

The Minor Prophets #20

Joel

by: Ronald L. Dart

When you read the Old Testament prophets a pattern begins to emerge and if you know what to look for it begins to clear the air somewhat in trying to understand what they're about. As long as society is behaving itself people are living good lives they're being moral they don't start trouble, you don't even hear from the prophets. God never send a prophet to tell you what a good boy you are, so consequently the first phase of the pattern of a prophet in the Bible is the things in society have gone terribly wrong.

God sends along a prophet with the first stages of a warning and the warning is simple amend your ways and your doings and I will cause you to dwell in this place. I'll bless you if the stuff in your life will work just straighten up and fly right. Now the second stage is more severe it warns of a certain disaster that lies ahead because they have not repented, at this stage you can't go back to stage one, that option is no longer open to you.

I remember distinctly one section in Jeremiah, where Jeremiah comes along and says OK here the word from God, surrender to the Babylonians. They will take you away into their land and you will live there because you can't govern yourselves. I will put you in a country where they can govern you, but you can't stay here because if you stay here you die. So when you repent at this stage it does not give you complete escape, the disaster can no longer be avoided you get your life and not a whole lot more.

The third stage of prophecy and you can see this in almost every one as you make your way through Isaiah Jeremiah, Ezekiel and a number of Minor Prophets. The third stage is a promise of restoration to the land, to peace, to safety under Gods rule. A restoration of the relationship with God that can come after the disaster has fallen. It was that third stage of prophecy that Peter thought he was seeing on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples.

You probably know the story fairly well if you read your Bible very much. It was that day when all the disciples were all together in one place and suddenly there was this roar of a mighty wind like a tornado rip through the place. And shimmering fire came across the ceiling and a little strip of it came down on top of each one of them. Empowered my word that's an understatement.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak the wonderful works of God but it was a peculiar change. They were using different languages, not unknown tongues

because as people heard the word of what was happening and came together to see and to witness what was happening, they heard these people speak in their own language wherein they were born. They knew not only what the language was they knew what the message was, they heard them speak in their language the wonderful works of God.

That's what praise is actually all about and so having this happen on this day with the power and these people, I mean you can imagine how excited the disciple would have been after having that manifestation of the spirit and after being so empowered I mean they would be absolutely giddy. And sure enough some of the people gathered together and said, ha these guy are drunk, well Peter got up and responded to that with a remarkable statement, you'll find it Act 2 Verse 15: he said these men are not drunk as you suppose it's only nine in the morning, no this is what's spoken by the prophet Joel and he begins to quote Joel, in the last days

God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people, your sons your daughters will prophesie, your young men will see vision, your old men will dream dreams even on my servants both men and women I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesie.

Now that part is easy to see, the spirit had not come merely only the twelve apostle it hadn't come on one of the twelve, it had fallen on everybody men women, young and old there were one hundred and twenty of them there that day and they were all empowered, they were shall I say prophesying. Now what is not so easy to see and I can easily see why Peter saw all that and said, Oh my this is what Joel was talking about, and it's not so easy to see why he went on to cite the rest of Joel's prophecy.

I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke, the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and glorious day of the LORD, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The day of the Lord then was not ultimately about anything that happened within the lifetime of the prophet Joel. If all of Joel's prophecies were just history, and the day of the LORD was the calamities, event that came with the fall of Israel when they were carried away into Babylon that would be all there was to it. Obviously Peter didn't think so because he stands right here and tell us what you're seeing here today is just the beginning of those events that lead up to the glorious day of the LORD. Now he sees it happening right in front of his eyes and Peter had no way of knowing how far this might go. He could easily be forgiven for thinking that the day of the LORD was just around the corner, this is the harbinger, this is one of the first things that's going to happen with the day of the LORD because after all Jesus had told them, no man knows the day or the hour of Christ return. So he didn't know it could have been next month as far as they were concerned it could have been a matter of several months. It could have been in their lifetime but they had no way of knowing it would be another two thousand years and it still would not happened, they just

knew it was coming. As it happens, what happened on the day of Pentecost was only a type it was a down payment, it was a here's an illustration of what I God said I am able to do. Some think that because Peter said quote in the last day I will pour out my spirit on all flesh that the last days begin on Pentecost and in a manner of speaking they did and yet the last days, perhaps the very last days lie ahead of us still. What Peter saw was a type of what would come he could not know how long it would be; before the sun could be turned into darkness neither could Joel. When you go back to Joel's prophecy and you look at the context of Peter citation from Joel you find initially what could be a late first stage of the prophet's work, it involves a call for repentance with a promise of reconciliation and restoration.

Joel 2:12: Therefore also now saith the LORD turn you to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, with mourning and rend your heart and not your garments turn to the LORD your God for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repent himself of the great evil.

Now as you read this it's a call to repentance, could be stage one could be stage two, but it's followed by this, he says in

Verse 17: Let the priest the ministers of the LORD weep between the porch and the altar and let them say spare your people O LORD, don't give your heritage to reproach that the heathen should rule over them. Why should they say among the people, where is their God, then will the LORD be jealous for his land and pity his people.

When? When everybody including the priest and the leadership turn to him with weeping, fasting and prayer and repentance.

The LORD said behold I will send you corn and wine and oil and you will be satisfied and I will no longer make you a reproach among the heathens.

So we're at late stage one, there is still a chance of repentance for being blessed by God, for being restored in relationship without having to go through the hell that otherwise is going to come upon you.

Verse 23: Be glad then you children of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God for he has given you the former rain moderately and it will come for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month and the floor shall be full of wheat, the vat shall overflow with wine and oil and I will restore to you the year the locust had eaten.

I'll give it all back to you, when, after you have repented and turned to God. Will you rent your heart not your garments, when it has gone right down to the core of your being that's when it will happen?

And you will eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the LORD your God that has done wondrously with you and my people will never be ashamed and you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and nobody else and my people shall never again be ashamed.

I need to explain something that sometimes makes prophecy in the Bible a little hard to follow. One of the problems is that the prophet may be speaking simultaneously about two totally different times in history. They speak to their own age to be sure and at the same time they speak to a people not yet born. To a time far in the distance, far in the future so far they have no idea when it might be and I suspect that sometimes they don't even know that's true. That statement for example where God says you shall know when I am in the midst of Israel. It has overtones of a time that all the prophets speak of, a time when Christ will return his feet will be on the Mount of Olives. God will be among us we will be his people he will be our God the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD like the waters that cover the seas. Yet at the same time he seems to be speaking to his own generation.

Joel 2 Verse 28: And it shall come to pass afterward, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and the handmaids.

OK how long afterward, well Joel had no way of knowing and for that matter neither did Peter.

This comes from the King James and I think that this is what God is talking about, it isn't just upon the high and mighty, it's all the way down to the household servants and handmaids, then he says **I will pour out my spirit**. This is the time of kicking the door open so the Gospel goes to the world and that what the book of Acts seems to be mostly about.

I will also show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.

So this is not only a glorious day of the LORD, a wonderful day of the LORD, there is a terrible day of the LORD and it's out there and as far as anybody can see it's still out there headed our way.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

I don't think even Peter really grasp the significant of what he said, that it shall come to pass, that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved, and the reason I say that is because all the way through the book of Acts all through to Chapter 10. Peter will not have

anything to do with the Gentiles, he won't eat with them, he won't stay in their house, and he won't go into their houses, and so plainly he at this point didn't get it. It had to be impressed upon his mind later and the whole story of the book of Acts, first with Peter and later with Paul. God says, enough already with this idea that Judaism is the religion belonging to the Jews, it's what I am all about. I am the God not merely of the Jews I am the God of the whole world. Well Joel went on to say.

Joel Chapter 3: Behold in those days and at that time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. I will gather all nations and I will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat and I will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land.

Now it's hard to say, we can draw some conclusions about what happened in ancient times whenever Jerusalem was taken captive. It's customary to look at this scripture where it says I will bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem and I'll put them back into the land. It's customary to interpret this as being fulfilled when the Jew returned home from Babylon but there is certain aspects of it that just don't work. For one thing it was only the house of Judah that went captive to Babylon the house of Israel had been carried away into captivity long before into Assyria and dissipated among the nations. Other prophets will talk about the reunion of the house of Israel and the house of Judah but those people who were in Judah at the time they went captive weather they were members of another tribe or not, they were part of the house of Judah when they went, they were part of the house of Judah when they came back. So it just doesn't work that way, especially when you read, I will gather all nations and bring them down. What he's talking about, this sounds very much like Zachariah who speaks of a time when the whole world will acknowledge the sovereignty of God, but we aren't there yet, there is another side of this thing. I think I ought to come back to it but we're now ahead to a time when he brings all nations into the valley of Megiddo, otherwise known as Armageddon and brings them down upon Judah.

And they have cast lots for my people; they've given a boy a slave, for a harlot and they sold a girl for wine they could drink. Yea and what have you to do with me, O Tyre and Zidon all the coasts of Palestine? Are you going to pay me off? And if you pay me off swiftly and speedily will I return you recompense upon you own head because you have taken my silver and my gold and carried into you temples my goodly and pleasant things.

All that I'm reading here is highly suggestive to me of yet another holocaust and probably one somewhere in the future. The scope of it, the practitioner of it, it's just not clear but the implication are that sooner or later this is all going to come home and it's going to be yet another one.

The children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem you have sold to the Grecians, that you might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them

up out of the place where you have sold them, and I will return your recompense upon your own head.

And this is very suggestive of something other than a return from Babylon they've gone to the Grecians and other places.

God says, I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, and to a people far off.

Just as you have bought and sold Israelites you're going to be bought and sold.

Proclaim this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say I am strong. Assemble yourselves and come all ye heathen gather yourselves round about there cause your mighty ones to come on down.

And this really rings like the battle of the great day of the God Almighty when the armies of the Gentiles assemble at, guess where, Armageddon.

Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come get you down; for the press is full the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

And where does this go.

That last verse I read, **put you in the sickle for the harvest is ripe, the press is full, the vats overflows.**

The image of the wine vat, does that bring anything back to memory, it probable would for some.

Revelation 14 Verse 14: **John looked and saw a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, thrust in your sickle and reap: for the time has come for you to reap; for the harvest for the earth is ripe. And he that sat upon the cloud thrust in his sickle and the earth was reaped.**

Now what on earth does that mean? It's obvious that we're talking about that same period of time that Joel was talking about. Joel didn't know when or exactly how and John

may not have fully understood himself. What is this reaping business and the wine vats and the sickle and all that is it for collecting all the saints for God, unnn not really because?

Revelation 14:17 goes right on to say, **another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven and he also having a sharp sickle, another angel came out from the altar which had power over fire and he cried to him with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle saying, thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine from the earth for her grapes are fully ripe. The angel of the LORD thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city and blood came out of the wine press even to the horse bridles by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.**

Now we're dealing with two different situations here aren't we. On the one hand, the one clothed in white with the golden crown and the sharp sickle seems to reap perhaps the saints, this other angel reaps not the saints but the rest of the earth. And they were thrown into the wine press of the wrath of God, sound pretty grim doesn't it. Now which one is Joel talking about?

Joel 3 Verse 15: **The sun and the moon shall be darkened; the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.** When is this, well?

Revelation 6 Verse 12: **And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal and lo there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became like blood; And the stars of the heaven fell to the earth like a fig tree casting her untimely figs. And the heaven departed as a scroll and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bondman and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountain; And said to the mountains and the rocks fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

Now where is all this going and what does it mean to Joel? Joel seems really to have passed right on out of his own time and into the future.

And he says in Chapter 3 Verse 17 - **So shall you know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy and there shall be no strangers passing through her any more it shall come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drop down new wine and the hills shall flow with milk and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters and a fountain shall come out of the house of the LORD, and water the valley of Shittim. Egypt shall be a desolation and Edom shall be**

a desolate wilderness for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

You know the person that believes his Bible he should tremble for the Palestinians for these are the people who live in those areas that fall in the category of Edom and the Egyptians, people who have been violent against the children of Israel and who have shed innocent blood. God doesn't seem to mind so much when warriors go into battle against warriors, they fight and some of them die. What he doesn't tolerate is the shedding of innocent blood, children, non-combatants and the old the women,

But Judah shall dwell forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation, for I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed for the LORD dwells in Zion.

Now what can you take away from all this. What maybe of more immediate important to you personally is that call to repentance that Joel had, just as these words apply to a nation so they apply to the individual. God is not going to send a prophet to tell you how well you are doing. When the prophet speaks it is a simple message, amend your ways and your doings, if you continue down the path you're on nothing but misery lies ahead but if you amend you ways and your doings all that can change. That's the earliest and the fastest message to a person who is beginning to lose his grip. Later worse things lie ahead and more serious repentance will be called for, if you don't take it now. Rend your hearts and not your garments, turn your life around there is still hope and I'll see to it that your life works. Later there is the wine press of the wrath of God, after that there is still hope when you have seriously and you deliberately turn to God and you commit and demonstrate you are committed to him and then he will take you where he wants you to go, after all you are Born to Win.

This article was transcribed with minor editing from a message given by
Ronald L. Dart titled: "The Minor Prophets #20" (MP20) 7/17/07
Transcribed by: tl

Ronald L. Dart is an evangelist and is heard daily and weekly
on his Born to Win radio program.

You can contact Ronald L. Dart at Christian Educational Ministries
P.O. Box 560 Whitehouse, Texas 75791
Phone: (903) 839-9300 — 1-888-BIBLE-44

www.borntowin.net