

God Will Pour out Blessings

Key Verse: *“Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.”*
—Joel 2:27

Selected Scripture:
Joel 2:21-27

A MAIN PART OF THE MESSAGE God gave to Israel through the Prophet Joel was to “sound an alarm” because the “day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand.” (Joel 1:15; 2:1,11; 3:14) Elsewhere, it is referred to as the “day of vengeance of our God.” (Isa. 61:2; 63:1-4) This is not a literal 24-hour day, but rather a time period of intense trouble, distress and perplexity.

The reason for the trouble is not because God is malicious. On the contrary, we are told that he has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” (Ezek. 33:11) The trouble which comes during the “day of the LORD” is the natural consequence of disregarding divine counsel and laws. As Paul writes, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”—Gal. 6:7

God made a covenant with Israel and promised to make them a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” However, there were conditions attached, which God pronounced: “If ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments, ... to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” If, on the other hand,

they were disobedient, they would receive chastisements from God.—Exod. 19:5,6; Deut. 11:13-17

Using symbols, Joel's prophecy outlines the trouble which would come upon Israel if they continued to disobey God, and he called upon the nation to repent. (Joel 1:3-15) However, Israel continued to violate their covenant with God, and eventually the trouble, forecasted by their various prophets, came upon them, and their nation was taken captive by Gentile powers. (Ezek. 21:21-27) Although a remnant of Israelites were later permitted to return to their land, as a nation they were cast off from God's favor for a long period of time.—Lev. 26:17,18,24,28

Joel's prophecy, however, was not all doom and gloom. Jehovah greatly desired Israel to return to him. He beseeched them: "Turn ye even to me with all your heart, ... And rend your heart, ... and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." (Joel 2:12,13) If Israel did this, God promised, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, ... And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you."—vss. 25,26

At the end of the foretold "day of the LORD," God has promised that through his power the children of Israel will be saved from being destroyed by the nations. (Zech. 14:1-9) Thus will be fulfilled the words of our Key Verse, that God is in the midst of Israel, and they shall never again be ashamed.

Israel's miraculous deliverance by Jehovah's power will introduce the kingdom of God on Earth. Speaking to Israel, the Lord says: "I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes."—Ezek. 36:23-36; 38:23, *Revised Version* ■