Promises of safety to the faithful and penitent; promises afterwards remarkably fulfilled to the Christians in their escape to Pella from the desolating sword of the Roman army, 32.

NOTES ON CHAP. 2

Verse 1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion] This verse also shows that the temple was still standing. All assemblies of the people were collected by the sound of the *trumpet*.

The day of the Lord cometh] This phrase generally means a day of judgment or punishment.

Verse 2. A day of darkness, &c.] The depredations of the locusts are described from the *second* to the *eleventh* verse, and their destruction in the *twentieth*. Dr. Shaw, who saw locusts in Barbary in 1724 and 1725, thus describes them:—


“I never observed the *mantes*, bald *locusts*, to be gregarious. But the *locusts*, properly so called, which are so frequently mentioned by *sacred* as well as *profane* writers, are sometimes so beyond expression. Those which I saw in 1724 and 1725 were much bigger than our common grasshopper; and had brown spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow. Their first appearance was toward the latter end of *March*, the wind having been for some time south. In the middle of *April* their numbers were so vastly increased that, in the heat of the day, they formed themselves into large and numerous swarms; flew in the air like a succession of

clouds; and, as the prophet Joel expresses it, (^{<2010>}**Joel 2:10**) they darkened the sun. When the wind blew briskly, so that these swarms were crowded by others, or thrown one upon another, we had a lively idea of that comparison of the psalmist, (^{<194923>}**Psalm 109:23**), of being ‘tossed up and down as the locust.’ In the month of *May*, when the ovaries of those insects were ripe and turgid, each of these swarms began gradually to disappear; and retired into the *Mettijah*, and other adjacent plains, where they deposited their eggs. These were no sooner hatched in *June*, than each of these broods collected itself into a compact body of a furlong or more in square; and, marching immediately forward in the direction of the sea, they let nothing escape them; eating up every thing that was green and juicy, not only the lesser kinds of vegetables, but the *vine* likewise; the *fig tree*, the *pomegranate*, the *palm*, and the *apple tree*, even all the trees of the field, (^{<20112>}**Joel 1:12**; in doing which they kept their ranks like men of war; climbing over, as they advanced, every tree or wall that was in their way. Nay, they entered into our very houses and bedchambers, like *so many thieves*. The inhabitants, to stop their progress, made a variety of pits and trenches all over their fields and gardens, which they lined with water; or else they heaped up in them heath, stubble, and such like combustible matter, which were severally set on fire upon the approach of the *locusts*. But this was all to no purpose, for the trenches were quickly filled up, and the fires extinguished, by infinite swarms succeeding one another; while the front was regardless of danger, and the rear pressed on so close, that a retreat was altogether impossible. A day or two after one of these broods was in motion, others were already hatched to march and glean after them; gnawing off the very bark, and the young branches, of such trees as had before escaped with the loss only of their fruit and foliage. So justly have they been compared by the prophet *Joel* (^{<20113>}**Joel 2:3**) to a great army; who further observes, that ‘the land is as the garden of Eden before them and behind them a desolate wilderness.’

“Having lived near a month in this manner (like a **μυριοστομον ξιφος**, or *sword with ten thousand edges*, to which they have been compared,) upon the ruin and destruction of every vegetable substance which came in their way, they arrived at their full growth,

and threw old their *nympha* state by casting their outward skin. To prepare themselves for this change, they clung by their hinder feet to some bush, twig, or corner of a stone; and immediately, by using an undulating motion, their heads would first break out, and then the rest of their bodies. The whole transformation was performed in seven or eight minutes, after which they lay for a short time in a torpid and seemingly languishing condition; but as soon as the sun and air had hardened their wings, by drying up the moisture which remained upon them, after casting their sloughs, they reassumed their former voracity, with an addition both of strength and agility. Yet they did not continue long in this state before they were entirely dispersed, as their parents were before, after they had laid their eggs; and as the direction of the marches and flights of them both was always to the northward, and not having strength, as they have sometimes had, to reach the opposite shores of *Italy*, *France*, or *Spain*, it is probable they perished in the sea, a grave which, according to these people, they have in common with other winged creatures.”—*Travels*, 4to. edition pp. 187, 188.

A day of darkness] They sometimes obscure the sun. And *Thuanus* observes of an immense crowd, that “they darkened the sun at mid-day.”

As the morning spread upon the mountains] They appeared suddenly: as the sun, in rising behind the mountains, *shoots his rays* over them. *Adanson*, in his voyage to *Senegal*, says: “Suddenly there came over our heads a thick cloud which *darkened the air, and deprived us or the rays of the sun*. We soon found that it was owing to a cloud of *locusts*.” Some clouds of them are said to have darkened the sun for a mile, and others for the space of *twelve miles*! See on  **Joel 2:10**.

Verse 3. A fire devoureth before them] They consume like a general conflagration. “They destroy the ground, not only for the time, but burn trees for two years after.” Sir *Hans Sloane*, *Nat. Hist. of Jamaica*, vol. i., p. 29.

Behind them a flame burneth] “Wherever they feed,” says *Ludolf*, in his *History of Ethiopia*, “their leavings seem as if *parched with fire*.”

Nothing shall escape them.] “After devouring the herbage,” says *Adanson*, “with the fruits and leaves of trees, they attacked even the *buds*

and the very *bark*; they did not so much as spare the *reeds with which the huts were thatched*.”

Verse 4. The appearance of horses] The *head* of the locust is remarkably like that of the *horse*; and so Ray on Insects describes them: *Caput oblongum, equi instar, prona spectans*— “They have an oblong head, like to that of a horse, bending downward.” On this account the *Italians* call them *cavaletta*, cavalry. *Bochart* remarks, from an *Arabic writer*, that the *locusts* resemble *ten* different kinds of *animals*: 1. The HORSE in its *head*. 2. The ELEPHANT in its *eyes*. 3. The BULL in its *neck*. 4. The STAG in its *horns*. 5. The LION in its *breast*. 6. The SCORPION in its *belly*. 7. The EAGLE in its *wings*. 8. The CAMEL in its *thighs*. 9. The OSTRICH in its *feet*. And 10. The SERPENT in its *tail*. *Vid. Hieroz.*, vol. ii., p. 475, edit. 1692. But its most prominent resemblance is to the *horse*, which the prophet mentions; and which the *Arabic writer* puts in the *first place*, as being the *chief*.

Verse 5. Like the noise of chariots] *Bochart* also remarks:— “The locusts fly with a *great noise*, so as to be heard *six miles off*, and while they are eating the fruits of the earth, the *sound* of them is like that of a *flame driven by the wind*.”—*Ibid.*, p. 478.

Verse 6. All faces shall gather blackness.] Universal mourning shall take place, because they know that such a plague is irresistible.

Verse 7. Like mighty men—like men of war (*and as horsemen*, ~~Joel~~ Joel 2:4)] The prophet does not say *they are such*, but they *resemble*. They are *locusts*; but in their operations they are LIKE the above.

They shall not break their ranks] See the account on ~~Joel~~ Joel 2:2, from *Dr. Shaw*.

Verse 8. They shall not be wounded.] They have hard scales like a coat of mail; but the expression refers to the *utter uselessness* of all means to prevent their depredations. See *Shaw's* account above.

Verse 10. The earth shall quake—the heavens shall tremble] Poetical expressions, to point out *universal consternation* and *distress*. The *earth quaked* to see itself deprived of its *verdure*; the *heavens trembled* to find themselves deprived of their *light*.

The sun and the moon shall be dark] *Bochart* relates that “their multitude is sometimes so immense as to obscure the heavens for the space of *twelve miles!*”—*Ibid.* p. 479.

Verse 11. The Lord shall utter his voice] Such a *mighty force* seems as if summoned by the Almighty, and the noise they make in coming announces their approach, while yet afar off.

Verse 12. Turn ye even to me] *Three means* of turning are recommended: *Fasting, weeping, mourning*, i.e., *continued sorrow*.

Verse 13. Rend your heart] Let it not be merely a rending of your *garments*, but let your *hearts* be truly contrite. Merely *external* worship and *hypocritical pretensions* will only increase the evil, and cause God to meet you with heavier judgments.

For he is gracious] Good and benevolent in his own nature.

Merciful] Pitying and forgiving, as the effect of *goodness* and *benevolence*.

Slow to anger] He is not easily provoked to punish, because he is *gracious* and *merciful*.

Of great kindness] Exuberant goodness to all them that return to him.

And repenteth him of the evil.] Is ever ready to *change* his *purpose* to *destroy*, when he finds the culprit willing to be *saved*. See **Clarke’s notes** on “⁴²³⁴⁶Exodus 34:6-7”.

Verse 14. Who knoweth if he will return] He may yet interpose and turn aside the calamity threatened, and so far preserve the land from these ravagers, that there will be food for *men* and *cattle*, and a sufficiency of *offerings* for the temple service. Therefore—

Verse 15. Blow the trumpet] Let no time be lost, let the alarm be sounded.

Verse 16. Gather the children] Let all share in the humiliation, for all must feel the judgment, should it come. Let no *state* nor *condition* among the people be exempted. The *elders*, the *young persons*, the *infants*, the *bridegroom*, and the *bride*; let all leave their houses, and go to the temple of God.

Verse 17. Let the priests—weep between the porch and the altar] The altar of burnt-offerings stood before the porch of the temple, ^{<14812>}**2 Chronicles 8:12**, and between them there was an open space of *fifteen* or *twenty* cubits. It was there that the priests prostrated themselves on such occasions. It was into this place that the priests brought the *sacrifice* or *victim of atonement*; and where the high priest laid his hands on the head of the victim confessing his sins.

Let them say] The following was the form to be used on this occasion, “Spare thy people,” &c. And if this be done with a rent heart, &c., “then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people,” ^{<2018>}**Joel 2:18**. He will surely save, if ye seriously return to and penitently seek him.

Verse 19. Yea, the Lord will answer] It is not a *peradventure*; it will *surely* be done; if ye seek God as *commanded*, ye will find him as *promised*.

I will send you corn and wine] He will either prevent the *total* ravaging of the land, or so bless it with extraordinary *vegetable strength*, that ye shall have plentiful crops.

Verse 20. I will remove far off from you the northern army] “That is, the *locusts*; which might enter Judea by the *north*, as Circassia and Mingrelia abound with them. Or the locusts may be thus called, because they spread terror like the *Assyrian* armies, which entered Judea by the *north*. See ^{<2013>}**Zephaniah 2:13**.”—*Newcome*. Syria, which was *northward* of Judea, was infested with them; and it must have been a *northern* wind that brought them into Judea, in the time of *Joel*; as God promises to *change* this wind, and carry them into a *barren and desolate land*, Arabia Deserta. “And his face toward the east sea,” i.e., the *Dead Sea*, which lay *eastward* of Jerusalem. “His hinder part toward the utmost sea,” the *western sea*, i.e., the *Mediterranean*.

And his stink shall come up] After having been drowned by millions in the Mediterranean, the reflux of the tide has often brought them back, and thrown there in heaps upon the shore, where they putrefied in such a manner as to infect the air and produce pestilence, by which both *men* and *cattle* have died in great multitudes. See *Bochart*, Hieroz., vol. ii., p. 481.

Livy, and St. *Augustine* after him, relate that there was such an immense crowd of locusts in Africa that, having eaten up every green thing, a wind

arose that carried them into the sea, where they perished; but being cast upon the shore, they putrefied, and bred such a *pestilence*, that *eighty thousand* men died of it in the kingdom of *Massinissa*, and *thirty thousand* in the garrison of *Utica*, in which only *ten* remained alive. See *Calmet* and *Livy*, lib. xc., and *August. Deuteronomy Civitate Dei*, lib. iv., c. 31. We have many testimonies of a similar kind.

Because he hath done great things] Or, *y^k ki*, *although* he have done great things, or, *after* he has done them, i.e., in almost destroying the whole country.

Verse 21. Fear not—for the Lord will do great things.] The words are *repeated* from the preceding verse; Jehovah will do great things in *driving them away*, and supernaturally restoring the land to fertility.

Verse 23. The former rain moderately] *hqdxl hrwmh hammoreh litsedakah*, “the former rain in righteousness,” that is, in *due time* and in *just proportion*. This rain fell after *autumn*, the other in *spring*. See ^{<408>}**Hosea 6:3**.

In the first month.] *^wvarb barishon*, “as aforetime.” So Bp. *Newcome*. In the month *Nisan*.—Syriac.

Verse 25. I will restore—the years] It has already been remarked that the *locusts* not only destroyed the produce of *that year*, but so completely ate up all *buds*, and *barked the trees*, that they did not recover for *some years*. Here God promises that he would either *prevent* or *remedy* that evil; for he would *restore the years* that the *locusts*, *cankerworm*, *caterpillar*, and *palmerworm* had eaten.

Verse 26. Praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you] In so destroying this formidable enemy; and so *miraculously* restoring the land to *fertility*, after so great a devastation.

Verse 28. Shall come to pass afterward] *^k yrj a acharey ken*, “after this;” the same, says *Kimchi*, as *in the latter days*, which always refers to the *days of the Messiah*; and thus this prophecy is to be interpreted: and we have the testimony of St. Peter, ^{<4127>}**Acts 2:17**, that this prophecy relates to *that mighty effusion of the Holy Spirit* which took place after the day of pentecost. Nor is there any evidence that such an *effusion* took place, nor such effects were produced, from the days of this prophet till the

day of *pentecost*. And the *Spirit* was poured out then *upon all flesh*, that is, on people of different countries, speaking the languages of almost all the people of the earth; which intimated that these were the *first-fruits* of the conversion of all the nations of the world. For there was scarcely a tongue in the universe that was not to be found among the *Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Jews, Cappadocians*, people of *Pontus*, of *Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, and Arabia*, who were residents at Jerusalem at that time; and on whom this mighty gift was poured out, each hearing and apprehending the truths of the Gospel, in his own language wherein he was born. Thus we have Divine authority for saying, *that* was the fulfilment of *this* prophecy by *Joel*. And the mighty and rapid spread of the Gospel of Christ in the *present day*, by means of the translation of the Scriptures into almost all the regular languages of the world, and the sending *missionaries* to all nations, who preach the Gospel in those tongues, are farther proofs that the great promise is in the *fullest progress* to be speedily fulfilled, even in the utmost sense of the words.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy] Shall *preach*-exhort, pray, and instruct, so as to benefit the Church.

Your old men shall dream dreams] Have my will represented to them in this way, as the others by *direct inspiration*.

Your young men shall see visions] Have true representations of Divine things made upon their imaginations by the power of God; that they shall have as full an evidence of them as they could have of any thing that came to the *mind* through the medium of the *senses*.

Verse 29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids] The gifts of teaching and instructing men shall not be *restricted* to any one *class* or *order* of people. He shall call and qualify the men of his own choice; and shall take such out of all *ranks, orders, degrees*, and offices in society. And he will pour out his Spirit upon them; and they shall be endowed with all the gifts and graces necessary to convert sinners, and build up the Church of Christ on its most holy faith.

And this God *has done*, and is *still doing*. He left the *line of Aaron*, and took his *apostles* indiscriminately from *any tribe*. He passed by the *regular order* of the *priesthood*, and the *public schools* of the most celebrated doctors, and took his *evangelists* from among *fishermen, tent-makers*, and even the *Roman tax-gatherers*. And he, lastly, passed by the *Jewish tribes*,

and took the *Gentile converts*, and made *them* preachers of righteousness to the inhabitants of the whole earth. The same practice he continues to the present day; yet he did not then pass by a man *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel*, no more than he would now a man *brought up in a celebrated seminary of learning*. He is ever free to use his *own gifts*, in his *own way*; and when *learning* is sanctified, by being *devoted to the service of God*, and the *possessor* is humble and pious, and has those *natural gifts* necessary for a *public teacher*, perhaps we might safely say, God would in many cases *prefer such*: but he will have *others*, as intimated in the prophecy, that we may see the conversion of men is not by *human might*, nor *power*, but by *the Spirit of the Lord of hosts*. The learned man can do nothing without his *Spirit*; the *unlearned* must have his *gifts and graces*, without which both their labours would be unprofitable; and thus the *excellency of the power is of God*, and *no flesh can glory in his presence*. See my sermon on this passage.

Verse 30. Wonders in the heavens and in the earth] This refers to those dreadful sights, dreadful portents, and destructive commotion, by which the Jewish polity was finally overthrown, and the Christian religion established in the Roman empire. See how our Lord applies this prophecy, ◀1029▶ **Matthew 24:29**, and the parallel texts.

Verse 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness] The Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be entirely destroyed.

Before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.] In the taking and sacking of Jerusalem, and burning of the temple, by the Romans, under *Titus*, the son of *Vespasian*. This was, perhaps, the *greatest* and most *terrible day* of God's vengeance ever shown to the world, or that ever will be shown, till the great day of the general judgment. For a full view of this subject, I wish to refer the reader to the notes on ◀1030▶ **Matthew 24:1-51**.

Verse 32. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord] hwby μvb arqy rva l k *col asher yikra beshem Yehovah*, "All who shall invoke in the name of *Jehovah*." That *CHRIST* is the *Jehovah* here mentioned appears plain from ◀5103▶ **Romans 10:13-15**, where the reader had better consult the notes. "This refers," says *Bp. Newcome*, "to the safety of the Christians during the Jewish and the Roman war." It may: but it has a much more extensive meaning, as the use of it by *St. Paul*, as above, evidently shows. *Every man who invokes Jehovah* for mercy and salvation by or in the

name, JESUS—that very name given under heaven among men for this purpose—*shall be saved*. Nor is there salvation in any other; and those who reject *him* had better lay these things to heart before it be too late.

For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem] Our blessed Lord first began to preach the Gospel in *Mount Zion*, in the *temple*, and throughout *Jerusalem*. *There* he formed his Church, and *thence* he sent his apostles and evangelists to every part of the globe: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Of the Jews there was but a *remnant*, a very small number, that received the doctrine of the Gospel, here termed the remnant that the Lord should call; *arq kore*, *whom he calleth*. Many were called who would not obey: but those who obeyed the call were saved; and still he *delivers* those who *call upon him*; and he is still calling on men to come to him that they may be saved.

JOEL

CHAPTER 3

The prophecy in this chapter is thought by some to relate to the latter times of the world, when God shall finally deliver his people from all their adversaries; and it must be confessed that the figures employed are so lofty as to render it impossible to restrain the whole of their import to any events prior to the commencement of the Christian era. The whole prophecy is delivered in a very beautiful strain of poetry; by what particular events are referred to is at present very uncertain, 1-21.

NOTES ON CHAP. 3

Verse 1. For, behold, in those days] According to the preceding prophecy, *these days* should refer to *Gospel times*, or to such as should *immediately precede* them. But this is a part of the prophecy which is difficult to be understood. All interpreters are at *variance* upon it; some applying its principal parts to *Cambyses*; his unfortunate expedition to Egypt; the destruction of *fifty thousand* of his troops (by the moving pillars of sand) whom he had sent across the desert to plunder the rich temple of Jupiter Ammon; his return to Judea, and dying of a wound which he received from his own sword, in mounting his horse, which happened at *Ecbatane*, at the foot of Mount *Carmel*. On which his army, composed of different nations, seeing themselves without a head, fell out, and fought against each other, till the whole were destroyed. And this is supposed to be what *Ezekiel* means by *Gog* and *Magog*, and the destruction of the former. See ^{<3801>} **Ezekiel 38:1-39:29**.

Others apply this to the *victories* gained by the *Maccabees*, and to the destruction brought upon the enemies of their country; while several consider the whole as a figurative prediction of the *success of the Gospel* among the nations of the earth. It may refer to those times in which the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, and be re-established in their own land. Or there may be portions in this prophecy that refer to *all the events*; and to others that have not fallen yet within the range of human conjecture, and will be only known when the time of fulfilment shall take place. In this painful uncertainty, rendered still more so by the discordant opinions of many wise and learned men, it appears to be my province, as I have nothing in the form of a new conjecture to offer, to

confine myself to an explanation of the *phraseology* of the chapter; and then leave the reader to apply it as may seem best to his own judgment.

I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem.] This may refer to the return from the Babylonish captivity; extending also to the restoration of *Israel*, or the *ten tribes*.

Verse 2. The valley of Jehoshaphat] There is no such valley in the land of Judea; and hence the word must be *symbolical*. It signifies the *judgment of God*, or *Jehovah judgeth*; and may mean some place (as Bp. *Newcome* imagines) where Nebuchadnezzar should gain a great battle, which would utterly discomfit the ancient enemies of the Jews, and resemble the victory which Jehoshaphat gained over the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites,
~~407~~ **2 Chronicles 20:22-26.**

And parted my land.] The above nations had frequently entered into the territories of Israel; and divided among themselves the lands they had thus overrun.

While the Jews were in captivity, much of the land of Israel was seized on, and occupied by the *Philistines*, and other nations that bordered on Judea.

Verse 3. Have given a boy for a harlot] To such wretched circumstances were the poor Jews reduced in their captivity, that their children were sold by their oppressors; and both *males* and *females* used for the *basest purposes*. And they were often bartered for the necessaries or luxuries of life. Or this may refer to the issue of the Chaldean war in Judea, where the captives were divided among the victors. And being set in companies, *they cast lots for them*: and those to whom they fell sold them for various purposes; the boys to be slaves and catamites, the girls to be prostitutes; and in return for them they got *wine* and *such things*. I think this is the meaning of the text.

Verse 4. What have ye to do with me] Why have the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians* joined their other enemies to oppress my people? for they who touch my people touch *me*.

Will ye render me a recompense?] Do you think by this to avenge yourselves upon the Almighty? to retaliate upon God! Proceed, and speedily will I return your recompense; I will retaliate.

Verse 5. Ye have taken my silver and my gold] The Chaldeans had spoiled the temple, and carried away the *sacred vessels*, and put them in the temple of their own god in Babylon.

Verse 6. Sold unto the Grecians] These were the descendants of *Javan*, ^{<0102>}Genesis 10:2-5. And with them the *Tyrians* trafficked, ^{<0279>}Ezekiel 27:19.

That ye might remove them far from their border.] Intending to send them *as far off* as possible, that it might be impossible for them to get back to reclaim the land of which you had dispossessed them.

Verse 7. I will raise them] I shall find means to bring them back from *the place whither ye have sold them*, and they shall retaliate upon you the injuries they have sustained. It is said that Alexander and his successors set at liberty many Jews that had been sold into Greece. And it is likely that many returned from different lands, on the publication of the edict of Cyrus.—*Newcome*.

Verse 8. I will sell your sons] When *Alexander* took Tyre, he reduced into slavery all the lower people, and the women. *Arrian*, lib. ii., says that *thirty thousand* of them were *sold*. *Artaxerxes Ochus* destroyed *Sidon*, and subdued the other cities of *Phœnicia*. In all these wars, says *Calmet*, the Jews, who obeyed the Persians, did not neglect to purchase Phœnician slaves, whom they sold again to the *Sabeans*, or *Arabs*.

Verse 9. Prepare war] Let all the enemies of God and of his people join together; let them even call all the tillers of the ground to their assistance, instead of labouring in the field; let every *peasant* become a *soldier*. Let them turn their *agricultural implements* into *offensive weapons*, so that *the weak*, being well armed, may confidently say, *I am strong*: yet, when thus collected and armed, *Jehovah will bring down thy mighty ones*; for so the clause in ^{<0311>}Joel 3:11 should be rendered.

Verse 12. Let the heathen be wakened] The heathen *shall be wakened*.

The valley of Jehoshaphat] Any place where God may choose to display his judgments against his enemies.

Verse 13. Put ye in the sickle] The destruction of his enemies is represented here under the metaphor of reaping down the harvest; and of gathering the grapes, and treading them in the wine-presses.

Verse 14. Multitudes, multitudes] *μυνημ μυνημ hamonim, hamonim, crowds upon crowds, in the valley of decision, or excision: the same as the valley of Jehoshaphat, the place where God is to execute judgment on his enemies.*

Verse 15. The sun and the moon shall be darkened] High and mighty states shall be eclipsed, and brought to ruin, and the *stars*—petty states, princes, and governors—*shall withdraw their shining*; withhold their *influence* and *tribute* from the kingdoms to which they have belonged, and set up themselves as *independent governors*.

Verse 16. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion] His temple and worship shall be re-established there, and he will thence denounce his judgments against the nations. “The heavens and the earth shall shake.” There shall be great commotions in powerful empires and their dependencies; but in all these things his own people shall be unmoved, for God shall be their *hope* and *strength*.

Verse 17. So shall ye know] By the judgments I execute on your enemies, and the support I give to yourselves, that I am the all-conquering Jehovah; and that I have again taken up my residence in Jerusalem. All this may refer, ultimately, to the restoration of the Jews to their own land; when *holiness to the Lord* shall be their motto; and no *strange* god, nor *impure people*, shall be permitted to enter the city, or even *pass through it*; they shall have neither civil nor religious connections with any who do not worship the true God in *spirit* and in *truth*. This, I think, must refer to Gospel times. It is a promise not yet fulfilled.

Verse 18. In that day] After their return from their captivities.

The mountains shall drop down new wine] A poetic expression for great fertility. Happy times: peace and plenty. The vines shall grow luxuriantly on the sides of the mountains; and the hills shall produce such rich pastures that the flocks shall yield abundance of milk.

And all the rivers of Judah] Far from being generally dry in the summer, shall have their *channels* always full of water.

And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord] See the account of the *typical waters* in Ezekiel, ^{<3570>}**Ezekiel 47:1-23**, to which this seems to have a reference; at least the subject is the same, and seems to point out the *grace of the Gospel*, the *waters of salvation*, that shall flow

from Jerusalem, and water the valley of *Shittim*. *Shittim* was in the *plains of Moab* beyond Jordan; ~~(HEB)~~ **Numbers 33:49**; ~~(HEB)~~ **Joshua 3:1**; but as no stream of water could flow from the temple, pass across Jordan, or reach this plain, the *valley of Shittim* must be considered *symbolical*, as the *valley of Jehoshaphat*. But as *Shittim* may signify *thorns*, it may figuratively represent the most *uncultivated and ferocious inhabitants of the earth* receiving the Gospel of Christ, and being civilized and saved by it. We know that *briers and thorns* are emblems of *bad men*; see ~~(HEB)~~ **Ezekiel 2:6**. Thus all the figures in this verse will point out the happy times of the Gospel: *the mountains shall drop down new wine; the hills flow with milk; the thorny valleys become fertile, &c.* Similar to those almost parallel words of the prince of poets:—

*Mistaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.—
Ipsæ lacte domum referent destenta capellæ
Ubera: nec magnos metuent armenta leones.—
Molli paullatim flavescet campus arista,
Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva:
Et duræ quercus sudabunt roscida mella.*
VIRG Ecl. iv. 20.

*Unbidden earth shall wreathing ivy bring,
And fragrant herbs the promises of spring.
The goats with streaming dugs shall homeward speed;
And lowing herds, secure from lions, feed.
Unlabour'd harvests shall the fields adorn,
And cluster'd grapes shall grow on every thorn:
The knotted oaks shall showers of honey weep.*
DRYDEN.

Verse 19. Egypt shall be a desolation] While peace, plenty, and prosperity of every kind, shall crown my people, all their *enemies* shall be as a *wilderness*; and those who have *used violence* against the saints of God, and *shed the blood of innocents* (of the holy MARTYRS) *in their land*, when they had *political power*; these and all such shall fall under the just judgments of God.

Verse 20. But Judah shall dwell for ever] The true Church of Christ shall be supported, while all false and persecuting Churches shall be annihilated. The promise may also belong to the full and final restoration of the Jews, when they shall dwell at Jerusalem as a distinct people professing the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 21. For I will cleanse their blood] *ytyqn nikkeythi, I will avenge the slaughter and martyrdom of my people, which I have not yet avenged. Persecuting nations and persecuting Churches shall all come, sooner or later, under the stroke of vindictive justice.*

For the Lord dwelleth in Zion.] He shall be the life, soul, spirit, and defense of his Church for ever.

THIS prophet, who has many things similar to Ezekiel, ends his prophecy nearly in the same way:

Ezekiel says of the glory of the Church, *hmv hwhy Yehovah shammah,* THE LORD IS THERE.

Joel says, *^wyxb ^kv hwhy Yehovah shochen betsiyon,* THE LORD DWELLETH IN ZION.

Both point out the continued indwelling of Christ among his people.