

The Day of the Lord

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BULLET THOUGHTS:

To my dear brothers in Christ whom I love, this is the first time that I have had to write a paper of *this* nature; where I am to convey thoughts and ideas that most are already familiar with. I am greatly challenged as to how to condense nine months of in-depth study into an abbreviated statement of beliefs on the verses of Joel, but what follows is an honest attempt.

For the sake of efficiency, I will attempt to keep my focus throughout this study primarily upon chapter two of Joel, even though I have thoughts concerning chapters one and three.

Please be aware that I have written this in a format and/or style that will allow me to share it later if it be the Lord's will, so don't think that my comments throughout are stated in a way intended to belittle your spiritual discernment in any way.

I believe that the intentional and primary focus of the book of Joel is to warn Adventism of the impending "*Day of the Lord*" that "*is nigh at hand*" or immanent!

I believe that Joel and Zephaniah are two of many witnesses testifying to the day of the Lord and that by combining their testimonies we may reach an accurate conclusion concerning the "day of the Lord" as well as who the army is in chapter two verses 2-11.

Some have said that they do not see a break in description between chapters one and two and thereby conclude that it's the same army in chapters one and two. I feel that it's an easy distinction to see and will attempt to show why.

I see the army of chapter one, which comes up upon "His land", as Rome at the Sunday law, marking the time when the new wine is cut off from the mouth of the drunkards within Adventism. However, I see a different army portrayed in verses 2-11 of chapter two. I see them, as I've already stated publicly, as the 144,000.

A VERY CRUCIAL POINT

I see that a very crucial point needs to be recognized and seriously considered by all of us who would venture to investigate the book of Joel and draw conclusions. As we formulate our ideas concerning the book of Joel, it is paramount that we understand that the time frame within the story of Joel is paralleling the time frame within the last six verses of Daniel eleven. What that means is that when we are drawing our conclusions within the book of Joel, we have to ask ourselves "Is this view contradicting what we teach concerning Daniels testimony on this same time period"? Because these two books are speaking about events that occur within the same timeframe, if we do not have a correct interpretation of Joel it will unavoidably reflect on and contradict our current understanding of Daniel 11:41-45; and the result will be confusion; not to mention that we'll leave ourselves wide-open to ridicule and attacks from without.

I believe in the Lord's providence. I believe fully that He has permitted the circumstances surrounding the study of Joel to develop in the way that they have in order to bring about a shaking, refining process within this movement at every level. Do we think that we are above being shaken out? Are we willing to see and accept the eternal consequences if we *are* wrong?

Dear *brother*, may we fall upon the Rock, in this probationary time, and plead for the greatest measure of wisdom from above. And as well may we open our hearts to His powerful love that it may guide our decisions and keep our hearts as we approach what may be the most defining moment in our Christian experience. Let us *truly* and *completely* rest in His sustaining grace; recognizing that "there is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."!

IS IT THE SAME ARMY?

In chapter one, Joel points the “old men” or “ancient men” [h2205] of Adventism to the thing that has never been before. I understand that to be “*the day of the Lord*” based not only on the obvious and compelling testimony of Joel and Zephaniah, but the bible as a whole; which is pointing to “*that day*” that has not yet come.

As he relates to them the events to come; and it’s worth noting that it *only* pertains to the drunkards within Adventism, his description extends all the way down to the time when the seven last plagues begin to fall (GC 628.1), ending with a description of the condition of the land in the seven plague time period; revealing what would appear to be a finality and conclusion to his thought process.

I see a distinct and intentional contrasting of the 144k in chapter two with the “drunkards” of chapter one; because for them it’s a day “*as the morning*” in contrast to those who deem it “*a day of darkness*”. Please note also that there is not the slightest hint as to the destiny of the faithful during the description in chapter one. I believe that’s because he takes up that detailed task in chapter two of Joel.

Also, it’s worth noting that the translators also recognized enough of a break in thought to warrant a chapter division after verse twenty in chapter one.

MOTIVATION

It was stated by one that nowhere in the bible were they aware of God employing a description of the 144k to motivate to repentance. That may or may not be, but that’s not what I see transpiring amid the verses of Joel. I see instead a warning that escalates and builds in each chapter and verse with pauses along the way calling to repentance, while simultaneously *defining*, very distinctly, the two classes that will emerge at the Sunday law/Day of the Lord; and I understand that to be “*the day of the Lord*”. He is simply contrasting the two choices that Adventism is confronted with as that “*day*” approaches.

Also, for me, the theme of the 144k, similar to the theme of Rome, is a theme that has been made very prominent; within the bible and the SOP, in that we are to be aware of the *intents* of Rome and as well we are to strive to be among that number. And it’s for this reason that I believe that while we are to be aware of the role and intents of Rome, we are NOT to make them the focus of our Christian experience. They are not given as our standard, the character of the 144k is. Becoming part of that company has been set before us as a benchmark of achievement that we are constantly to aim for. And as we are also clearly taught that by beholding we become changed, it seems only natural that Christ would set the theme of the 144k before His people more prominently; to be an encouragement and standard (*ensign*) as the day of the Lord approaches. Consider how Joel’s encouragement is aimed at Adventism and warns of the battle to be waged between the two armies he portrays:

“Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD, Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.”-- **Joel 1:13-15**

“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts:

let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.”-- **Joel 2:12-17**

VERSE 1

BLOW YE THE TRUMPET!

“Blow ye the **trumpet** in Zion, and sound **an alarm** in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land **tremble**: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;” -- **Joel 2:1**

Blow “ye” the trumpet. Who is “ye”? Contextually, it would have to still be the “old men” and “all ye inhabitants of the land” that he’s been addressing up to now; the ‘ancient men” (h2205 *same as Ezekiel 9:6*) or leaders within Adventism as well as the people of Adventism.

Therefore, I see the *trumpet* and *alarm* intentionally and specifically directed at Adventism; due primarily to the fact that the close of probation for Adventism is about to be accomplished when the “*Day of the Lord*” arrives. A *trumpet* and *alarm* denote the tools used to express an impending danger (Jer. 4:19-20; GC 310.1; Ezek. 33:1-4) and should be the logical and primary applications to the symbols; not denying any secondary applications as long as they fit contextually (i.e. the 7th trumpet).

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”-- **Isaiah 58:1**

“Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth **the sound of the trumpet**, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the **trumpet**, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and **blow not the trumpet**, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.”-- **Ezekiel 33:1-7**

Within the sacred volumes of the bible, it is discovered that the trumpet has been employed for many different purposes. Aside from being used as a musical instrument, it was also used to assemble the people for worship, to give the sound of alarm and to call the people to battle; just to name a few. In fact, there was a special time during the year that the trumpet played a very special role; and that was during the “Feast of Trumpets”. They were blown ten days prior to the typical Day of Atonement and were to be a warning of the soon coming close of judgment which resulted from the investigative judgment.

Concerning the role of the trumpet in sacred history, Brother S.N. Haskell offers the following valuable and insightful commentary found in his book entitled “*The Cross and Its Shadow*”:

“In obedience to the command of God, Moses made two silver trumpets to be used in calling their assemblies and in regulating the journeyings of the children of Israel [Numbers 10:2].

When the priests blew both the trumpets, all the people were to assemble at the door of the tabernacle; if one trumpet sounded, only the princes responded [Numbers 10:2-8].

“The call for summoning to the religious assemblies was different from the sound of an **alarm, which was blown to gather the army for war**. God promised that when they blew the alarm for war, they should ‘be remembered before the Lord,’ and should be saved from their enemies [Numbers 10:9]...

“God designed that every blast of the trumpet blown by His people, whether **for joy or for sorrow, for worship or for war**, should be a memorial, or **reminder, of the power of God** to comfort, sustain, and protect His people; ‘that they may be to you,’ He said, ‘for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God.’ [Numbers 10:10]. -- *The Cross and Its Shadow*, 201 by: Stephen N. Haskell, 1914

What is evident so far is that the trumpets were blown in a way as to express a condition that existed at that time. If there was a need for a solemn assembly, then the trumpet tones would express that. And likewise, if there was a need for alarm in connection with the threat of war or any other danger, the tones of the trumpet blast would express that as well. The trumpet blast was to be a “reminder of the **power of God** to comfort, sustain, and protect His people”. It was intended to be a comfort and encouragement in a time of crisis. In fact they were assured that if they blew the trumpet, they would be delivered from their enemy.

Now notice Haskell’s closing remarks about the role of the trumpet:

“The prophet Joel evidently connected the closing work of the gospel on earth with the blowing of the trumpets, for he writes as follows:–‘Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.’” [Joel 2:1]. --*Ibid*.

So in Joel 2:1, we can now begin to better understand why, at the end of the world just before the Sunday Law, we are commanded to blow the trumpet in Zion. We are facing a time just before us that is to reveal the wise and foolish virgins within Adventism.

We also, as I understand it, are about to take the field of battle against Satan and the whole host of hell, as the “army” of God in defense of the Truth. And we need, therefore, the assurance that we will prevail which is only enjoined upon those that will blow the trumpet and sound an alarm within Adventism; giving it that certain sound that is to awaken God’s people to the crisis just ahead—the Day of the Lord!

Joel reveals plainly that he is very aware that the trumpet is to give a “certain sound” that calls the congregation together for a solemn assembly and that the trumpet is also to give a “certain sound” that is to be the alarm of war and gathers the army of God together:

“Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: **come**, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. (14) Sanctify ye a fast, **call a solemn assembly, gather** the elders and all the inhabitants of the land **into the house of the LORD** your God, and cry unto the LORD, (15) Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.” -- **Joel 1:13-15**

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, **call a solemn assembly**: (16) **Gather** the people, sanctify the congregation, **assemble** the elders, **gather** the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

(17) Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" -- **Joel 2:15-17**

The people of God that will comprise the 144k will comprehend and understand the dire necessity to call for a solemn assembly as they see that day approaching and will heed Joel's command to "blow" "the trumpet in Zion", and in so doing they will give that trumpet a certain sound—the sound to assemble and "cry unto the Lord" as they see the Day of the Lord approaching.

However, the trumpet was also blown as an alarm of danger and when there was a threat of war. And in order to receive the promise of deliverance from their enemies [Numbers 10:9], they must be faithful to give that trumpet a certain sound—a sound that awakens Adventism to their impending danger!

"Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: (20) **But I will remove far off from you the northern army**, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. (21) Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: **for the LORD will do great things.**" -- **Joel 2:19-21**

Because I believe that the army described in verses two through eleven of chapter two are the 144k, and that the "Day of the Lord" will arrive at the Sunday law in the United States where the door of probation closes on Adventism, this alone would warrant the need for the watchmen upon the walls of Zion to blow the trumpet in Zion and sound the alarm! As God's faithful watchmen today within Adventism recognize that the armies of Rome are rapidly approaching; as revealed in the image of the beast being formed before our very eyes today, they will give that trumpet a "certain" sound.

In summary: Joel's command to you and I to "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion" is a reminder to "...turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Joel 2:12-13.

"Sound an alarm in my holy mountain" is expressing an awareness that the army of God is soon to begin the work of ridding God's land of His enemies and therefore they must seek the promised blessing of deliverance associated with the blowing of the trumpet and preparing their hearts for the work ahead.

VERSE 2

As I consider the second verse of Joel, I recognize that the "*Day of the Lord*" is two different things to two different classes of people. To one class it's "*a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness*" while a totally different class sees it "*as the **morning** spread upon the mountains*".

In the quote below you will see two classes portrayed; one are those who cry "My God, we know thee" when in reality they do not, and the other class are inferred; they are those who see the day of the Lord exactly opposite, as you will see. In this quote, Sister White is identifying a condition that existed within the church that was becoming saturated with Miller's teachings. But that history is prefiguring ours as it is to repeat here at the end of the world.

HERALDS OF THE MORNING

“It was needful that men should be awakened to their danger; that they should be roused to prepare for the solemn **events connected with the close of probation**. The prophet of God declares: ‘**The day of the Lord** is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?’ Who shall stand when He appeareth who is ‘of purer eyes than to behold evil,’ and cannot ‘look on iniquity’? Joel 2:11; Habakkuk 1:13.

To them that cry, ‘My God, we **know** Thee,’ yet have transgressed His covenant, and hastened after another god, hiding iniquity in their hearts, and loving the paths of unrighteousness-- **to these the day of the Lord is ‘darkness, and not light, even very dark, and no brightness in it.’** Hosea 8:2, 1; Psalm 16:4; Amos 5:20. ‘It shall come to pass at that time,’ saith the Lord, ‘that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.’ Zephaniah 1:12. {GC 310.1}

While undoubtedly referencing the same “*day of the Lord*”, the Pen of Inspiration also makes a powerful and extremely important distinction. By referencing the day of the Lord and showing that for “*these*” it is a day of “*darkness*”, then without the slightest doubt there has to be another class who see the day of the Lord as something completely different—maybe as “*the morning* spread upon the mountains”? I believe so!

AS THE MORNING

“Who is **she** that looketh forth **as the morning**, fair as the moon, clear as **the sun**, and terrible as an **army** with banners?”-- **Song of Solomon 6:10**

This **army** of God that “appears as the **morning**” will logically begin their work of fulfilling the role of the 144k when the Sunday law begins. I say that in connection with Isaiah 60:1-5:

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because **the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee**, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.”-- **Isaiah 60:1-5**

The abundance of the sea cannot begin to be converted unto the 144k until the Sunday law arrives. So when we compare Joel’s, Solomon’s and Sister White’s testimony above, it becomes clear that they are all teaching the same thing and speaking about the very same event; the “day of the Lord”.

This is also in harmony with the testimony of Daniel 11:40-45 where we see the emergence of the 144k begin when the KON enters the Glorious land--at the Sunday law, and the 144k begin to give the loud cry message that diverts the waters flowing into Babylon unto the mountain of the Lord (Isaiah 2:2-3). This diverting is symbolizing the conversion of the “abundance of the sea”.

The light that “*is come*” in Isaiah sixty at the Sunday law *began* to come in a progressive manner on 9-11 as the angel of Rev. 18 descended. But that light/glory being progressive in its nature, doesn’t arrive in full until the Sunday law; when the loud cry begins and the latter rain is poured out “without measure”. Here’s why I say that.

The “Glorious manifestation of the power of God” extended from 1840-44 and these dates correspond to 9-11 and Michael standing up. Now notice something very important-- the first **test** in connection with the empowerment of the first angel’s message didn’t occur until June of 1842, which aligns itself with the Sunday law. The first angel’s message is *empowered* in 1840 and a testing **process** begins. But the first actual *test* in connection with that empowerment will not be seen until June of 1842 when a specific date/time is set before the people prompting a decision.

Likewise, when the angel began to descend on 9-11 “the light for that time” was given and the 1st angel’s message was empowered. Why do I say that? I understand that the third angel’s message is a blending of all three messages. That would mean that on 9/11 the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd angel’s messages were empowered when this fourth angel joined it.

But that “light”, which began on 9/11 as the angel of Revelation 18 began to descend, is also progressive in nature and its first purpose is to prepare a people *within* Adventism for the arrival of the first test to follow 9/11; the national Sunday Law. And the arrival of this test parallels the test of June, 1842; for it was the first test to follow August of 1840.

My point: When that test comes at the Sunday law, the firstfruits of the kingdom of “glory” begin to be manifested or “lifted up” (*They “arise” Isa.60:1*); beginning first within America. Thus, the “**glory**” of the Lord “**is risen**” upon them and it’s here that we see the beginning of the transition of God’s people into the “**Glorious** Holy Mountain”.

It is here at this point also that we will see the Gentiles begin to come “to thy light” (Isa. 60:3). And we’re told that that light is the “**glory**” of the Lord that has risen upon them. Here, at the Sunday law, the Gentile world will begin to flow together unto “the mountain of the Lord’s house” (Isaiah 2:2) because “out of Zion shall go forth the law” (v.3).

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: **his going forth** is prepared **as the morning**; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”--
Hosea 6:3

I understand that Christ, the same angel of Revelation 10, begins to go forth at 9-11 as the morning; meaning that His light/glory progressively increases beginning at 9-11 and that it is not “*risen upon thee*” until the SL/DOL where it is to be revealed in the personage of His saints and the sharp, fiery message they proclaim.

Also, as a side note, I suspect that when Jesus says that He will send both the “former” and the “latter” rain, that what He really intends to convey by those words is that it is to mark the “full” outpouring; because if you have both the former and latter, you have the rain in its “fullness”.

That light would then end when Michael stands up. And I understand that light/glory to represent both a message and character. But notice the two classes in the following quote and how the description dovetails with Joel:

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the **children of light**, and the **children of the day**: we are not of **the night**, nor **of darkness**. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and **be sober**. For they that sleep sleep in **the night**; and they that be drunken are **drunken in the night**. But let us, who are **of the day**, **be sober**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”-- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-8**

When comparing the inspired language that Joel employs to describe the DOL, with that that Paul employs when describing the same day in the verses above, it should be easy for us to see that they both are clearly speaking about the same DOL. However Paul brings confirmation that there are two classes manifested when the Day of the Lord arrives. The SOP acknowledges that fact as well by demarcating one class, at that point in time, which sees that day as a day of darkness.

So then logically speaking, if there are only two classes in the world, then the other class, contrasted with those that see it as a day of darkness, would then naturally see that day as a day of light—or as the “morning”.

To me the verses above do a great work in bringing many themes of thought together and substantiating them. For example: (1) The “drunkards” of Joel are associated with those that see that day as darkness while the “sober” would naturally be associated with those that see that day as the morning. (2) Clearly the *drunkards* are those drinking the wine of Babylon and will be lost, while the *sober* are living by a “thus sayeth the Lord” and will join the ranks of God’s great army at the SL; if we hold that all of the prophets are speaking about the end of the world.

UPON THE MOUNTAINS

I understand these mountains to be the other religious entities that comprise Babylon that will, in the Day of the Lord, be esteemed lesser in spiritual status because of the loud cry testing message that is going forth and diverting her waters. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law” [Isa.2:3] is speaking of the Loud Cry message of Revelation 18 combined with the messages of Revelation 14 concerning the Sabbath test.

In the verses describing God’s army in chapter two of Joel, I see the identical language of the story of Joshua and the overthrow of Jericho; which is prefiguring the overthrow of Babylon at the end of the world. Therefore, when we are considering the conquest of the enemy within the borders of Canaan here at the end of the world, we can see that the nations comprising Babylon that are to be conquered are to be represented as “mountains”:

“And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims **from the mountains**, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.”-- **Joshua 11:21-23**

The bible gives us a second testimony to the fact that in the “Day of the Lord”, Christ will send His army to overthrow spiritual Canaan and rid the land of His enemies; and it is found in Zephaniah—a companion study to the Book of Joel which teaches the same principles:

“Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; **O Canaan**, the land of the Philistines, **I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.**”-- **Zephaniah 2:5**

A GREAT PEOPLE

I have made this point many times before but it bears repeating here again. When the day of the Lord—the Sunday law, arrives, there will be two armies to take the field—not just one. Unfortunately for me, all too often I see a stronger emphasis placed upon Rome, to the gross neglect of the army of God; that is mightier than the armies of Rome and who will overcome that army according to John’s testimony in Revelation 17:14.

We see these two armies portrayed also in Daniel 11:40-45 when we see a company giving the “tidings out of the east and out of the north” and again in Ezekiel 37 where there is an “exceeding great army” that stands up upon their feet after receiving a prophetic message.

“The **two armies** will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of truth will come on the side of God's commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, **prior to** the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth. They will be brought before kings and rulers, and before councils to meet the false, absurd, and lying accusations brought against them, but they must stand firm as a rock to principle, and the promise is, ‘As thy days so shall thy strength be.’” (Deuteronomy 33:25). -- {1888 Materials, 484.1}

“And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, **a great people**, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.”-- 1 Kings 3:8

It's my belief that the correct understanding of the description: “*a great people and a strong*”, is substantiated in the verses that follow it and likewise in the companion book of Zephaniah. I believe that the bible teaches that the reason they are deemed mighty and strong is not because of their size or numbers but solely because Jesus is in the midst of His people- His army!

“**In that day** it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”-- **Zephaniah 3:16-17**

“In that day” would point us to the day of the Lord which begins at the Sunday law and it's there that the 144k emerge perfectly reflecting His character- He is “*in the midst of*” them!

“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. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.”- **Joel 3:16-17**

While I recognize that that term “great” can also apply to numbers, the words “and a strong” that are connected with it, point us to and support an understanding that I believe not only Joel but all of the prophets are upholding- that God's people are “mighty” and “strong” ONLY because of Christ being in the midst of them: “If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us”? [Rom. 8:31]. The Old Testament is littered with accounts of victories gained when they recognized who their true strength was and stopped trying to do it in their own strength.

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”-- **2 Corinth. 12:9**

We can see this theme all throughout scripture. This theme IS the everlasting gospel. It IS the mystery of Godliness that is to be accomplished in His saints! And at the risk of seeming to labor this point:

“These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with **the Lamb**, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”-- **Revelation 17:13-14**

Here we see the 144k represented as the Lamb. Why? Why not the Lion of the tribe of Judah; a warring beast? I believe it's because Jesus is trying to make an intentional and specific statement as to the character of those that will comprise the 144k and finish the work.

Remember the theme of Joel: The immanent coming of Christ at the SL for Adventism- for the *drunkards* and the *sober* in 1 Thess. 5. And Jesus' character will have to have been perfectly reproduced within them until they, like Christ, can say: “If you've seen me you've seen Jesus” or like Paul: “It's not I that live but Christ in me”.

This is the sentiment that I firmly believe Christ is trying to convey through the prophet Joel and likewise through all of the prophets as he begins to describe in detail **His** “army” that will “*executeth his word*” Joel 2:11.

“NOT BEEN EVER THE LIKE”

Maybe there is evidence beyond what I see at this point to change my thoughts concerning this statement, and I'm open to that, but I find it interesting that when we consider all of the armies described in the bible from Genesis to Revelation, there is only one army that I know of that has never been before and that army cannot be revealed until the day of the Lord arrives! It was future to Joel and I believe it is future to us today. It's the army of Ezekiel 37—the 144k! We've seen the armies of Rome and Islam.

“EVEN TO THE YEARS OF MANY GENERATIONS”

You may find it interesting to discover that the term “*many generations*”, as found in the bible, is ALWAYS employed in reference to God's people ONLY.

VERSE 3

“A FIRE DEVoureth”:

Before I address what I understand the fire to actually be, I would like to make what I feel is a very important point concerning the fire in chapter one. I first believe that this fire in chapter one is the same fire of chapter two.

As I stated earlier, in chapter one Joel is setting forth a sequence of events that begin when the armies of Rome come up upon God's glorious land at the Sunday law. And these events extend all the way down to the seven last plague time period as evidenced by Sister White in *The Great Controversy*, p628.1 In fact she references from verse ten, all the way to the end of the chapter, excepting verses thirteen to sixteen where we see a call to repent before it's too late.

Because I believe that chapter two is a repeat and enlarge but with a different focus—that being upon the “sober” that emerge from within the ranks of Adventism, I can see that this fire is the very same fire. And the effects of that fire are identical to those found in chapter two. I do not believe that they are two separate fires, nor do I believe that it's the *false* messages of Rome.

My reasoning for this is based in part on the account of Nadab and Abihu. They prefigure a people here at the end of the world that will choose to employ a “strange” fire in their work; a false message. They will chose this strange fire because, like Nadab and Abihu, they will have been made drunk on the wine of Babylon. Consider as well that Nadab and Abihu; having chosen to use the “strange” fire, were consumed by a fire of God's own kindling; a “holy” fire, and not by the “strange” fire they chose to employ.

When Christ was to “consume” these wicked men for their sinful act, He did NOT use “strange fire”. The fire of Joel, when compared with Zephaniah’s second witness, is to destroy ALL of God’s enemies including Babylon; and she will not be “devoured” by her own false messages. I don’t see any justification for concluding that the fire of Rome suddenly switches to some other fire that then consumes them.

THE FIRE

Concerning what the fire is, I believe and will attempt to show that that fire is the “loud cry” message—the word of God, attended by the power of the Holy Spirit and that at the Sunday law it is to go forth to **every** green thing and nothing shall escape; and I am assuming here that we all understand that grass and trees etc. represent people in the bible. Every soul will encounter the message and either align themselves with Christ and help swell the loud cry or Satan and be consumed by that fiery message. The following quotes are employed to show the extent to which this fiery “loud cry” message is given.

“The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided.” {2SM 80.4}

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not.” GC 605.2

“The Sabbath question is a test that will come to the whole world...

“We have now the most solemn, important test given to us from the Word of God for this special period of time. This test is for the whole world... There are storms before us, conflicts of which few dream. Nothing should come in to divert our minds from the grand test which is to decide the eternal destiny of a world,--the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” {GCB, January 1, 1900 par. 9}

I believe that the day of the Lord is also when the “glory” of the Lord “*is risen*” upon His army and therefore we should expect to see glory associated with this fire: “And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the **sight** of the **glory** of the LORD **was like devouring fire** on the top of the mount **in the eyes of** the children of Israel.” Exodus 24:15-17. Take note that this “glory” is manifested in connection with Christ as he is entering into covenant with his people because when the SL arrives, Christ begins to enter into covenant with His people. Therefore we should expect to see His glory begin to be revealed at that same time.

“When Moses came down from the mount where he had been given a view of the glory of God, his face was so lighted up that Aaron and all the children of Israel ‘**were afraid** to come nigh him.’ ‘And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. . . . And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.’ **They could not bear even the reflection of the glory of God**.” {*Youth Instructor*, August 20, 1896 par. 3}

Not only is the **glory** of Christ; as revealed in His people at the Sunday law, represented as a flame, but also their loud cry **message** that is derived from the “Word” of God. “For **the LORD** thy God **is a consuming fire**, even a jealous God.” “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for **he is like a refiner's fire**, and like fullers' soap.” Deuteronomy 4:24, Malachi 3:2.

Understanding that the “Lord” is Christ and Christ is the Word, we can now understand the harmony of this verse: “Is not my **word** like **as a fire**? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Jeremiah 23:29. We can justifiably begin to apply the symbol of this fire to the “message” that the 144k are to proclaim to the world. But what is to be the effect of that message? “Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make **my words in thy mouth fire**, and this people **wood**, and **it** shall **devour** them.” **Jeremiah 5:14**.

So when the day of the Lord arrives and the word of God begins to be proclaimed as the “Loud Cry”, it will behave as a fire; a fire that will “*devour*” the wicked who reject it! That’s exactly what Joel 2:3 tells us. And I believe that this is a spiritual consuming because I firmly believe that the wicked are only literally consumed AFTER Michael stands up.

“BEFORE THEM”

“Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.”-- **Deuteronomy 9:1-3**

There is a principle set forth and testified to in both Joel and Zephaniah. That principle is that it’s Jesus who is “*in the midst of*” His people and that it is He that goes “*before*” His people and conquers the enemy as a *fiery* and *shaking* message. “A fire devoureth before them” “The earth shall quake before them...And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army” “for the Lord dwelleth in Zion” “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save” “...the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee” “The just Lord is in the midst thereof” (Joel 2:3, 10-11; 3:21; Zephaniah 3:17, 15, 5)

In Deuteronomy 9:1-3 he is a consuming fire. And it’s important to note that this assertion is made in connection with the overthrow of the enemies of God within Canaan; prefiguring the fall of Babylon at the end of the world. And because all of the prophets are writing about the same day of the Lord, this to me can be seen as a clear connection to Joel 2:7-9 and is evidenced by the language employed there. I will share more on this point as we consider verses 7-9.

PENTECOST

I would assume that we all agree that Pentecost is pre-figuring the day of the Lord—the Sunday law testing time when the loud cry is given. When we look back to that history we can see the very same characteristics that I’m setting before you today. There was fire connected with the early rain message: “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of **fire**, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and **began to speak...**” (Acts 2:3-4) And if one tries to apply the symbol of fire in these verses to the Holy Spirit *alone*, please consider that you will never find the Spirit of God separate or apart from the Word of God, because this is the specific tool that the Spirit employs to accomplish his work; both of separation from sin and of leading us into all truth. As a testimony to this, we all recognize that the disciples could not have converted a total of eight thousand people without the word they preached being attended by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prior to Pentecost, there were two who had a totally *different* experience and testimony in connection with the *fiery* words of Christ: “And they said one to another, Did not our heart **burn** within us, while he talked with us by the way, and **while he opened to us the scriptures**? (Luke 24:32) The loud cry message will be as a fire from the mouths of the righteous, and it will consume!

“BEHIND”

“A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies **round about**.”-- **Psalms 97:3**

“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous **round about** him.”-- **Psalms 50:2-3**

AS THE GARDEN OF EDEN

In respect to it appearing as the garden of Eden, consider what makes up that garden. Trees, grass, etc.

“And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see **men as trees**, walking.”-- **Mark 8:23-24**

“Therefore **their inhabitants** were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the **grass** of the field, and as the **green herb**, as the **grass** on the housetops, and as **corn** blasted before it be grown up.”-- **2 Kings 19:26**

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: **surely the people is grass**. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”-- **Isaiah 40:7-8**

“And **the bramble** said unto the **trees**, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour **the cedars** of Lebanon.”-- **Judges 9:15**

“For **the day of the LORD** of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and **he** shall be brought low: And upon all the **cedars** of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the **oaks** of Bashan.”-- **Isaiah 2:12-13**

We can see that the green things of this earth are also representative of people; oaks, cedars, grass, tender herb, corn, etc.. In fact, the olive tree is used to represent the whole nation of Jews as exemplified in the cursing of the fig tree. You also have the parable of the vineyard that describes as well how God relates greenery to a people. So for the prophet to state that it was “as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness” is teaching us that every soul will encounter the loud cry message and either be destroyed by the fiery message (spiritually) or join the ranks of God’s army. That’s why there is nothing behind them. The converts are keeping step with the army who is issuing the fiery and consuming message.

When I consider verse three, I see a parallel to chapter one. The “word of God”, as a fire, consumes everything green, “as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness”, just as the four insects do in chapter one. But, in chapter one it’s not the “word of *God*” but the “word of *man*” that is consuming and destroying and it is not represented by *fire* but rather as *wine*!

In other words, just as the “word of man” is symbolized by *insects* that “consume”; leaving nothing behind, in like manner the “word of God” is symbolized by a *fire* that likewise will “consume” and “nothing shall escape them”.

Consider this perspective:

CHAPTER 1: 4 INSECTS (WORD OF MAN)

Consume all green foliage.
Leave nothing behind.
No green - no life.
Teachings of men (*Doctrines of Rome*)

CHAPTER 2: FIRE (WORD OF GOD)

Consumes all green things. (Joel 2:3- “as the garden of Eden before them”)
Leaves nothing behind. (Joel 2:3- “Nothing shall escape”)
No green - no life.
Word of God. (Jer. 23:29; 4:23-24)

A DESOLATE WILDERNESS

In order to understand the use of the word “wilderness”, let us consider how Isaiah employs it in describing a time when the Spirit/rains are to be poured down:

(9) “Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.”

[Here Jerusalem is being addressed, as portrayed by the “careless daughters”, and we can see that they are to hear the latter rain message that’s deemed His “voice”.]

(10) Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. (11) Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins. (12) They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. (13) Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: (14) Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; (15) Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.” -- **Isaiah 32:9-15**

The “wilderness”, at one level, is pointing us to a condition that results from those who encounter the latter rain but reject it. They will have rejected the Holy Spirit. So when the 144k begin to give the loud cry message; a call to come out of Babylon, two classes will be manifested and those that receive the latter rain will *join* the ranks of the army that is giving this fiery message. Therefore, whoever rejects the rain becomes a desolate wilderness.

A HURDLE

When I consider Joel 2:3 and the possibility that this army is Rome, I’m confronted with a discrepancy that I cannot rectify, and it’s this: If in Daniel 11:41 we understand that there are those that *escape* out of the papacy’s hand: “but these shall escape out of his hand”, then how can we apply this verse in Joel which states that “nothing shall escape them”? Maybe there’s a simple answer. If so, praise the Lord.

However, I apply “and nothing shall escape them” in this way: There are none that will escape the fiery, loud cry warning message. And as a result they will either join the ranks of those proclaiming the loud cry message and help to swell that cry or be consumed by the fire as stubble.

FIRE’S OBJECTIVE

TO PURGE THE LAND

The objective of the fire is to purge the “*land*” (the earth) of all the wicked in order that the people of God can take possession of it; in the same manner that Joshua was to purge the land of Canaan prior to, and in order that, the people of God could “possess” it fully: “for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to *possess* the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to *possess* it.” Joshua 1:11.

But they fell short of their commission of ridding the land of the enemy; even though they took possession of most of the land: “Thou (Joshua) art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.” Joshua 13:1.

But that will not be the case with the 144k; because as Jesus succeeded where Adam failed, so too the 144k—a type of Christ, will succeed where Joshua failed:

“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for **all the earth shall be devoured** with the **fire** of my jealousy.” Zephaniah 3:8. The land is an integral part of the covenant that He is about to enter into with His final covenant people; that’s why there is such a tremendous emphasis placed upon ridding the land of the enemy by a majority of the prophets. The land is that one-third part that will comprise the kingdom Jesus is soon to return and take possession of.

I do not believe that “**all the earth shall be devoured**” means that all are to be lost, but rather that all will encounter the fiery loud cry message and “nothing shall escape them”—and this message is described as His *indignation*! “Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, **burning** with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are **full of indignation**, and **his tongue** as a **devouring fire**.” Isaiah 30:27. To the wicked, the life saving message He sends is as a flame that “consumes” them (Zephaniah 1:2-3). The same is said of the stone when it breaks Babylon into pieces; it “consumes” the kingdoms of Babylon (Daniel 2:44). And in the language of Joshua, “and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city”. Nothing escaped alive except those in Rahab’s house who separated themselves from the ones marked for destruction.

The objective of the army in Joel is the same as that of the army of Joshua and the stone of Daniel 2. The stone of Daniel two and the army of Joel two are both representing the 144k who will overthrow and conquer Babylon at the end of the world—finally ridding His land of the enemy; something Joshua fell short of accomplishing! It would seem only right that Jeremiah 51 would employ the language of Joshua, Daniel and Joel when describing what the “army” or “stone” or the 144k are to destroy. And notice that when Jeremiah is speaking about what will be destroyed in Babylon, he points to the same things found in Joel’s account of the DOL:

“The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name. Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces **the nations**, and with thee will I destroy **kingdoms**; And with thee will I break in pieces **the horse and his rider**; and with thee will I break in pieces **the chariot and his rider**; With thee also will I break in pieces **man and woman**; and with thee will I break in pieces **old and young**; and with thee will I break in pieces **the young man and the maid**; I will also break in pieces with thee **the shepherd and his flock**; and with thee will I break in pieces **the husbandman and his yoke of oxen**; and with thee will I break in pieces **captains and rulers**.

And I will render unto **Babylon** and to all the inhabitants of **Chaldea** all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.”-- **Jeremiah 51:19-25**

By combining the language of Joshua, Daniel and Joel we can see that Jeremiah is employing their very language to describe what is to be broken in pieces and consumed.

“And nothing shall escape them” Joel 2:2. When the army of God goes forth with the fiery loud cry “message”, none shall be exempt and the result will be that: “the whole land shall be **devoured** by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land” and he “will utterly consume **all** things from off the land.” Zephaniah 1:2, 18. The land, that one-third part that makes up the kingdom that Christ is to receive upon His return, has to be secured before His return—spiritually; by the subjects that are employed as His army—the 144,000.

TO CONSUME THE PALACES

Amos sheds even more light as to the role of the fire discussed in Joel. After quoting Joel 3:16 in Amos 1:2, Amos reveals that a fire is sent after the fourth transgression of each different and successive nation described in Amos 1:3-2:5 totaling seven nations in all; not including the eighth which is Israel.

Now, it’s worth noting that the fire always devours the “palaces”; representative of the civil powers or state. Now then, do we see where a message is employed to bring down the civil powers—the armies of Rome at the end of the world? “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them” Revelation 17:14. The 144k overcome and conquer the civil powers, the armies of Rome as represented by the ten kings, and they accomplish this through “tidings” out of the east and the north according to Daniel 11; the loud cry “message”.

In the language of Daniel two, the army of the 144k “break in pieces” Babylon, as personified in the armies of Rome, as the loud cry message goes forth: “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and **like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?**” Jeremiah 23:29. The result of that message is expressed as: “he shall come to his end, and none shall help him”.

In the language of Joshua: “So the people shouted (*Loud cry*) when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they **utterly destroyed all** that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.” Joshua 6:20-21.

CLOSING THOUGHT ON THE “FIRE”

As I suggested earlier in this document, I strongly believe that the accumulative evidences reveal that the “fire” referenced at the close of chapter one in Joel is the very same fire in chapter two—a holy message, and it’s simply describing the results of the loud cry message that goes forth as a consuming fire.

One might suggest that it is representing the destructive work of an *unholy* message; the teachings of men, but I’ve noticed that the term “fire” within the book of Joel has only been employed in connection with God’s army in chapter two and the message **they** give. It comes forth from *them*. The teachings of men are represented as the wine that intoxicates Adventism in chapter one; not fire.

As you consider the wording of Joel 1:19-20; where he is describing the after effects of the fire, it is apparent that he is describing the condition of things *after* the fire has done its work. Factoring in that the SOP places these verses as fulfilling in the seven plague time period (GC 628.1),

then this fire would have to have burned prior to Michael standing up and that is in complete harmony with the collective testimony of the bible; that the fire begins at the Sunday law/DOL when a fiery message began to go forth into the whole world. And “nothing” escaped that fiery message; resulting in a condition as described by Joel in verses 19-20.

THE APPEARANCE OF HORSES

Zechariah 10:1 establishes the context of the verses that follow and establishes that in the latter rain time period there is a condition that develops within Judah; his church: “For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way **as a flock**, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.” In consequence to their condition, He then visits them in judgment at the SL and those that remain are made His goodly horse in the battle: “Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts **hath visited** his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.” Zechariah 10:2-3

Christ visits the house of Judah (Adventism) at the Sunday law or day of the Lord. This is in harmony with Zephaniah 1:12 “And it shall come to pass **at that time**, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, **and punish** the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.”

As a result of visiting the house of Judah, verse five tells us that “they shall be as **mighty men**, which tread down *their enemies* in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.

An observation: In Joel 2:2, 5, 7, 11; Zephaniah 1:14, 3:16-17 and Zechariah 10:5, we discover that it’s only after the Sunday law or Day of the Lord arrives, that we see the people of God being labeled a “*mighty*” and “*strong*” people.

“A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a **great** (*mighty*-h7227) people and a **strong**; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.” (5) Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a **strong** people set in battle array.(7) They shall run like **mighty** men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: (11) And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very **great**: for *he is strong* that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it?”-- **Joel 2:2, 5, 7, 11.**

Zephaniah 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the **mighty** man shall cry there bitterly.

Zechariah 10:5 “And they shall be as **mighty** men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.”

These labels are applied only after Christ “hath visited his flock the house of Judah” or Adventism at the Sunday law. Why are they deemed at that time to be “mighty” and “strong”? That question, I believe, is answered most fully only as we begin to understand the deeper implications of Zephaniah 3:17.

It is only when Christ is perfectly formed within that we become *mighty* and *strong*! Amen? Because He ONLY is *mighty* and *strong*. And this will occur when the day of the Lord arrives and the church is purified. I believe that this theme is not often allowed to weigh in to the overall interpretation as it was intended.

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**.”-- **Colossians 1:25-27**

I believe that this “mystery” that He desires to “make known” today is “Christ in you, the hope of glory”! And it’s this theme that is being emphasized so strongly within the pages of Joel. He’s speaking to the “old men” or “ancient men” of Adventism and warning them of the nearness of the day of the Lord and that they need to prepare a character beforehand that reflects the character of the One they profess in order to meet with Him in peace and escape the punishment to be executed upon the drunkards.

HORSEMEN, SO SHALL THEY RUN:

“And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and **some shall run before his chariots**.”-- **1 Samuel 8:10-11**

In addition to manning chariots, horsemen were also those who ran before the king of Israel’s chariot. And I’m fairly certain we are all familiar with the account of Elijah who, after the “seven times” test, in the time when the rain began falling without measure, **ran** before the chariot of the king of Israel.

“And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.”-- **1 Kings 18:41-46**

The 144k are typified in and prefigured by the prophet Elijah and the Carmel experience. Because of this, I understand that the circumstances surrounding the Mount Carmel experience of his day are more accurately applied to us here at the end of the world. So when I read: “as *horsemen* so shall they run”, I naturally conclude that this is to occur when the latter rain, or “*great rain*”, begins to fall without measure; when the day of the Lord arrives, and that the Elijah’s in that day (144k) will begin to run before the true King of Israel’s (Christ’s) chariot. I understand this to be the time of the perfect fulfillment of the Carmel experience, understanding that that history was to reach its complete or perfect fulfillment here at the end of the world (1 Corinth. 10:11; 1 Peter 1:12; 3SM, 338.1).

“LIKE THE NOISE OF CHARIOTS ON THE TOPS OF MOUNTAINS SHALL THEY LEAP,”

I will now begin to show why I have concluded that these chariots are to represent God’s people, but first I would like to qualify the “mountains” that they are leaping on top of as “a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble”.

In Jeremiah 51:19, we read that the “rod of his inheritance” is Israel (144k) and the verses that follow tell of a work of destruction that is to be accomplished by this “rod” against Babylon. “And I will render unto Babylon and to all of the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the Lord” (verse 24).

We then discover that in verse 25 Babylon is represented as a *mountain* that is *burnt*. Notice then, that the bible parallels the work of the 144k as the “rod of his inheritance” and their “breaking in pieces”, to the destructive work of “fire”. In this we see a parallel connection to Daniel 2 where the stone, the 144k, are to “break in pieces” the false system of worship as represented by the image through a loud cry message.

So then, the work of the 144k in Jeremiah 51:19-25, can be seen as paralleling the work of fire and resulting in the burnt *mountain* of Babylon. However, this mountain is said to be comprised of “nations” in the plural. Babylon therefore is not representative of a single mountain or nation, but is comprised of nations or *mountains* in the plural. Just as Babylon is not a singular religion but is a confederacy of every apostate religion, she will not consist of a single mountain but rather a confederacy of many mountains or hills. This, in my opinion, is a very important fact to retain.

FIERY CHARIOTS

As we now begin to consider how the 144k are to be represented by the *fiery* chariots in Joel 2:5, we turn to the book of Nahum; specifically chapter’s two and three.

It is here that we see the destruction of Nineveh/Babylon vividly described. However, as an introduction or prelude to this description, we hear a woeful pronouncement in chapter one; verses nine to fourteen, upon Nineveh/Babylon, as Christ is clearly speaking directly to them. Then Nineveh hears Christ say: “Behold”!

As chapter two approaches there is a call to Nineveh to “behold upon the *mountains*” a particular people. They are to consider “the feet of him that bringeth good *tidings*”; and these “*tidings*” are being given upon the “*mountains*” (plural) that make up Nineveh/Babylon; because Nineveh is symbolic of Babylon and Babylon is comprised of *mountains* in the plural (Isaiah 2:1-3).

I understand these people upon the mountain to be the very same as found in Daniel 11:44 who are giving the loud cry message described as “tidings” because all of the prophets are writing about the end of the world.

Remembering that Joel 2:5 says: “Like the noise of chariots on the tops of *mountains*” (plural), I see this as a parallel description pointing to those who are giving a message called “tidings” in Nahum 1:15.

First notice that there is a *message* to be given, or “tidings”, and that it is to be accomplished by Judah. Please take notice also that this proclamation in verse fifteen comes directly on the heels of, and in direct connection with, a declaration by Christ in the preceding verses concerning the immanent fate of Nineveh; that He “*will make thy grave; for thou art vile*”; pointing us to the immanent destruction to be accomplished in the following verses by those whose feet are bringing a “fiery” message or “tidings” that Jeremiah 51 states will render them a “burnt mountain”.

“He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily. For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches.”

In these two verses, I see that the language, considered in its context, is unmistakably pointing us to Nineveh as the one who is to “fortify thy power mightily” because he that “dasheth” or “breaketh in pieces”, the 144k, is “come up” before Nineveh’s face-- in a time when the “good tidings” are being proclaimed by Judah. This is who Jesus had called to Nineveh to “behold” in the verse just before.

“Dasheth in pieces” (H6327), is also translated “breaketh in pieces” and is the identical language employed by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 51:20-23 and Daniel 2:44, when describing the work of the 144k as they are to bring down Babylon at the end of the world.

Consider this: For one class the messages are “good tidings” while for another class they “break in pieces”.

Nineveh is counseled to “fortify their power mightily” and “keep the munitions” because Jesus has sent His “*mighty men*” and “*valiant men*” whose “**chariots** shall be with **flaming** torches”.

In chapter two verse one; the 144k are those “mighty” and “valiant” men who are poised to “break in pieces” the city of Nineveh (spiritually) at the end of the world through the proclamation of a “fiery” loud cry message or “good tidings”.

In the first part of verse three there is an emphasis upon the *shield* and *garments* being red: “**The shield** of his mighty men is **made red**, the valiant men *are in scarlet*.” Now consider Isaiah 63:1-6:

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah (**h1224: *sheepfold***)? this that is **glorious** in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?” (Notice the answer) “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

Now, if we correctly apply this at the end of the world, we will admit that this could not be referring to Christ personally but rather to those who are perfectly reflecting His character and are the ambassadors of heaven; as Christ remains in the most Holy place until probation closes. Therefore this would have to be the 144k that Isaiah is writing about.

“Wherefore art thou **red** in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? **I** have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for **I** will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and **their blood** shall be **sprinkled upon my garments**, and **I will stain all my raiment.**”

I understand that this work is accomplished spiritually not physically. This language speaks of the battle between Truth and error, Light and darkness as the 144k begin to proclaim a life saving message; making the 144k saviors symbolically. And during this battle, where darkness is trying to counteract light, two classes are clearly being revealed and the wicked are “broken in pieces” spiritually and their blood is symbolically staining the garments of the righteous as they are trodden under foot. You see, they failed to fall on the Rock Christ Jesus and now comes the time when He, through the personage of His saints, falls upon them and grinds them to a powder!

“For **the day of vengeance** is in mine heart, and the year of my **redeemed** is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my **fury** [*His word-Jeremiah 25:15*], it upheld me. And I will **tread down** the people in mine anger, and make them **drunk in my fury** [*His word-Jeremiah 25:15*], and I will bring down their strength to the earth.” -- **Isaiah 63:1-6**

The shield and garments being red is pointing to a people that perfectly reflect the character of the one “mighty to save” and as well points us to the day of the Lord when He will tread the people in His anger and trample them in His fury in the personage of His saints—the 144k!; not physically or literally but spiritually: “and their blood shall be sprinkled upon” His “garments” and all of His raiment will be stained.

This is symbolically accomplished through the 144k and the voice of Christ as heard in the Loud Cry message.

As a second witness to the staining of the garments of the 144k during the loud cry time period due to the treading down of the grapes, notice Jeremiah’s parallel testimony:

“For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, **as they that tread the grapes**, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.”-- **Jeremiah 25:29-31**

And what about the shield? In forty-four verses the word “shield” is found predominantly naming Christ as a shield. For God to *tread* the people in His anger and *trample* them in His fury in the “day” of His vengeance parallels the same work as the flames that are to *consume* all of the wicked.

FLAMING TORCHES

“*The chariots shall be with flaming torches*” (verse 3) is a term that would therefore be associated with God’s army- the ‘mighty’ and “valiant” men, the 144k.

“The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called **my mighty ones** for mine anger, even **them that rejoice in my highness**. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of **heaven**, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.”-- **Isaiah 13:1-6**

Here is my reasoning: The book of Nahum is detailing the overthrow of Nineveh in 612 BC, but Nineveh (KON) typifies and prefigures, as I understand it, the *final* overthrow of Babylon (KON) at the end of the world; where God will “make an utter end” and Nineveh/Babylon “shall not rise up the second time” (Nahum 1:9).

Generally speaking, if we hold that the party responsible for the overthrow of Nineveh in the book of Nahum is Babylon, then we are effectually saying that it will be Babylon that overthrows Babylon at the end of the world-spiritually or literally, and that does not harmonize with the testimony of the bible.

But this overthrow **will** be accomplished spiritually by one of the armies typified in Nahum. And that army is to prefigure the 144k; who through the “loud cry” “good tidings” message, that as a fire, will burn the mountain of Babylon and make her a “burnt mountain” and she “shall not rise up the second time” (Nahum 1:9).

So we need to become acquainted with those who were literally responsible for the overthrow of Nineveh. However, let's first consider the overthrow of Babylon (KON) in the time of Belshazzar and notice something interesting about that history that has a bearing on the history of Nineveh.

When Babylon was conquered under the direction of Cyrus of Persia, both the armies of the Medes and Persians were involved.

“Even while he (Belshazzar) and his nobles were drinking from the sacred vessels of Jehovah, and praising their gods of silver and of gold, the **Medes** and the **Persians**, having turned the Euphrates out of its channel, were marching into the heart of the unguarded city. The army of Cyrus now stood under the walls of the palace; the city was filled with the soldiers of the enemy, ‘as with caterpillars’ (verse 14); and their triumphant shouts could be heard above the despairing cries of the astonished revelers.” {PK 531.2}

Notice what the bible says concerning Cyrus; “Thus saith the LORD to **his anointed**, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, **to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut**” and that he is the “*shepherd*” of Jerusalem/Israel (Isaiah 44:28-45:4)

So Cyrus is a type of Christ. He is prefiguring Christ at the end of the world when, yet again, He will direct His army against Babylon and accomplish its *spiritual*, and then after Michael stands up, its *literal* overthrow—never to rise again. He will yet again come as a thief in the night to all of the drunkards as in the time of Belshazzar.

The armies that Cyrus directed were comprised of two armies that formed a coalition in an effort to dethrone the king of Babylon. That army was comprised of Medes and Persians.

PARALLEL

Here is the parallel. In both the account in Nahum and that given by the historians, it was likewise a coalition of forces that came together to overthrow Nineveh (KON). In that coalition the Medes were clearly the prominent force and were aided by the Persians, the Scythians, Cimmerians, Chaldeans and Babylonians. And this battle occurred approximately 73 years prior to the overthrow of Belshazzar by Darius and his nephew Cyrus. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nineveh).

But what fascinates me about this account and points heavily toward the Medes and Persians as the ones to prefigure the 144k, is that in this history portraying the overthrow of Babylon at the end of the world, the gates are **again** left open: “the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved” (Nahum 2:6).

Realistically however, could we really point to any of the other warring parties involved in the account describing Nineveh's fall and find their counterpart at the end of the world and say that they will be involved in the overthrow of Babylon spiritually? I answer no.

So when we are reading the account in the book of Nahum concerning the events describing the overthrow of Nineveh, we can know that 1.) It's a description of the final overthrow of Nineveh/Babylon at the end of the world beginning with the day of the Lord. And 2.) Therefore, their overthrow will be accomplished by the 144k who are the anti-type of Medes/Persia.

“ALL FACES SHALL GATHER BLACKNESS”

“She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.”-- **Nahum 2:10**

This occurs in the faces of those in Nineveh who are being conquered by God's army. But notice also what occurs among the people of Babylon when again, His “mighty ones”, begin to fulfill His will in the day of the Lord:

“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be **afraid**: pangs and **sorrows** shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.”-- **Isaiah 13:6-8**

I have concluded that when it states that their faces “gather blackness”, that it’s indicative of their probation (in a broad or narrow sense) having closed; and they suddenly are aware of it:

“Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? **The harvest is past, the summer is ended**, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.”-- **Jeremiah 8:19-21**

VERSE 7

THEY SHALL RUN LIKE “MIGHTY MEN”!

Who are the “mighty men” when “the day of the Lord” arrives? Our first witness is found in Zephaniah:

“The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the **voice** of the day of the LORD: the **mighty man** shall **cry** there bitterly.”-- **Zephaniah 1:14-15**

According to Zephaniah’s testimony, the “day of the Lord” has a voice connected with it. And according to verse fourteen, the voice of the day of the Lord is represented as a “bitter cry” that comes from a “mighty man”. In order to understand this bitter cry that comes from a mighty man better, we go to Isaiah for his testimony:

“Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. The LORD shall go forth as *a mighty man*, he shall stir up jealousy like *a man of war*: he shall **cry**, yea, **roar** [Joel 3:15]; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I **cry like** a travailing woman; I will destroy and **devour at once**” [Zephaniah 1:18]. -- **Isaiah 42:12-14**

In these verses we are shown several important things. First we are told that Christ is the “mighty man”; therefore He is the same “mighty man” in Zephaniah 1:14. But we also know that Jesus is to prefigure the 144k at the end of the world; who in the day of the Lord will perfectly reflect His character and fulfill His will. So when we read about the accomplishments of Jesus in these verses, we are to understand that it is representative of the accomplishments of the 144k in the day of the Lord. As a second witness to that principle, notice John’s testimony:

“These (*ten kings*) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”-- **Revelation 17:14**

Just as in Isaiah's testimony, it is not Christ the Lamb that personally or literally wages war against the ten kings, but rather it is through the 144k who perfectly reflect His character and fulfill His will that He will overcome these kings. Besides, do we think that Christ will leave the most holy place where He is interceding on our behalf and come to earth to wage a literal physical war BEFORE probation closes?

Therefore they; the 144k, are the "mighty man" that cries bitterly in Zephaniah 1:14. We'll discuss the cry in just a moment, but first notice that the 144k are also portrayed as behaving like "a man of war". This to me is very significant because Joel 2:7, when referring to the army under discussion, states that: "They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war." I believe that Isaiah is teaching the same principles that Joel is.

Notice that when the 144k cry, it's also described as a "roar". That's interesting to me as well because Joel, still speaking about the army described in chapter two of Joel, has this to say: "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" [Joel 3:16].

I believe that the combined testimonies of Joel and Isaiah here are teaching us that the "cry" is in fact the "loud cry". And so that we understand the *nature* of that cry, we are told that it is also a "roar".

In Revelation ten we see another example of Christ roaring and it occurs in the history that we are repeating to the very letter. Notice:

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And **cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth**: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."-- **Revelation 10:1-3**

In this instance, the "loud cry" is *also* the "roar". But what is the "loud cry" or "roar" to accomplish? Notice John's testimony in chapter five:

"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, **the Lion** of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."-- **Revelation 5:4-5**

When we see Christ roaring, based on the testimony of God's word, we are to understand that it is to represent a message coming forth from God's word that is given by Christ/144k as an increase of knowledge in that history. This is what happened in the Millerite history. And the "loud cry" will again be the opening of God's word; specifically centering on the Sabbath commandment, to those in the darkness and confusion of Babylon. And it will also be when Christ "roars".

We are also told that "he shall prevail against his enemies" [Isaiah 42:13] as a result of the "roar" of the 144k; the loud cry! The loud cry/roar conquers the enemy!

A BITTER CRY

Now let's understand the "bitter cry" from scripture. Christ states through Isaiah: "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry **like** a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once."

In this we begin to gain an insight as to why it's a "bitter" cry. Jesus says: "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself." Here is portrayed the conclusion of a long wait for the great controversy to be over. But the time comes when He must do that which He has loathed to do; destroy His creation.

Those whom He gave His Son for who, until now, have been esteemed worthy of His every effort and deemed precious in His sight yet have spurned every invitation to open the door of their hearts to Jesus are now left to receive their due wages. Jeremiah, speaking of the identical point in time, expresses it in this way:

“Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for **the days** of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and **ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.**”-- **Jeremiah 25:34**

When I read this passage my mind's eye pictures a priceless irreplaceable vase from some far away dynasty that is beautifully adorned with priceless stones and beautiful colors; the pride of an ancient Artisan. And as He's holding it, it slips, in slow motion, from His grasp and falls irretrievably to the floor; shattering into countless pieces never to be recovered.

I believe that this is what Jesus is trying to convey in His warning: “and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.” He also expresses it this way in Matthew 23:37: “how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

When Jesus says that He will “cry like a travailing woman”, as expressed by Isaiah in chapter forty-two, He is intending to convey the deepest heartfelt anguish and regret as He is forced to *let go* of that priceless vase, stop upholding it with His righteous right hand and permit it to fall to the earth—lost for eternity.

I WILL DESTROY AND DEVOUR AT ONCE

In keeping with the theme of Zephaniah, Isaiah also teaches that Jesus “will destroy and **devour at once**.” Not by coincidence, Christ in Zephaniah proclaims: “for he shall make even **a speedy riddance** of all them that dwell in the land.” Both Zephaniah and Isaiah are giving witness to the swift and rapid destruction, spiritually, that is to come to “all them that dwell in the land.”

VERSES 7-9

THEY SHALL...

Having qualified who I believe the “mighty men” to be according to God's word in verse seven, let's now consider verses seven through nine and the things that the “mighty men” are to accomplish in the “day of the Lord”.

Allow me to begin by first saying that I see in Joel chapter two, the depiction of an army that will conquer Babylon at a *spiritual* level at the end of the world. This conquering begins with “the Sunday law” or the “Day of the Lord”, and continues until Michael stands up. This overthrow will be accomplished through the giving of the Loud Cry message that is represented as a “fire”.

{**NOTE:** I understand that the “day of the Lord” is not a point in time but a period of time that begins when the Sunday Law arrives and extends to the executive judgment.}

Selected Messages, book 3, p.338 teaches us that “each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours.” So if my conclusion is accurate, when we are considering another passage in the bible where a description of the overthrow of Babylon is being given, we should expect to find a corroborating testimony that upholds and supports the same understanding I just mentioned; even if only in part.

As I begin to substantiate my conclusion concerning the army of Joel two mentioned above, let me say that I have found within verses seven through nine, the very same language and theme that Joshua chapter six sets forth as it describes the conquering of Jericho through God's army; which prefigures the conquering of Babylon at the end of the world through the 144k.

BACKGROUND

Most of us are already acquainted with the story of Joshua and *how* he conquered Jericho so I will only address the key connecting points; though you may see others beyond what I mention.

What is revealed in this story and I feel is extremely important for us all to recognize, is the role and purpose of the “land”. It is an inseparable component of the covenant that was established between God and His people from the beginning. This land is forever to be connected with the covenant people as it typifies or prefigures the heavenly Canaan which is to be their eternal home.

In Leviticus 25:23, Moses makes it clear that the **land** is God’s land and that He extends it only to those who faithfully keep the covenant. And in Leviticus 26:33-34 we discover that the tenants are evicted from off of His **land** for breaking the Holy Covenant. The land of the covenant that they were to possess was Canaan. This is the very same land that Joshua is instructed to enter and take possession of beginning with Jericho. And their victory is assured because Jesus has promised to accomplish the victory on their behalf.

The city of Jericho is a *symbol* of Babylon at the end of the world, with the harlot Rahab and those within her house representing those within Babylon that will choose to separate from the fallen churches and follow Christ as they encounter the loud cry message. They survive the fiery message that consumes the wicked and become part of the true church. In Joel, the Loud Cry message is represented as a fire, but here in the account of Jericho it is a “sword”.

Jericho was to be the first of many cities that Joshua would overthrow under the direction of the Lord in order to rid His **land**; that prefigured the heavenly Canaan, of the enemy in order for God’s people to possess it.

Please be aware also that the land of Canaan was occupied by many different tribes and thus territories of people, beyond Jericho, with each having their respective city to overthrow. This truth will have a bearing on our subject later in the study.

But the work of the removal of the enemy out of Canaan; God’s land, was first to begin with Jericho.

“To reduce Jericho was seen by Joshua to be the first step in the conquest of Canaan.”--
{*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 487.3}

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Because Christ intentionally gave specific instructions to Joshua that were to detail both how they were to assemble themselves and what their behavior would be once assembled; in order to conquer Jericho, we are to see them as a pattern that is to foreshadow the method that He will employ in the final and parallel overthrow of spiritual Babylon at the end of the world by God’s army—the 144k. So notice:

First, they were to place their “men of war” in the front of the procession:

“And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is *armed* pass on *before* the ark of the LORD.”-- **Joshua 6:7**

Second, they were to place the seven priests before the “ark” with “rams’ horns”:

“And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.”-- **Joshua 6:8**

What is so extremely important to see within this description, is that the verse states: they “passed on before the **Lord**.” It is crucial to see and understand that they considered walking before the “ark” to be walking before “Jesus”, or the presence of the “ark” was considered the presence of “Christ”.

In other words we see Joshua clearly representing **Christ** as being **in** the midst of His people as they went forth to purge His land and conquer the enemy or Babylon! And this will be repeated again as the final overthrow of Babylon is accomplished. This is where their strength lies and this will be where our strength lies. Zephaniah confirms this principle and gives a second testimony to Joel in chapter three:

“The LORD thy God **in the midst of thee** *is mighty*; **he** will save, **he** will rejoice over thee with joy; **he** will rest in his love, **he** will joy over thee with singing.”-- **Zephaniah 3:17**

Notice a description of the same conquest as given by Moses:

“Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he **which goeth over before thee**; as a consuming fire **he shall destroy them**, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.”-- **Deuteronomy 9:1-3**

This theme, to me, is the very *heart* of the everlasting Gospel; Christ “*in you*” the hope of glory! Amen? It’s about you and me inviting our merciful Savior into our hearts in order to accomplish a work that we ourselves are powerless to do... before it’s too late.

When we consider all of the stories and accounts within the bible, constantly we see Christ ever trying to insert Himself in the midst of His people; literally or spiritually. When we look at the wilderness tabernacle service we can see this clearly; Christ desired an intimacy with His people. As an example of this, the high priest was given two stones to place upon his ephod in order that Jesus could answer their questions directly; either by the Urim or the Thummim—a yes or no.

Also, Jesus would go before them as a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day. Elsewhere we read that He wanted to be the King of His people but instead they wanted a man to rule over them. We see this also in the gospels; “Immanuel”—“God with us”.

John likewise emphasizes this desire in chapter seventeen in the prayer of unity. This principle is all throughout the bible and God’s faithful, here at the end of the world, will understand and recognize it... and reciprocate.

It is in the divinely inspired account, given through the prophet Joel, that this principle is most vividly and forcefully set before us in order that we might be encouraged and provoked to a deeper level of surrender; so that it may become our personal experience—Christ in **us** the hope of glory!

“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. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God **dwelling in Zion**, my holy mountain: **then shall Jerusalem be holy**, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.”-- **Joel 3:16-17**

“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.”-- **Joel 2:32**

There will be deliverance “in the remnant” because Christ will have been formed within! Christ is the deliverer:

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and **my deliverer**; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”-- **Psalms 18:2**

Thirdly, the Ark of the Covenant is to follow the priests with trumpets, and then

Fourthly, the rest of the people, the rereward, came after the ark. They are following “the Lamb whithersoever He goeth”!

My intention in detailing the way in which Christ had them arrange themselves for battle was to reveal that Christ was actually “in the midst” of them as they marched against Babylon; as symbolized by Jericho. He had a specific purpose for arranging them in that way. Remembering therefore that He shows the end from the beginning; at the end of the world, there will be a united emphasis upon this same fact by the prophets and that’s exactly what I see Joel doing in verses seven thru nine. It’s the identical language.

“They shall run like mighty men; they shall **climb** the **wall** like men of war;”

Compare this to:

“And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the **wall** of the city shall fall down flat, and the people **shall ascend up** every man straight before him.”-- **Joshua 6:5**

“So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the **wall fell down flat**, so that the people **went up** into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.”-- **Joshua 6:20**

We can reason from these verses in Joshua that when the walls fell, the people of God had to *ascend* them. More than that, there were houses that remained on the tops of the walls that had **not** fallen when the shout was given, that Gods people had to enter in order to destroy every living thing that breathed within the city.

“And they **utterly destroyed all that was in the city**, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the **sword**.”-- **Joshua 6:21**

“The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan: ‘Thou shalt smite them, and **utterly destroy** them.’ Deuteronomy 7:2. ‘Of the cities of these people, . . . thou shalt save alive **nothing that breatheth**.’ Deuteronomy 20:16.”

It has been suggested that *all* of the walls fell flat; every one of them. I have not been able to find the evidence that supports that conclusion; either in the Spirit of Prophecy or the bible. In fact the bible states that “the **wall**” *singular* “fell down flat”. And the SOP states:

“The walls of solid stone, with their massive towers and battlements, tottered and heaved from their foundations, and with a crash fell in ruin to the earth. The inhabitants of Jericho were paralyzed with terror, and the hosts of Israel marched in and took possession of the city.” -- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 491.1

Yes, in this statement there is clearly more than *one* wall represented as falling down contrasted with the bible account in Joshua. However, there are not any quotes or further evidence to suggest; much less support, the theory that ALL of the walls were thrown down. In fact, the bible describes the circumstances surrounding the house of Rahab; that was poised atop the wall of Jericho, in a way that rejects that theory. After the walls were cast down and the army of God climbed the walls and entered through the windows and destroyed every living creature except those in Rahab's house, notice what Joshua says to the two who made the covenant with Rahab:

“But Joshua had said unto **the two men** that had spied out the country, **Go into** the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies **went in**, and **brought out** Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.”-- **Joshua 6:22-23**

If Rahab's house, being poised atop the wall of Jericho, came down with ALL of the walls, and yet everyone survived without injury and the house remained intact, then that at the very least would have been a miracle worthy of even the slightest mention in either the SOP or the bible. But they are both silent.

The men of Joshua are told to enter the house; therefore it was still intact, and bring out those who were in the house; revealing that everyone in the house was alive and well and could walk; and bring them out of the city to a safe place.

I believe that the much more plausible and reasonable conclusion, based on the evidence in scripture and the SOP, is that enough of the walls fell to render them defenseless and exposed them to the armies of God but that certain portions remained intact. Specifically, but not limited to, that portion that Rahab's house rested upon. And it is highly probable that there were other homes next to hers on the wall still intact.

The house of Rahab was to be delivered from the general destruction because of her faithfulness and this alone would have warranted God leaving that portion of the wall intact if not other sections as well. **“I will uphold thee** with the right hand of my righteousness.” [Isaiah 41:10]

But beyond that is the fact that the city was not so utterly decimated structurally that attempts to rebuild it were not made; even in the face of the curse pronounced upon it. In fact, not only was it rebuilt but the waters also were restored by God:

“Five centuries passed. The spot lay desolate, accursed of God. Even **the springs** that had made residence in this portion of the valley so desirable suffered the blighting effects of the curse. But in the days of Ahab's apostasy, when through Jezebel's influence the worship of Ashtoreth was revived, **Jericho**, the ancient seat of this worship, **was rebuilt**, though at a fearful cost to the builder. Hiel the Bethelite ‘laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord.’ 1 Kings 16:34.”

“Not far from Jericho, in the midst of fruitful groves, was one of the schools of the prophets, and thither, after the ascension of Elijah, Elisha went. During his sojourn among them the men of the city came to the prophet and said, ‘Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but **the water is nought**, and the ground barren.’ The spring that in former years had been pure and life-giving, and had contributed largely to the water supply of the city and the surrounding district, **was now unfit for use**.

“In response to the plea of the men of Jericho, Elisha said, ‘Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein.’ Having received this, ‘he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, **Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters**; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.’ 2 Kings 2:19-21.

“The healing of the waters of Jericho was accomplished, not by any wisdom of man, but by the miraculous interposition of God. Those who had rebuilt the city were undeserving of the favor of Heaven; yet He who ‘maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,’ saw fit in this instance to reveal, through this token of compassion, His willingness to heal Israel of their spiritual maladies. Matthew 5:45.” -- *Prophets and Kings*, 230.1

“...and **they shall march** every one on his ways, and they shall **not break their ranks**:”

Consider what becomes of God’s people at the Sunday law or “day of the Lord as described in *Early Writings*, 270:

“Said the angel, ‘Look ye!’ My attention was then turned to the **company** I had seen, who were **mightily shaken**. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were **clothed with an armor** from their head to their feet. They **moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers**. Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. They had obtained the victory, and it called forth from them the deepest gratitude and holy, sacred joy...

“I heard those clothed with **the armor** speak forth the truth with great power (*Loud Cry*). It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the **loud cry** of the third angel.’” -- {EW 270.4}

WOUNDED BY THE SWORD?

“Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the **sword**, they shall **not be wounded**.” (Verse 8)

What is the “sword” to symbolize? We must answer this question correctly in order to gain a clear insight as to who this army really is. And this cannot be interpreted to mean a *literal* sword or we break the rules established by our pioneers which were endorsed by heaven.

This *sword* is to be recognized as a symbol of something else. We have to find a *bible* definition of a *sword* that fits, as close as possible, the context of the story found in Joel. The bible reveals three prominent definitions. One is the “king of the North” who were employed to scatter God’s people for breaking the Holy covenant. A second is a military power or plague, in general, sent to destroy. And lastly, it is God’s word.

If we employ the definition where a sword is the “king of the North”, then we are saying that Rome will fall upon Rome at the end of the world and not be wounded. That does not make sense or fit the context. If we employ that symbol as another army or plague, that too doesn’t make sense given the context of the story. But if we allow the *sword* to be a symbol of God’s word, then things begin to come into focus.

You and I are wounded when we fall upon the *sword* as a sinner and are separated from the sin in our lives. The sword “wounds” because it divides and separates the sinner from sin.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the **sword** of the Spirit, **which is the word of God**:”--
Ephesians 6:17

“For **the word of God** is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, **piercing** even to the **dividing** asunder of **soul** and **spirit**, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”-- **Hebrews 4:12**

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but **a sword**.”--
Matthew 10:34

Because the “sword” is symbolic of the “Word,” we therefore have license to replace the word “sword” with the word “Rock”; because they are referring to the same Person—Jesus. Doing this, it would read: “and when they fall upon the Rock, they shall not be wounded (*or broken*).” So one of the telling characteristics about this army is that they are not “broken” or “wounded” when they fall upon the “Rock” Christ Jesus; who is most assuredly that “sword” or—the Word of God! And because Rome has not been separated from their sins, they WOULD be wounded if they fell upon the sword.

Why aren’t the 144k wounded? Because at the Sunday law they were eternally separated from their sins as a result of falling upon the Sword prior to the NSL; that’s the work of the sword or “word” of God when wielded by the Spirit of God. Sister White informs us that “When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.”-- {5T 216.1}

But how is the “sword” to impact the “king of the north” in “the day of the Lord”?

“For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin (*Pagan, Babylonian worship ceases*). Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, **not of a mean man**, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited. And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose **fire is in Zion**, and his **furnace in Jerusalem**.”-- **Isaiah 31:7-9**

The “sword” and the “fire” are one in the same. It’s the word of God—the Loud Cry message. Both are described as consuming the wicked; or in this instance, the king of the north—Assyria:

“For by **fire** and by his **sword** will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.”-- **Isaiah 66:16**

“Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will **burn** her [*Babylon’s*] chariots in the smoke, and the **sword** shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.”-- **Nahum 2:13**

“There shall the **fire** devour thee; the **sword** shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts.”--
Nahum 3:15

In “that day”; the Day of the Lord, when the 144k are lifted up as an ensign, the “sword”, not of a mean man, shall *devour* the Assyrian or king of the north. “Not of a mean man” points us to the people of God that have “no guile” in their mouths and are that “ensign” that is lifted up at the Sunday law or “day of the Lord”. As the Assyrian is confronted with the loud cry message, or the “sword”, and refuses to stand on the side of Christ, it will “devour him” spiritually. Isaiah is teaching us the same thing that Joel and all of the other prophets are.

We have already dealt with the fire earlier in this study, so notice what the prophet Isaiah has to say in harmony with Joel's testimony in chapter two. This passage states that the "*ensign*" is both **Zion** and **Jerusalem** and that there is a "*fire*" within both. That to me is fascinating because Joel also teaches that Jesus is in the midst of both **Zion** and **Jerusalem**. And Christ is the "Word" or refiners "*fire*" in Malachi chapter three. So when Jesus as a "*fire*" is in the midst of **Jerusalem** and **Zion**, it is a harmonious description of the same condition as described in Isaiah.

THEY SHALL RUN...

"They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief."-- **Joel 2:7-9**

The people of God were told "...the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall **ascend up** every man **straight before him**" (Joshua 6:5) or: "they shall march every one on his ways" (Joel 2:7) or: "they shall walk everyone in his path" (Joel 2:8).

After the walls of Jericho fell, as we learned from Joshua 6:21, the army of God "utterly destroyed ALL that was in the city". This was the command given them by Christ. Because all of the walls had not been cast down, and there still remained those who sought refuge in their houses upon the tops of the wall from the invaders, this army had also, out of necessity, to ascend these walls in order to fulfill their commission—to destroy every breathing thing; except Rahab's house.

WHY THE SCARLET THREAD

Another vital clue, that strengthens the logical conclusion that there were indeed other houses upon the other remaining walls, was that in order to ensure that the armies of God did not destroy those within Rahab's house in the onslaught; they were to bind a "line of scarlet thread in the window". Are we to conclude that this was done in order to help them locate Rahab's house as they were sorting through the rubble in the aftermath of ALL the walls falling down? Or can we see that this thread would be visible to the armies of God that would be running upon the tops of the walls, going from rooftop to rooftop and entering "in at the windows like a thief" to destroy every living thing?

"Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him."-- **Joshua 2:18-19**

And when they reached the tops of the walls and climbed "up upon the houses", they would have to enter in by the windows in order for it to be "as a thief". The only ones to be spared were those who knew to put the scarlet chord—not upon their door, but upon the window; as this was to be the avenue that God's army would be commissioned to employ in order to enter "like a thief".

There are some that point to the description: "like a thief" and conclude that it's Rome because they are clearly marked as a "robber" in Daniel 11, and if a "robber" then by default a "thief". But that's only one approach to the word "thief".

Are we so quick to forget that Jesus comes for the wicked "**as a thief in the night**"? And if the 144k are representatives of Christ at the end of the world, bringing a life or death message, then while they are climbing in the window, where they are best able to surprise the occupants, bringing destruction upon those inside, they too are coming in as a "thief"! The destruction they bring is accomplished by the *sword* or "word of God" in the form of the Loud Cry message! In Joel, Zephaniah and many other books, it is portrayed as a "fire" as well. Also, in Daniel two it is represented as a stone striking the image and breaking in pieces.

Nothing living was to be spared EXCEPT those that placed the scarlet thread upon their window. In this, God is showing us that He knew in advance that it was His people who were going to be entering in through the window; He had them bind a scarlet chord in the window so that when His armies came through they would not enter in through the wrong window of Rahab's house and destroy every living thing.

This work of placing the "scarlet" thread in **the window** is, in many ways, similar in purpose to the time when the Israelites were to place—not a "crimson" thread, but the "crimson" blood upon **the door** post in order to be spared when the angel of death passed by. The sign being placed upon the door post verses the window signifies that they were all given an advance notice; the day and the hour, and given the opportunity to be spared. But the people of Jericho were not told in advance the day or the hour; they could only witness the fast fulfilling signs around them, and seeing that destruction was imminent, find their way to Rahab's house. But the majority did not enter into the safety of Rahab's home.

This account in Joshua is pregnant with parallels to the story of Joel primarily because they are both speaking about the identical time period; the day of the Lord, beginning at the Sunday law. When I read verses 7-9 in Joel chapter two, I can't help but see the clear parallels, language and circumstances that are found in Joshua chapter six. God's army, the 144k, are simply carrying out His orders in both accounts. And likewise, they are "strong that executeth his word" (Joel 2:11).

Notice how the work of Christ in the overthrow of Jericho is prefiguring the work that those who are perfectly reflecting His character at the end of the world will accomplish:

"Victory will attend the third angel's message. As the Captain of the Lord's host tore down the walls of Jericho, so will the Lord's commandment-keeping people triumph, and all opposing elements be defeated."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 410.1

In summary:

1. The overthrow of Jericho is prefiguring the overthrow of Babylon at the end of the world.
2. Jericho is one of many cities that Joshua encountered in his quest to rid God's Canaan land of His enemies, and the army of the 144k will, in the language of Zephaniah, have to also meet and overcome many "high towers" and "fenced cities," like Jericho, in their quest to finally rid God's Canaan land; the earth, of the enemies of God. That process will end when Michael stands up and probation has closed for all mankind. Then their physical destruction begins—Ezekiel 9!
3. It was an army, small in number, that Christ employed to overthrow Jericho and rid the "land" of His enemies. Their victory was only accomplished because they were made "mighty" as Christ manifested His power, through them, in the Loud Cry message.

And it will yet again be God's army, comparatively small in number, who will overthrow the anti-type of Jericho here at the end of the world; Babylon, because of Christ manifesting His power through them in the Loud Cry warning message.

"In that day it shall be said to **Jerusalem**, Fear thou not: and to **Zion**, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."-- **Zephaniah 3:16-17**

THE EARTH SHALL SHAKE BEFORE THEM...

In Joel 2:10-11 we begin to see a closing description concerning this army. And I believe that it is here in these two verses; when combined with chapter three verses fifteen through seventeen, that the prophet Joel identifies beyond any reasonable doubt who this army truly is.

We read in verse ten that “the earth shall quake before them”. I have continually maintained a position that the “message” of the 144k is what is doing all of the damage; either as a “fire” or as a “stone” in Daniel two or as a “sword”. So when we come to verse ten and discover that there is a quaking that occurs before them, I easily reason that this is the “shaking” that the message creates as the “loud cry” that goes forth from them—thus “before” them.

But in order for us to fully understand verses ten and eleven, we have to also include their companion verses found in Joel 3:15-16, because they are a repeat and enlargement of verses ten and eleven.

“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and 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.”-- **Joel 3:15-16**

CHRIST UTTERS HIS VOICE

When we combine these verses with Joel 2:10-11, we can see that Jesus will clearly utter His voice. However, He utters His voice twice. Let’s understand how:

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice **then shook the earth**: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet **once more I shake** not the earth only, but also heaven.”-- **Hebrews 12:25-26**

“But when the wrath of God comes upon the persecutors who are found enforcing the sign or mark of the beast [*After Michael stands up*], **then** they will realize the importance of the Sabbath,—the seal of the living God. They who turn away from that which the Lord spoke when his voice shook the earth [Prior to Michael standing up-Loud Cry], will confess their fatal error when his voice shall shake the heavens and the earth [Day and the hour given-7th plague]. Hebrews 12:25, 26; **Joel 3:9-16**, and others. See also pages 639, 640 of this book.” – {GC88 691.3}

First Jesus will speak through His people beginning with the Sunday law or “day of the Lord”. When His voice is heard it will be through the Loud Cry warning message being directed at those in Babylon. His voice is not literal, as He is in the Most Holy place until the work of the Angel with the writer’s inkhorn is completed. That voice is unmistakably that of Christ given through the 144k as He is pleading with all nations [Joel 3:1-2].

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”-- **John 10:16**

This is why “the earth shall quake before them”; because they give a “shaking” message. And what causes the first shaking within Adventism also causes the shaking among those in Babylon; it’s the straight testimony of the True Witness—Christ or the Word of God.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the **straight testimony** called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth **the straight truth**. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.” {*Christian Experience and Teachings*, 176.1}

Secondly,

“When He [Jesus] shall come to the earth **again**, He will shake ‘not the earth only, but also heaven.’ ‘The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage.’ ‘The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll;’ ‘the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.’ But ‘the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.’ Hebrews 12:26; Isaiah 24:20; 34:4; 2 Peter 3:10; Joel 3:16. {*Desire of Ages*, 780.1}

When Christ shakes the earth the second time it will be a literal shaking and will occur only after Michael has stood up in Daniel 12:1.

BEFORE HIS ARMY

The words: “And the Lord shall utter his voice **before** his army” is the repeating of the words found in the verse before it: “the earth shall quake **before** them”. It’s the same people in both verses—it’s the army that’s under discussion.

What causes the earth to *quake* before them in verse ten is understood only as you combine it with verse eleven. And it’s then that we discover that it’s only because “the Lord shall utter his voice” **before** them or **before** His army, that a quaking or shaking will occur.

WHO IS THE ARMY OF JOEL 2:2-11?

Only by combining Joel 2:10-11 with 3:15-17; written by the same author and speaking on the same topic, will we see that Joel tells us specifically who this army is.

In 2:11 we can see that the army referenced is the very same army that has been under discussion leading up to these verses (10-11). In verse eleven we are told that the Lord shall utter his voice “before” His army. This verse, when compared to the verses in 3:15-17 again state that He will utter His voice, but in these verses we are told where He *is* when He utters His voice—and this is a crucial clue to see: “The Lord also shall roar **out of** Zion and utter his voice **from** Jerusalem” Joel 3:16.

It would seem easy to see that you cannot roar “*out of*” Zion unless you are “*in Zion*”, and also that you could not utter your voice “from” Jerusalem unless you were “in” Jerusalem. So when we combine these verses with those in chapter two, we now can discover where Jesus is when He utters His voice “before” His army.

“In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. **The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty**; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”-- **Zephaniah 3:16-17**

One of the points that I attempted to make prominent in the beginning of this study was that the strong emphasis that I see Joel making in describing the army in chapter two, is that these people were seen as “a great” “and a strong” people (verse 2), as a “strong people” in verse 5, and they are “mighty men” in verse 7.

So, clearly the emphasis is upon their *strength* or *might* and NOT their numbers. And now we can see if we choose, why that is. It’s because *Christ* is their strength and their might; and it is His power and presence alone that makes them mighty!

This is, at the very least, one of the main objectives of Christ in writing this way in Joel 2, in my opinion. It is to emphasize the dire need to put away ALL sin and behold Christ that He might be perfectly formed within and we become part of that army that we are told to “strive with all the power that God has given us” to be among.

“We are to copy no human being. There is no human being wise enough to be our criterion. We are to **look to the man Christ Jesus**, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is **the pattern man**. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. We may behold Christ to good purpose. We may safely look to Him; for He is all-wise. As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.

“Let us strive with all the **power** that God has given us to be among **the hundred and forty-four thousand** (RH March 9, 1905).”-- {7BC 970.9}

Most all of us understand the bible principle that by beholding we become changed into the same image. We are not counseled to look to Rome, but to “look to the man Christ Jesus” and in so doing “we may be changed into His likeness”. While I want to be very aware of the work and plans of Rome in opposing God’s people, I want to be much more aware of the work that Christ is attempting to accomplish in His people in order to prepare them to be among the 144k—the army of God! My keeping abreast of the Jesuits plans and intents moment by moment will never save me. Keeping up with the latest conspiracy theories will never bind my heart to Christ’s with chords of love. We are counseled to keep our attention and eyes focused on Christ. I do not however, by this statement, want you to conclude that I feel that we do not need to be aware of the role of the enemy as revealed in Rome’s final attack. I simply think that more energy should be spent in beholding Christ in order to be prepared to meet with Him in peace!

It is my personal conviction that Joel is intentionally detailing the work of this army in order that we may see, in contrast to the drunkards of chapter one, what we may become and accomplish through the “mighty” power of Christ formed within; and be encouraged!!

Sure we must be aware of the work of Rome in opposing God’s people, but fear has never brought true conversion; only conformity. By beholding Christ we may become changed. In Daniel 11:40-45 we aren’t just given a view of the armies of Rome, we are shown as well the army of God that will “overcome them” (Rev. 17:14). This to me is significant because Truth will prevail friends and Christ wants us to realize and remember that and believe that.

Joel wants to warn Zion of the shortness of time and the need to promptly put away sin before the Sunday law/Day of the Lord arrives.

Notice that the “army” of Joel 2:11 are strong only because they “executeth his word”. This is where their power comes from: “For I am not ashamed of **the gospel** of Christ: for **it is the power of God** unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). We have to allow the “Word” of God to be the Lord of our hearts and minds if we expect to be an overcomer.

ROARS?

“The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem;”—**Joel 3:16**

What is the bible teaching us when it says that Jesus “roars”? The bible teaches us that when we see Christ roaring He is unsealing the word of God to His people and sending an increase of knowledge; just as He did in the Millerite history.

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a **lion roareth**: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”-- **Revelation 10:1-3**

“The mighty Angel who instructed John was no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left upon the dry land, shows the part that He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan.”-- {19MR 319.3}

In order to understand why Christ roared, we have to back up to chapter five in Revelation where we see Him described as “the Lion” in verse five. We’ll notice that He is unsealing the seven seals that have the word of God sealed up to His people. So when we see Him roar, we are to understand that He is in the process of opening up the word of God to His people. And that *truth* was to be formulated into a life and death message.

It is also important to understand that when Christ roared as a lion in the Millerite history and unsealed the bible that had been sealed up due to the “teachings, traditions and maxims of man”, it was not Christ personally; it was the people of God giving a life or death warning message. So too, when Christ again roars in the “Day of the Lord”, it again will not be Christ personally but again the people of God, the 144k, giving a life or death warning message. And it is described as Christ roaring “out of Zion” and uttering His voice “from Jerusalem” in the book of Joel.

Also notice in Joel 2:11 that, in reference to the “day of the Lord”, a question is posed: “**who can abide it**”? We understand that the “day of the Lord” is the point in time where Christ begins to pour out His “*wrath*” upon those whose cup of iniquity is full. So wrath is a characteristic associated with the day of the Lord. Now take notice that this same question is posed in Revelation 6:17: “For the great day of his wrath is come; and **who shall be able to stand**?”

The answer that comes in the next three verses answers both questions:

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have **sealed the servants of our God** in their foreheads.”-- **Revelation 7:1-3**

The sealing of the “servants” in Revelation chapter seven begins officially when the test arrives at the Sunday law. And it’s at the SL that the “Day of the Lord” and His “wrath” commences; and remember that they too are progressive. Therefore, the answer to the question “who can abide it”? is the 144k!

ROARING FIRE

The prophet Amos, under inspiration, also wrote concerning Christ roaring out of Zion and uttering His voice from Jerusalem (Amos 1:2); just as Joel had. But when Amos writes concerning the “roar” of Christ, he makes us to understand that it’s not a good thing. In fact he says that as a result of the “roar”; or the uttering of Christ’s voice, that “the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither” (ibid.)

Amos then begins to systematically teach us, through eleven consecutive descriptions, of the effects of that *roar* within the different tribes depicted in chapters one and two—that a “fire” is started or created by that “roar”. “But I will send a fire...” is connected with each account.

We have already detailed earlier in this study that that fire is the Loud Cry warning message. So Amos is simply teaching a message that is in harmony with and supports the testimony of Joel and many other prophets as it has been presented in this study.

To say that Christ “roars” from Zion and “utters” His voice from Jerusalem, is a parallel description of the Loud Cry warning message that goes forth to Babylon. It again will be an increase of knowledge because of the Lion of the tribe of Judah unsealing God’s word and it is proclaimed to those in Babylon and is again a testing message. In both Joel and Amos, this fire behaves and impacts the people as a fire would.

So then, when Christ “roars”, a fire is sent forth as a result. Not only that, but the fire also “consumes” in each and every account—just as in Joel, Zephaniah and many other books of the bible.

SUMMARY OF JOEL

I understand that Joel, in chapter one, is addressing the leadership of Adventism, the “ancient men”, and “all the inhabitants of the land” of Adventism. In his address, he is openly warning the drunkards of the church that the Sunday law/DOL is “nigh at hand”. I firmly believe that the “nation” that is come up upon His land, the Glorious land of America, is Rome as it fits perfectly with every other connected truth we teach, and that they enter through the Sunday law in America—Daniel 11:41.

Therefore it is they who accomplish Joel 1:7 upon the drunkards of Adventism, while the “sober” of Adventism; “Edom, Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon”, escape out of his hand. But Joel’s method of writing, in chapter one, reveals to us that he is intentionally and singly addressing the circumstances connected with the outcome of the *drunkards*; and not the *sober*. There is neither an acknowledgement of, nor inference to, the “sober” in that description of destruction, gloom and doom that I can find. I personally believe that the reason for this is because as he begins to repeat and enlarge upon chapter one in chapter two. He begins by describing the manifestation of the two classes; and from there he sets out to detail the work to be accomplished by Christ within His army.

When Joel writes chapter one, his account extends from just prior to the SL/DOL to the time when the plagues are being poured out after Michael stands up. This, I feel, should be considered a complete and comprehensive view detailing the outcome of the “drunkards”. But when he gets to chapter two, he begins to repeat his description of the DOL and begins to detail what becomes of those who were found to be “sober” when the DOL arrived.

When that day arrives there will be two classes that are revealed; for one class it will be “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness”, while at the very same time, it will be seen entirely different by the “sober”. To them it will be a day “as the morning spread upon the mountains”; because for them, their “light has come” and “the glory of the Lord is risen” upon them. [Joel 2:2; Isaiah 60:1-5]

I believe this people that are “mighty” and “strong” and “great” are deemed as such by inspiration only because “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save” [Zephaniah 3:17].

I believe that the *fire* of Joel one is the very same *fire* referenced in chapter two. We can see that when Joel is concluding his warning to the drunkards and referencing the fire in Joel 1:19-20, that they are represented as having already accomplished their intended purposes. In support of this understanding, Sister White places the fulfillment of those specific verses within the seven plagues time period. So with this evidence in hand, I deduce that Joel is simply pointing us to the after effects of the identical *fire* in Joel two that is to represent the Loud cry message that began to go forth at the very same point in time that the drunkards were being cut off. When we understand that Joel is repeating and enlarging upon the day of the Lord in chapter two and thereby detailing the different outcomes within Adventism; the “drunkards” in chapter one and the “sober” in chapter two, then this interpretation becomes much more plausible.

I believe that the *fire* is in fact the “Loud Cry” that goes forth from the **only true** army of God, at a time when there are two armies on the battlefield; the armies of Rome and the army of the 144k as described in Ezekiel 37; or in the language of Daniel 11:40-45: “the king of the north” vs. those who give the “tidings out of the east and out of the north”.

I recognize the 144k as representing the horse in Joel 2:4; based in part on the supporting evidence given in Zechariah 10:1-7.

I see Joel 2:7-9 as a parallel to Joshua 6 and the overthrow of Jericho due to the parallel subject matter, language and activities.

I see clearly that Joel, by combining the verses in Joel 2:10-11 with Joel 3:15-17, is telling us plainly that the army of Joel 2:2-11 is “Zion” and “Jerusalem” at the end of the world.

I then see Joel, as he concludes his description of the two classes that are manifested when the Sunday Law arrives, pleading with the people yet again to “turn ye”. In the verses that follow, Christ continues this call to repentance and also pledges, if they do turn, to give them a full outpouring of the rain.

In verse twenty Christ promises those who are found sober when He comes, at the SL, that He “will remove far off from” them “the *northern* army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up”. This, I see, parallels Daniel 11:45 “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

I personally do not believe that there is any grammatical justification, in verse twenty, for concluding that this “northern army” *has* to be the army described in verses 2-11. Instead, I see that this is simply a promise that Christ will drive far off from them, the “sober” that is, “the northern army” or the “nation” that came up upon “his land” in chapter one and is, in the language of Daniel, seeking to “go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many” at a time when the Loud Cry is going forth.

It is my conviction that Joel is writing in harmony with the account that Daniel gives in Daniel 11:40-45. Daniel portrays two armies on the field after the Sunday law arrives; the army of the 144k along with the armies of Rome. And when you compare the language of Joel to Daniel, they are seen accomplishing the very same work. It should not be a hard thing to see that the events in Joel parallel those in Daniel 11.

A SECOND WITNESS?

I understand that the theme of Zephaniah centers on the “Day of the Lord”. If that understanding is accurate then we should expect that he and Joel will confirm each other; though not necessarily upon every point.

When Zephaniah finishes his genealogy in verse one, he immediately dives into the heart of his warning message: “I will utterly consume all *things* from off the land, saith the LORD.” I see that, in contrast to Joel, Zephaniah is really emphasizing the particulars associated with the *wrath* of God as revealed in the “Day of the Lord”. He often employs the word “consume” in connection with the destruction of the wicked upon His land. This word is likewise employed by Joel but in connection with the *fiery* message of the loud cry. In fact, if we go to the last verse of this first chapter, we discover that “fire” is also the very same tool that Zephaniah states He will employ to rid the land of His enemies: “...but the whole land shall be devoured by the **fire** of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land”.

As one reads the account of Zephaniah, they can’t help but notice a strong emphasis being placed upon the “land”. Why is that? What is the purpose? Jesus, in order to possess His kingdom in its fullness, has to rid the *land*—the world, of His enemies; all of the prophets teach us this. This world is a type of Canaan; where the new city Jerusalem will eventually reside; our eternal home. In fact this planet, as I understand it, will become the center of the whole universe. The new city will reside upon this tiny atom of a planet; wherein Christ will be the temple and all will gather from one new moon to another to worship our Father and Jesus.

Each of the bible writers are emphasizing the same theme of thought, and that is that the enemy has to be utterly destroyed from off His land! Joel teaches this, Zephaniah teaches this; it's a theme woven throughout the pages of our bibles.

One of the clearest portrayals of this work to be accomplished was recorded in the book of Joshua; wherein is detailed the overthrow of Jericho. I see in the book of Zephaniah many parallels to that record which I will not place in this document.

THE SACRIFICE PREPARED?

Verses two through six detail the extent of the work of Christ in *consuming* the enemy from off the land; both in and out of the church. Then we come to verse seven. I understand that the DOL begins at the SL. It is at the SL that character is revealed and we either receive the mark or the seal. I have heard some conclude that the *sacrifice* that is prepared for the DOL is Christ. I believe the bible teaches differently, but before we come to that let me address what the sword is.

The DOL is unmistakably the point in time when Jesus begins to pour out His **wrath** as a result of the cup of iniquity being filled by the fourth generation; and the *wicked* are to be destroyed thereby. The first to feel this **wrath** will be His people because Paul teaches us plainly that whether it be *curses* or *blessings*, God always rewards the Jew first; THEN the Gentile:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”-- **Romans 1:16**

“**Tribulation** and **anguish**, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But **glory**, **honour**, and **peace**, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”-- **Romans 2:9-10**

I have stated earlier that the *sword* in Joel 2:8 is symbolic of the “Word” or more specifically the Loud Cry message. This I believe the bible teaches is His “wrath”.

Some may struggle with this position as they remember that in the bible, God has employed the armies of Babylon, the Assyrians and others to be His “sword” that would bring destruction upon God’s people. But what I have noticed that the bible also teaches, is that in the end, there will be a reversal. It will not be the armies of Babylon until the end doing the work of destruction, because at some point they themselves will be destroyed by the “sword” of the Lord and it will not be accomplished by themselves but instead, God’s true army.

An example of this is set forth in the book of Nahum. In the account of Nahum we are shown the overthrow of Babylon—the king of the north at the end of the world as typified in the overthrow of Nineveh. Because the overthrow of Nineveh was accomplished by a confederacy of forces and not by only one; with the Medes being the main power, the term “sword” could not be accurately applied to the king of the north alone. In Nahum, he tells us that a *sword* shall devour in addition to being *burned*.

“Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.”-- **Nahum 2:13**

Certainly we do not suppose that Babylon will bring down Babylon at the end of the world. The perfect fulfillment of the *sword* that God will use in the DOL will be His faithful army—the 144k; specifically the Loud cry message. It is during the DOL time period that Rome comes to an end and none shall help! So the sword could not represent Rome in that time period. In the end, Babylon will be destroyed by a *sword*. Jeremiah teaches this plainly. After a portrayal of how Jesus will employ Babylon as a tool of punishment against His people in Jeremiah 25:9-11 for seventy years, he then gives us a description of the inevitable fate of Babylon herself:

“And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And **I will bring upon that land all my words** which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied **against all the nations.**”-- **Jeremiah 25:12-13**

We are told that all that Jeremiah has prophesied against the other nations will also be pronounced against Babylon at the end of the seventy-year prophecy. We are then told that Jesus will cause all nations to drink something. It’s “the wine cup”! What is wine? Well, if it’s fermented we call it false doctrine—the teachings of men. But if it is unfermented, then it’s pure doctrine—the word of God. In the verses that follow we discover that the cup that they will all drink from is; in the language of Christ, His “sword” that he will “send among them”!

“For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this **fury** at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of *the sword* **that I will send among them**. Then took I the cup at the LORD’S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me:”-- **Jeremiah 25:15-17**

I’m not sure if you caught it, but there are two extremely powerful points that Jeremiah just made:

1. The wine, or the *word* of God, IS His fury! [“...the wine cup of this fury”]
2. The cup filled with the word of God; His fury, is also called His SWORD!

So what does that mean? From this we should see that when Jesus “pours out” His wrath when the DOL arrives, He is simply pouring out His word upon a wicked people and it is coming from the 144k. The result will be that the wicked will “drink, and be moved, and be mad” [Jeremiah 25:16]. On top of that, they will HAVE to drink it; they will have no choice: “And they shall drink”!

The cup of the wine of His fury; or wrath, is the sword that all of the earth, without exception, will encounter when the DOL arrives; “*and nothing shall escape them*”:

“Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; **Drink** ye, and **be drunken**, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.”-- **Jeremiah 25:27**

“And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink. For, lo, I **begin to bring** evil on the city which is called by my name [*Judgment begins at the house of the Lord*], and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a **sword** upon **all the inhabitants of the earth**, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes [*Garments of red- Nahum 2:3; Isaiah 63:1-6*], against **all** the inhabitants of the earth. **A noise** [*Loud cry*] shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, **he will plead with all flesh** [*Joel 3:1-2*]; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.”-- **Jeremiah 25:28-31**

Friends, this passage is stuffed full of parallels to the themes I have already set forth. Jeremiah confirms:

1. That all nations will be forced to drink this “wine cup” of Christ’s “**fury**”.
2. His **fury** first begins to be poured out on Adventism [*Zephaniah 1:12-13*].

3. That wine cup of **fury** is referred to as the “sword” that will come to all nations.
4. The *shouting* and *roaring* is unmistakably pointing us to the “Loud Cry”; when the “shout” paralleling the shout at Jericho is given.
5. To be given “to the sword” is when we “fall like a pleasant vessel”; by our choice we decide our own fate.

We had to cover these points first in order to lay the right foundation for who the sacrifice is in connection with the DOL. Now let’s consider the DOL in Jeremiah 46:10:

“For this is **the day of the Lord** GOD of hosts, a day of **vengeance**, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and **the sword shall devour**, and it shall be satiate and made **drunk** with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts **hath a sacrifice in the north country** by the river Euphrates.

“Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; *for* thou shalt not be cured.”-- **Jeremiah 46:1-10**

In this passage concerning the DOL, Christ has a sacrifice; but it’s not Himself. According to the verses that precede it, that sacrifice is actually *Egypt*; a symbol of the world. What I personally see is that the “sacrifice” that has been prepared are all of “the wicked” who have rejected the truth. And their lives are offered up in exchange for the righteous.

“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee [*SL*], I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine [*sealed*]. When thou passest through the waters [*The world-Babylon; Jeremiah 46:8*], I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through **the fire** [*Loud Cry message?*], thou shalt not be burned [*thou shall not be “wounded”*]; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: **I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.**”-- **Isaiah 43:1-4** [emphasis supplied]

Another testimony to this theory is found in Ezekiel. Beginning in chapter 38, Ezekiel is issuing a warning to Gog; the chief prince of Meshech, and Magog. I understand these to be symbolic of all the wicked during the DOL [*Revelation 20:8*]. We take up the story in Ezekiel 39:1-:

“Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from **the north parts**, and will bring thee upon the **mountains of Israel**: And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. **Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.** Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.”-- **Ezekiel 39:1-5**

As the wicked come against the glorious “holy mountain” to destroy, they will find that it is they who are destroyed. They comprise the *sacrifice* that is given for the lives of the righteous. They also represent Egypt.

“And I will send a **fire** on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD. So will I make my **holy** name known **in the midst of** my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my **holy** name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One **in** Israel.”-- **Ezekiel 39:6-7**

But Ezekiel is much more specific and detailed than that. Notice:

“And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every *beast of the field*, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side **to my sacrifice** that I do sacrifice for you, even **a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel**, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the **mighty**, and drink the blood of the **princes** of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table **with horses and chariots**, with **mighty men**, and with all **men of war**, saith the Lord GOD.”-- **Ezekiel 39:17-20**

The language and focus of Ezekiel should be obvious. The description given includes the very things that are detailed in Joel and Zephaniah as well as many other books concerning the DOL. So, with this before you, can you begin to see why I feel that the sacrifice in Zephaniah is not Christ; but instead, the wicked who rise up to resist the Loud Cry warning message? They are given as a sacrifice for the lives of the righteous. But there is yet another testimony:

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the **fowls** that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto **the supper** of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of **kings**, and the flesh of **captains**, and the flesh of **mighty men**, and the flesh of **horses**, and of **them that sit on them**, and **the flesh of all men**, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and **their armies**, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”-- **Revelation 19:17-20**

Finally, in Zephaniah 1:7 we discover that at the time when the sacrifice is prepared, “he hath *bid* his guests”. This word “bid” is worth noticing:

שׁוּב

qa ^ dash

kaw-dash'

A primitive root; to *be* (causatively **make**, **pronounce** or **observe as**) **clean** (ceremonially or morally): - appoint, bid, consecrate, dedicate, defile, hallow, (**be**, keep) **holy** (-er, place), keep, prepare, proclaim, purify, **sanctify** (-ied one, self), X wholly.

God’s people become all of the above only when the Sunday law/DOL arrives. And all of those who comprise the “sacrifice” were “prepared” beforehand in the sense that Jesus knows the end from the beginning.

I’m not excluding the theory that the “sacrifice” is Jesus; I just haven’t seen that as a scenario that fits the context—but I’m willing to.

THE PUNISHMENT

“And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the **princes**, and the **king's children**, and all such as are clothed with **strange apparel**. In the same day also will I punish all those that **leap on the threshold**, which fill their masters' **houses** with violence and deceit.”--**Zephaniah 1:8-9**

In these verses I see that those who are punished are the professed people of God; the “*king’s children*,” the “*princes*”. “*All such as are clothed with strange apparel*” would be those within Adventism that, according to John 10, have climbed up some other way into the sheep fold. They have clothed themselves with their own righteousness. But it also mentions a class that leap “*on the threshold*” which I would conclude are those within Adventism that Ezekiel was shown in chapter eight who were involved in pagan worship as this term to “leap upon the threshold” points us to the false prophets of Baal that on Mt. Carmel were leaping and cutting themselves upon the altar.

A NOISE

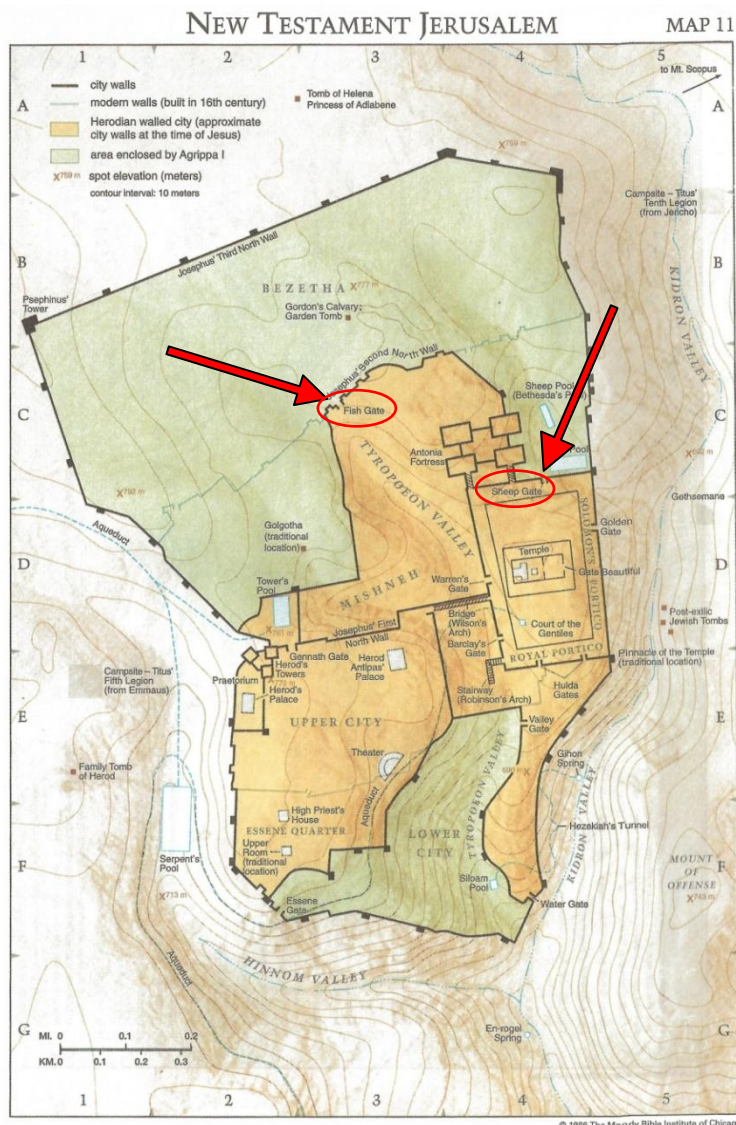
“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills.”--
Zephaniah 1:10

In the past it was stated that this verse claims that there is a “cry from the hills” or “mountain”. But in looking closer at this verse, we are told plainly that there is “the noise of a cry from *the fish gate*” in the DOL or at the SL. And in connection with that cry there is also “an howling from *the second*” gate.

I believe that there is something intentional that Jesus intended to convey in that language. After doing some research on these two gates, this is what I discovered. In the map of Jerusalem to the right, I discovered what was meant by “the fish gate” and “the second” gate. When we look at the map of Jerusalem, you will see that there are only two gates on the northern side of the city; the “fish gate” and the “sheep gate”; or the “second”.

I believe these two gates are symbolic. Jesus called us to be “fisher’s of men”, but he also asked that His disciples “feed His sheep” [John 2:15-17]. However, we have stopped fishing for souls and no longer are able to feed the sheep.

In fact, not only are the shepherds incapable of feeding the sheep, but the bible also teaches us that our shepherds here at the end of the world are eating the very sheep they are supposed to be feeding!



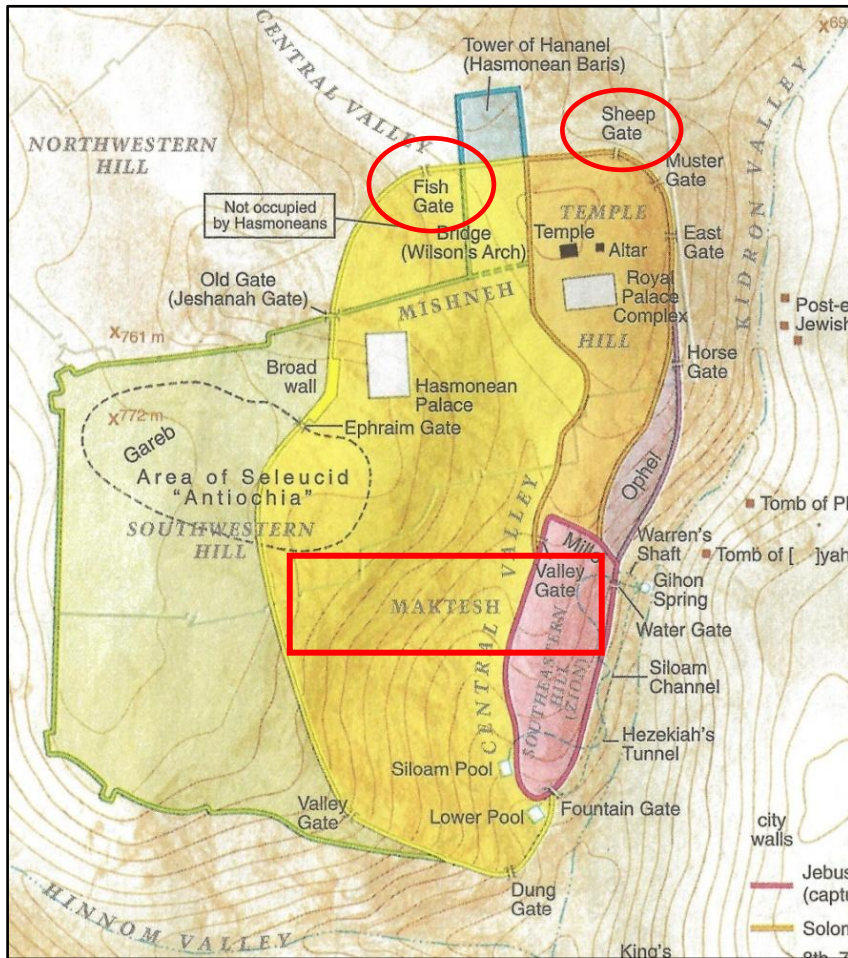
“Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock **from their mouth**, that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith

the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock **in the day that he is among his sheep** that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered **in the cloudy and dark day.**”--

Ezekiel 34:10-12

But why the “cry” that goes up from one gate and a “howl” from the second when the DOL arrives. We have only to include the next sentence: “and a great *crashing* from the hills”.

I apply this “great crashing from the hills” to the “northern armies” that are seen approaching Jerusalem from the north by those who are either at the *fish* gate or the *sheep* gate. This is symbolic of the verses in Joel 1:6-7 where the “nation” of Rome comes up upon His land—the USA at the SL, and the drunkards are told to “awake”



“weep” and “howl”.

The “cry” or “*shriek*” [h6818] that goes up from the *fish* gate occurs because they realize, too late, that they have not fulfilled their commission to be fishers of men; and being on the north side of Jerusalem, they are able to see the northern armies approaching. The “howling” at the *sheep* gate is pointing our attention to the false shepherds and false sheep—the *wolves* in sheep’s clothing within Adventism who “howl” as they too see the enemy approach and realize they too are lost:

“Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the **days of your slaughter** and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have **no way to flee**, nor the principal of the flock **to escape**. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture. And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the LORD. He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.”--
Jeremiah 25:34-38

The *cry* and the *howl* arise because they are lamenting that they have not a strong High Tower any longer to seek shelter in as the king of the north approaches. They, in the language of Joel, are drunk and are about to be cut off and so they “weep and howl” [Joel 1:5].

MAKTESH AND SILVER

“Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.”-- **Zephaniah 1:11**

Maktesh was located in the central valley of the city of Jerusalem (*see map*) and is symbolic of Adventism at the end of the world who have been drinking of the wine of Babylon. They too will howl when “all the merchant people are cut down.” But why will they howl when “they that bear silver are cut off”?

“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Israel**, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes.”-- **Amos 2:6**

The selling of “the righteous for silver” is an expression used to reveal that the *righteous* were **betrayed** by the unrighteous. Joseph was sold into slavery for twenty pieces of silver: “Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt” [Genesis 37:28].

Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver: “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him” [Matthew 26:14-16]

Those who are represented as selling “the righteous for silver” are those who, within Adventism, betray God’s faithful messengers are to bear the last warning message, into slavery; meaning they stripped them of their freedoms or rights and citizenship within Jerusalem/Adventism [*disfellowshipped*]; and they thus became the outcast of Israel.

I WILL SEARCH JERUSALEM

“And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem **with candles**, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.”-- **Zephaniah 1:12-13**

In these verses I see the judgment falling upon those within Adventism as, in a moment, he judges and passes sentence upon the chaff of Adventism. It is worth noticing what He searches them with; it’s the word of God. Jesus—the word of God, is the “sword”, He’s the “fire” and it’s also He that is the “wine cup of His fury”, but in this instance, and accomplishing the same work, He’s that “candle”.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”-- **John 5:22**

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not **my words**, hath one that judgeth him: **the word** that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”-- **John 12:48**

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness **by that man** whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”-- **Acts 17:31**

A DAY OF WRATH

Zephaniah 1:14-15 are verses that I have addressed earlier in the study. The DOL is the context.

HIGH TOWERS

“A day of the **trumpet** and **alarm** against the **fenced cities**, and against the **high towers**.”--
Zephaniah 1:16

As I have stated earlier, the account of the overthrow of Jericho is a parallel to the overthrow of Babylon at the end of the world. Therefore, when Zephaniah is describing the conquest of Babylon at the end of the world, it should not come as a surprise to see him borrowing the same language as Joel in connection with Jericho. But as a confirmation of that theory, notice what he says in 2:5:

“Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; **O Canaan**, the land of the Philistines, **I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.**”-- **Zephaniah 2:5**

Here, Zephaniah is telling us; just as Joshua did, that Canaan is to be destroyed and “there shall be no inhabitant”. He is clearly repeating the story as told by Joshua and he is confirming that the language of chapter one verse sixteen is describing the identical work—ridding Canaan of the enemies of God!

But before I explain how I understand this verse, I want to first reacquaint us with the correct method of bible interpretation. This is where I feel we are getting off track; but maybe it’s me that’s off track.

Miller’s Rules state:

RULE IV- To understand doctrine, bring **all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know**, then let every word have its proper influence, and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in an error. PROOF: Isaiah 28:7–29; 35:8; Proverbs 19:27; Luke 24:27, 44–45; Romans 16:26; James 5:19; 2 Peter 1:19, 29.

If I understand this rule correctly, and I may not so I remain open for correction, in order for me to correctly understand a symbol I first have to recognize that it is in fact to be seen as a symbol. Once I concede to that then I am obligated to go into the bible and become acquainted with all of the bible definitions associated with that symbol. Then I am to bring those different definitions back to the verse in question and determine which one of the definitions most accurately applies; allowing the *context* of the surrounding verses to govern my choice.

When you select a definition for that symbol and seek to apply it, according to Brother Miller, you have to ALSO be able to “form your theory without a contradiction” in order to correctly employ the proof-text method. Many seem to feel that if you are able to employ a verse from the bible to defend your theory—whether it fits the context accurately or not, then you have successfully employed the proof-text method; but that is simply not true. You have only employed it in part.

As an example, in order to determine what the “towers” are in verse 16, we have to go to the bible and allow the bible to define what a tower is. We do this by gathering all of the texts together that employ the word “tower”. Then, in order to apply the Twin Towers to the symbol of “towers” found in verse 16, you would have to be able to produce an example in the bible where “tower” or “towers” is employed representing say, “a symbol of financial strength” or something that you can connect to the towers in NYC. But none of them fit.

Zephaniah 1:16 is given in direct connection with the “day of the Lord”. When the day of the Lord arrives at the SL, he states plainly that “That day is a day of wrath”. And this is the consistent testimony that all of the prophets give.

When we begin to consider these symbols we have to factor in that they are occurring or present in the Day of the Lord because that's the context as established by the preceding verses. So, "A *day* of the trumpet" [v.16] is connecting the Sunday law and a "trumpet", not 9-11 and a "trumpet".

And I say this of course because the Day of the Lord begins at the Sunday law when the cup of Adventism's iniquity; the fourth generation, is filled up and they are the first to be judged and consequently His wrath begins to be poured out there; remembering of course that it is progressive.

Not only is the "trumpet" associated with the SL, but the whole verse is couched in the theme of the SL crisis or—the arrival of the Day of the Lord! It is at the SL that the "trumpet" is blown and the army of God, in the context of Joshua 6, begins to take up the work of ridding "His land" of His enemies; repeating the overthrow of Jericho/Babylon and the entire conquest of Canaan/the earth in chronological order. So what did Joshua do first? They blew the "trumpets" correct? Then what? They gave a "shout" or "Loud cry" right? Well notice the definition of the next word "alarm" as employed in verse sixteen:

t^{er}u^{oo} a^h (ter-oo-aw') From H7321; *clamor*, that is, *acclamation* of joy or **a battle cry**; especially *clangor* of trumpets, as an *alarum*: - alarm, blow (-ing) (of, the) (trumpets), joy, jubile, **loud noise**, rejoicing, **shout** (-ing), (high, joyful) sound (-ing).

The "alarm" against the fenced cities can be correctly understood as the "loud cry" or "shout" against the "fenced cities"! Verse sixteen is emphasizing that the overthrow of Jericho and Canaan at the end of the world **is under way**. And what about "the fenced cities"?

Like Jericho, the many cities that comprise Babylon at the end of the world are symbolized as also having "walls" and "high towers" to cast down. But Christ has pledged Himself to do just that! Listen to the words of Christ that apply to us here at the end of the world:

"Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in **to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself**, cities great and "fenced up" to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he **which goeth over before thee**; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and **he shall bring them down before thy face**: so shalt thou drive them out, and **destroy them quickly**, as the LORD hath said unto thee."-- **Deuteronomy 9:1-3**

The quote above is brought forth to emphasize the repeat of the overthrow of the enemy in Canaan that is represented in Zephaniah 1:16 and 2:5 as well as Joel 2:7-9. I find it to be quite a testimony that that quote would also include the very same language found just two verses later in the very same chapter: "for he shall make even **a speedy riddance of all them** that dwell in the land" is the same language as "and **destroy them quickly**". It's the same testimony!

Concerning the symbolism of the "walls" or "fenced cities" and the "towers" of these cities that are overthrown by the shout or Loud Cry message, they are trusting in their own strength and power instead of trusting in the only True Tower and rock: "The LORD is my **rock**, and my **fortress**, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and **my high tower**. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."—[Psalms 18:2-3]. Both Jew and Gentile will be swept into the ranks of the wicked and they will seek shelter behind the "fenced cities" and "high towers" of their own devising, but they will discover too late the consequences of trusting in flesh.

Christ is the true "Rock" and "High Tower" (*Thus saith the Lord-word of God*) just as He is the true Christ. But just as there is a false Christ, there will also be a false "rock" and "high tower" (*Thus saith man-teachings of men*) that men will seek shelter in when the DOL arrives.

Man is not to place his confidence in the "fenced cities" or "high towers" that man has built, but are to trust in the true "Rock" and "High Tower" Christ Jesus:

“The faith of Asa was put to a severe test when ‘Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots,’ invaded his kingdom. Verse 9. In this crisis Asa did not put his trust in the ‘**fenced cities** in Judah’ that he had built, with ‘**walls**, and **towers**, gates, and bars,’ nor in the ‘mighty men of valor’ in his carefully trained army. Verses 6-8. The king's trust was in Jehovah of hosts, in whose name marvelous deliverances had been wrought in behalf of Israel of old. Setting his forces in battle array, he sought the help of God.”--{PK 110.2}

In summary: I see that the “fenced cities” and “high towers” primarily symbolize the efforts of man to defend or fortify himself against the Truth; man's righteousness, when they need to seek shelter in the true “Rock” and “High Tower” Christ Jesus whose righteousness “will not cover one spot or stain of sin.” If they fall upon the Rock they will never have to be ground to a powder! But those who take refuge behind the walls of the “fenced cities” will witness the pulling down of the strongholds of men's teachings by the Word of God!

BEFORE THE DECREE

In Zeph. 2:1-3 is a call to repentance before the SL arrives and the DOL begins. This is the same method by which Joel wrote. The “nation not desired I understand to be spiritual Israel.

KEY POINTS

In verses 4-15 we see a pronouncement against the wicked cities who will incur His wrath beginning in the DOL. However there are some interesting points to see that I just want to highlight:

CANAAN: In verse five we see that when the DOL arrives, He promises to destroy **Canaan** “that there shall be no inhabitants” left. And he says that he will accomplish this by the “word of the Lord” that “is against” them. Clearly this is affirming my position that Zeph. 1:16 and Joel 2:7-9 are pointing us to the anti-type of Joshua's overthrow of Jericho and the enemies of God within the borders of Canaan at the end of the world beginning at the SL.

MOAB, CHILDREN OF AMMON: Zephaniah 2:9 is giving a second testimony to the theme that Joel sets forth quite vividly; that when the Day of the Lord arrives, the army of God, who give the Loud Cry warning message, will succeed in removing His enemies from off His land: “Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah [*Both destroyed by fire*], even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: **the residue** of my people **shall spoil them**, and **the remnant** of my people **shall possess them**.”-- Zephaniah 2:9

NINEVEH: Earlier in this study we were in Nahum considering the parallels of the destruction of Nineveh; a type of Babylon, being repeated upon Babylon at the end of the world. Here in Zeph. 1:13, he draws **the exact same connection** and **parallel** giving a second testimony: “And he will stretch out his hand against **the north**, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.”

“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to **pour** [*wine cup of his fury*] upon them mine **indignation** [Isa. 30:27], even all my fierce anger: for **all the earth** shall be devoured with **the fire** of my jealousy.”

Here in Zeph. 3:8 we receive yet another testimony and confirmation that God's “fire”; not an *unholy* fire, but a “holy” fire—His word, is to be used to rid His land of **ALL** His enemies and it is this same **holy** “fire” that will also remove the “northern armies”. Christ will not employ an **unholy** “fire”; and certainly not to destroy Rome and Babylon.

Concerning the “fire” that God sends in order to purify the earth when the DOL arrives, notice how it comes and from where:

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with **fire of the altar**, and cast it **into the earth**: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”-- **Revelation 8:5**

This fire, representative of the investigative judgment that is to purify the earth and precipitate the close of probation, was Holy fire from the altar; not an unholy fire. Nadab and Abihu discovered the hard way that God makes it clear that only and always His fire is to be used by His priests—the 144k [Revelation 1:6]. But notice what the “fire” of the 144k is connected with:

“In the temple service the Lord gave special directions that the priests were to use on their censers **only** the sacred fire of **God's own kindling**, which was kept burning day and night. But Nadab and Abihu perverted their senses by **the use of wine** [*wine of Babylon*], so that they could not distinguish between the sacred and the common. They ‘took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not.’ {ST, March 31, 1898 par. 10}

“Those who ignore **the Lord's Sabbath** to keep holy the first day of the week, **offer strange fire to God**. It is a strange sabbath, which He has commanded them not... As did Nadab and Abihu, they offer the common in place of the sacred.”-- {ST, March 31, 1898 par. 11}

The fire that is directly connected with this army in Joel is the “Loud Cry” warning against receiving the mark of the beast. Their message therefore is the sacred “fire” of the Sabbath. The “fire” that God will use to rid His land of ALL the enemies of God, will likewise eliminate the northern armies of Rome as well. Christ cannot use a sacred and a common fire to rid the land of His enemies, because Jesus will neither use nor allow to be used; as Nadab and Abihu found out, unholy or common fire in the work of purifying the earth or ridding the land of His enemies.

We’re told where this fire will originate: “Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:” [Isaiah 30:27]. The fire is the word of God and it is His indignation or wrath or fury that He will pour out beginning at the SL or DOL.

After describing the 144k in Zeph.3:12-13, he emphasizes the same critical point that Joel did; that Christ in the midst of His people is mighty and will be their strength and salvation in the Day of the Lord:

“Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is **in the midst of thee**: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. **The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty**; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. **Zephaniah 3:14-20**

At this point in my journey through Joel and related books, these are my humble conclusions. But I trust that there will be many more things to see and include as time moves us closer to that “Day”. I am certain that my understanding of these subjects will have increased before we are able to meet together so please be patient with me as I desire to know and do His will. A rich abundance of His grace to you all, your brother in Christ, Wesley