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C0816 – April 30, 2008 – Joel – A Walk Through Joel

HISTORY

When we started this series on the Twelve earlier this year we spent quite a bit of time setting the stage. We talked about history and we separated it into two headings; world history, what we might just call Gentiles in Genesis 1-11, those chapters cover about a 1/3rd of history, it's remarkable that the first 11 chapters of Genesis records 33% of world history. If you really want to feel the power of that take a piece of paper and chart out Gen 1-11 on your x axis. On your y axis plot the number of years covered in Gen 1-11. Then start with Gen 12 all the way to Acts 1, figure that number of years, plot it and think about it. That section only covers about 1,900 years. So, do you think those early foundational chapters might be pretty important? Every word is imperative. So, the period from Adam to Abraham covers about 2,000 years. That's Gen 1-11. At the end of that section you have a record of the nations that come out of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth; 70 nations that disperse over the face of the whole earth. The names of those people and nations become important as you read the Bible because you see the Canaanites, who are they, the Philistines, where did they come from, why are they getting judged here and so forth. That's crucial for understanding the rest of history because this is the fountainhead of every tongue, tribe, people and nation that populate the world today and what do we find in the Book of Revelation but people from every tongue, tribe, people and nation are redeemed. So, this is where that all starts and we're not given a detailed revelation of those nations, where they went, what they did, what languages they speak, etc...in Scripture. That has to be worked out by us, going back in the historical record and interpreting it in light of God's word. God gave us hints in the text, how this nation interacted with Israel and how that nation had contact with Israel. So, a detailed analysis of Gen 10-11 sets you up for

seeing how God has worked in history with the nations. Then in Gen 12 we have the origin of the second head of history and that's Israel. Israel's history extends from Gen 12-Acts 1, like we said, about 1,900 years. After that we won't deal with the following era right now except to say that 1 Cor 10:32 mentions the Church as a third division of history, the Church is neither Jew nor Gentile. So the Church is the third division and that's why a study of church history is important. But that's it; the outline for history can be divided into Gentile, the world in general, Jewish, that nation in particular and the Church, neither Jew nor Gentile. That gives us the three-fold framework of history.

THE ABRAHAMIC AND MOSAIC COVENANTS

The second thing we did was ask, "What are the interpretive principles of history? How do I understand history? What are the forces that control history? Is it social policy? Is it politics? Is it environmental pressures such as famine, disasters, etc...? Is it some combination of these? What's ultimately back of history? Is it going anywhere? Is there meaning and purpose to any of it? That's where we brought in the covenant structure of the Bible, namely the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. These are verbal, contractual agreements God made with Israel. So it is God's word that controls history, it's not a political decision, a court's ruling or something like that. It's God's word. The verbal speech of our God sets the framework for where history is going. To guarantee this, just like a contract you sign, you go down you make a deal on a new car, you agree to certain terms, the price, who you're getting the loan through, the interest rate, the whole nine yards and then you sign on the dotted line. What are you saying when you sign your name? I will do this and if I do not do this then I agree to pay a penalty. Isn't that what's going on in the biblical contracts? Isn't God saying in the Abrahamic Covenant, "Abraham, I'm going to give you a land, piece of real estate over here, a seed, a descendant who will solve the sin problem and I'm going to make you a worldwide blessing and you don't have to do a thing to receive it. I'm going to do it and here's my name on the dotted line, you can count on Me." Let's turn over to Gen 12. And notice the language, verse 2, "And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;" skip down to verse 7, "The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." What's the language used there? It's the language of certainty. "I will do this and I will do that." You

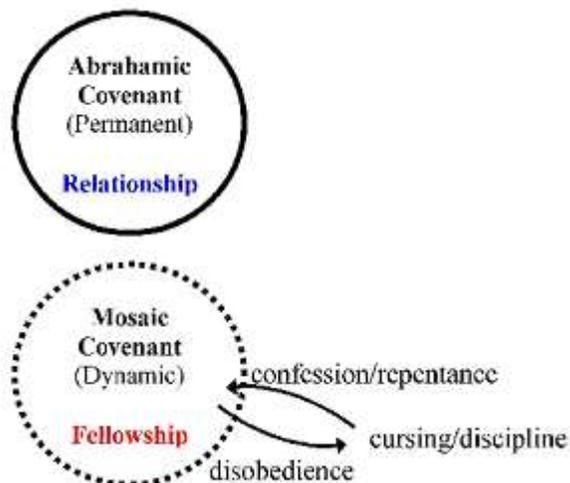
don't read any, "If you are a good little boy then I will do this." So, this is what we mean by the Abrahamic Covenant, that God will do this. God has come into a permanent relationship with the nation of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and made them certain promises. Land, Seed and Worldwide Blessing. That's our top circle.



Has that been fulfilled? Not yet. Will it be fulfilled? Of course. How did Joel end, chapter Joel 3:18, "The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk," verse 20, "Judah will be inhabited forever," that's fulfillment of the Land promises. Verse 21, "The Lord dwells in Zion." Promise? Seed, the eternal seed of Jacob, Jesus Christ. So history ends on this note, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. God is faithful to His word and everything that happens in history is geared toward that destination. If that covenant fails what's the implication? How does that affect God's character? If He violates His word then is He trustworthy? Is He reliable? No. So, the very character of God is at stake in this covenant. God, binds Himself to His word. We don't bind Him. He's bound Himself. So the plan of Satan is to dismantle God's promises. One of the major tactics of Satan is front page news virtually every day. The Arab plan to exterminate Israel? Why do you think they want to do that? Because if you get wipe Israel off the map then how can God fulfill His contract with them. Does that have implications for how you interpret the Holocaust? So Israel becomes the central target. Satan is trying to thwart the plan of God which will cause God to violate His character. So we have the Abrahamic Covenant.

What's the other contract we introduced in some detail? The Mosaic Covenant, two key chapters, Lev 26 and Deut 28 outline the Terms of this contract. Turn over to Deut 28. This is a different kind of contract. With the Abrahamic God obligated Himself to Israel but in the Mosaic it's a different ball game. Watch the language. Verse 1, "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth." There's the blessing for obedience. Verse 15, "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all

His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.” There’s the cursing for disobedience. So the language is “if...then...” it’s not simply an “I will” contract. So, we said this looks at another dimension of Israel’s relationship to God, the bottom circle, Israel’s fellowship.



As a nation are they in covenant disobedience or covenant obedience? This is the dynamic facet, they can go in and out of fellowship. If they sin they go out and come under divine discipline, the cursings outlined in Lev 26 and Deut 28, we learned there are five degrees of cursing which God uses to get the nation to repent so they will be restored to fellowship and God can bless them again. So, for example, the land is theirs by divine right but blessing within the land is conditioned upon obedience. What happened to Israel historically was she went into the land under Joshua, then they experienced blessing and cursing, blessing and cursing, up and down, then they went into a downward trend of cursing. They’re in that trend when Joel was written in 835BC and so they go through 1st degree, 2nd degree, and so forth till they hit 5th degree and go into Exile. We said that happened the final time when they crucified their Messiah in AD33, God delayed the judgment because of Christ’s prayer on the cross, “Forgive them Father, they know not what they do.” That generation was given time to repent, 37 more years, the story of Acts, then judgment fell in AD70, Jerusalem was destroyed by fire, and the church hits center stage, that’s an intercalation in God’s program with Israel. When the Church program is complete at the Rapture the Tribulation can begin and Israel will have seven more years to respond to God’s discipline in the Tribulation, then she will repent and the Lord will return and rescue her and fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant. Okay, that’s the basic story. But what I want you to see is that all that happens that way because of God’s word in those

two covenants. That's controlling everything. Those covenants control the rise and fall of nations. And every part of Joel is explained by one of those two covenants. EVERY part. So, these are the two contracts, the Abrahamic and the Mosaic and they basically teach that God's language controls history, both World History and Israel's History and Church History too, all of history is controlled not by human rulers, not by social policy, not by the laws of physics but by God's speech, God's promises. If you want to get a feeling for how God does that, how His word is absolutely supreme, read Isa 40. So, it follows logically that without a thorough understanding of God's word in these covenants you can't understand history. That makes these two covenants the interpretive keys to the Twelve, just like they are the interpretive keys to any event in world history, always, everywhere, in some way, some aspect of one of these covenants is at work. History is teleological, there's a goal, a purpose to it all. Of course, what follows logically? If God is the Planner and He has a plan for history and you're a part of history then does God have a plan for your life?" See how the reasoning works, we move from the greater to the lesser.

So let's walk through Joel in light of these two covenants. We're arguing that all the prophets are basically reminding Israel of her covenants, they're interpreting Israel's experience in terms of one of those two contracts. Everything is dependent on God's word.

Verses 1-14, **Locust Invasion**. Verse 4, "What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten;" what is this describing? Agricultural and economic collapse is what this is describing. Outworking of what covenant? Mosaic Covenant. Down here in the bottom circle. They're out of it. We're not told how they got out of it in Joel but they've obviously violated the terms of the Mosaic Law. Result, divine judgment. God controls nature and sends four successive waves of locusts. What does the prophet Joel tell the nation to do? Verse 5, "Awake drunkards and weep." Get off your duff, get with the game here, verse 13, here's the central leadership, "Gird yourselves with sackcloth and lament, O priests, Wail. What's this a call for? Repentance, national repentance, get back in fellowship Israel so I can bless you, get back in the bottom circle so I can make your land fruitful. So the first 14 verses are explained in terms of the Mosaic Covenant.

Verse 15 jumps to the future, to a future invasion, not just a locust invasion but a **Demon Invasion**, likely spelled out in more detail over in Rev 9. So, starting in verse 15 we get into the future “day of the Lord.” This is prophecy that still hasn’t come to pass. It’s an unprecedented day, chapter 2:2 “A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been *anything* like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.” When is the only unparalleled period of history, in terms of judgment? The second half of the Tribulation. Jesus said, “then there will be great tribulation as there never has been or ever will be.” It’s a period so scary the rabbi’s didn’t want to see it. It’s the day of Jacob’s trouble. So, this Demon Invasion is much greater in scope than the Locust Invasion, so great that by the end of v 11, what’s the question raised? The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?” Who can withstand the horrors of the second half of the Tribulation? That’s the question. And the answer is given in verses 12-17

Verse 12, “Return to Me with all your heart,” verse 13, “Now return to the Lord your God,” the one’s who **Repent and Return**. That’s who will survive the Tribulation. So, we’re back to the bottom circle again. Israel, will you get back in fellowship with God? And if they will their Messiah will return because that’s the thing they need to repent of in the future; crucifying Jesus, their Messiah. God will lift the veil and they will see that Jesus is the Messiah and they will mourn and they will weep and they will repent and return to fellowship. That’s what we’re talking about in Acts. Peter’s message in Acts 2:38 is not just an evangelistic message, it’s a national call to repent concerning the identify of Jesus. In Acts 3 we’ll see the same thing again. In fact, Peter uses the same terminology, “repent and return” so that the Lord Jesus can return. This is the condition the nation must meet for Jesus to return.

When they repent what is going to happen? Verse 18, “Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, And will show pity on His people.” Verse 19, “Then the Lord will answer and say to His people,” see, we serve a Personal God, a God who responds, He’s not an impersonal force, He’s Personal and responds to us. I think we’ll see a lot more of this in Jonah, the personal dimension of our God. He’s not cold, uncaring and distant. Verse 20, when they repent, “I will remove the northern *army* far from you,” really that’s a title for the

Antichrist, he represents the final worldwide anti-Semitic campaign against Israel. So here's God, rescuing His people in accordance with what covenant? Abrahamic Covenant. If you curse My people you will be cursed." God is always faithful to His word. So look at verse 23, we did a little translation work here and the point we want to make is that when the nation repents then the **Messiah will Return** and that's in verse 23, "So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the Lord your God; For He has given you" not the early rain for vindication, but the *Moreh Ha-Tzedek*, "the Teacher of Righteousness". When Israel repents her Messiah, the Teacher of Righteousness will return. This is an awesome passage. And if you scan down in the following verses you see the agricultural blessing that follows, it's all land oriented.

Verses 28-29 we move into the **Kingdom**, "It will come about after this," that is after the Messiah returns, "That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. ²⁹"Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days." So, that's all in the Kingdom, all the blessings poured out on Jewish flesh. Really this is the fulfillment of the New Covenant, we haven't talked much about this covenant but it's a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, remember you have three basic promises, Land, Seed and Worldwide Blessing and each part is amplified in three later covenants, the Land or Palestinian Covenant in Deut 29-30, the David Covenant in 2 Sam 7, 1 Chron 17 and Ps 89, and the New Covenant in Jer 31. This is a New Covenant promise, the pouring out of the Spirit on all Jewish flesh. They got a foretaste of the Spirit's outpouring on the day of Pentecost but the nation didn't repent so this was never fulfilled. Hopefully though you're seeing that every passage in Joel is explained in terms of some aspect of one of the two basic covenants.

Joel 2:30, "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. ³¹"The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood *Before*" there's our timing word, "before", so this jumps back to the period before "the great and awesome day of the Lord comes." That's the day of the second coming of Jesus Christ, so we're back in the Tribulation when all the nations are gathered against Israel under Antichrist, "Verse 32, "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who

escape,” There will be a remnant of Israel that will be saved, obviously because they repent. They will have a change of mind about the identity of Jesus. So this too is fulfillment of Abrahamic Covenant.

Chapter 3 goes into the **Gentile Judgments** after the Tribulation and in the Tribulation, both the outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant, especially Gen 12:3, those who curse Israel will be cursed. So here’s the Sheep/Goat’s judgment after the Tribulation, verse 2, “I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.” So you can see this is a judgment based on anti-Semitism.

Verses 9-17 talk about the Gentile judgment at Armageddon (Rev 16:16). Verse 9, “Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up.” Then you have the final conflagration before the Millennium. Verse 14, “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision. Verse 15 the cosmic disturbances. Remember, this is all likened to the Flood of Noah, vast geographical and cosmic implications.

Finally, Joel 3:18-21 we see the restoration of Israel in her land with the Messiah dwelling in Zion, it ends on a victorious note for Israel in fulfillment of her Abrahamic Covenant. History ends on a very different note than where we present stand. Now we live in the times of the Gentiles, Gentile kingdoms, Gentile power, Gentile rule, but in the future is the time of the Jews, a Jewish kingdom, Jewish power, Jewish rule with a Jewish Messiah as absolute. A couple of things here about the sentencing of Egypt and Edom in verse 19. I mentioned this last time rather quickly so we can look at it in more detail to satisfy that. I said Egypt would be in desolation for the first 40 years of the Millennial Kingdom and then she would be restored. That’s found in Ezek 29. Turn there, you have to compare Scripture with Scripture to get the whole picture here. Verse 9, “The land of Egypt will become a desolation and waste.” there’s the desolation, verse 11, “A man’s foot will not pass through it, and the foot of a beast will not pass through it, and it will not be inhabited for forty years.” That’s where I get the figure of forty years. ¹²“So I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated lands. And her cities, in the midst of cities that are laid waste, will be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them

among the lands.” ¹³For thus says the Lord God, “At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered.” So after the forty years she’ll be regathered to her land. Verse 14, “I will turn the fortunes of Egypt and make them return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they will be a lowly kingdom. ¹⁵“It will be the lowest of the kingdoms, and it will never again lift itself up above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations.” So, she will be desolate forty years and then restored for the remaining 1,960 years of the kingdom. Let’s go back to Joel. There was one other nation mentioned here as being extremely anti-Semitic and that’s Edom, Edom was the other name of Esau, Jacob’s twin brother, he’s the greatest anti-Semitic nation along with Babylon, those two nations share the greatest judgment from God. Both of those regions will lay in total waste for the entire 1,000 years. A thousand years of burning, smoke rising for all the world to see while the rest of the earth else is blooming like a rose, like the garden of Eden (Ezek 36:35), these two places will be desolate. So if you’re wondering how those two places are going to turn out, modern day Iraq and Jordan, here’s your answer. Two other passages actually tell us that the demons will be somehow imprisoned in those two regions for the entirety of the 1,000 years (Isa 34:8-15; Jer 49:17-18; Isa 13:20-22; Jer 50:39-43; Rev 19:3; 18:1-2). So, that’s a walk through Joel. Everything is explainable by those two covenants. His argument is summed up in the meaning of Joel’s name, Yah-el, “Yahweh is God,” therefore He and He alone is to be worshipped. That’s the big issue, you’re either going to be an idolater or a worshiper of God. There are no other options. Everyone worships it’s just a matter of whether that worship is directed toward the Creator or the creation. Romans 1:18-32 outlines this in detail, how it happens, ec...Alright, so, let’s take a minute, I’ll try to explain anything you had questions about as we walked through.

I. A Past Day of the Lord (1:1-14)

A. The Locust Invasion (1:2-13)

- 1. The Elders Summoned (1:5-7)**
- 2. The Jerusalemites Summoned (1:8-10)**
- 3. The Farmers Summoned (1:11-12)**
- 4. The Priests Summoned (1:13)**

B. All Judah Summoned (1:14)

II. The Future Day of the Lord (1:15-3:21)

- A. The Demon Invasion (1:15-2:11)**
 - 1. The Devastation (1:16-20)**
 - 2. The Alarm (2:1)**
 - 3. The Cosmic Phenomena (2:2a)**
 - a. The Invasion (2:2b-9)**
 - i. The Unparalleled Force (2:2b-c)**
 - ii. Their Devastation (2:3)**
 - iii. Their Appearance (2:4)**
 - iv. Their Sound (2:5)**
 - v. Their Terror (2:6)**
 - vii. Their Speed and Agility (2:7)**
 - viii. Their Discipline and Unity (2:8)**
 - ix. Their Attack (2:9)**
 - b. The Blackout (2:10)**
 - c. The Lord's Judgment (2:11)**
- B. The National Repentance of Israel (2:12-17)**
- C. The National Salvation of Israel (2:18-32)**
 - 1. The Antichrist's Invasion (2:18-20)**
 - 2. The Messiah's Coming (2:21-27)**
 - 3. The Spirit's Coming (2:28-29)**
 - 4. The Salvation of a Remnant (2:30-32)**
- D. The Judgment of the Nations (3:1-17)**
 - 1. The Sheep/Goats Judgment (3:1-8)**
 - 2. The War of Armageddon (3:9-17)**
- E. The Kingdom of the Messiah (3:18-21)**

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