

The Sun Moon and Stars Darkened

The book of Joel has three references to the sun, the moon and the stars being darkened. They are prophetic pictures of the end of two different ages: One is the end of the ceremonial and sacrificial law, and the other is the prophesy of the end of the age of salvation by grace. We will attempt to address each of these separately to come to a proper interpretation of the one found in **Joel 3:15**. We highly recommend to the readers; read the whole book of Joel, for better context of the scriptures that will be mentioned, which will not be included due to the length of the writing.

Let us look at this book as the ending of the ceremonial and sacrificial law age, and the prophetic coming of the age of salvation by grace. Let us see the invading army as the devil and his minions.

In **Joel 1:1-20**, we have Joel's description of the terrible consequences and the plagues that are coming upon Israel, God's chosen nation, because they have forsaken the Lord and turned to idolatry. God tells Israel in **Joel 1:6-7; 6 "For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. 7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.**" Whether this be an army of men or locust, it matters not. Consider this nation as the army of Satan and his work of deception in Israel. Throughout the length of the age of the ceremonial and sacrificial law, the devil and his minions got to Israel, tempting Israel to seek their own way, and to turn to idolatry, which thing God hates. In turning to idolatry, they are turning from God. As they turn from God, their eyes are blinded to the truths of God. Thus, they lost sight of the original uses of the law ordinances. The sanctifying uses of the law services are lost, and thereby the vine is wasted, and the fig tree is barked.

In **Joel 2:1 "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;"** God tells Israel to sound the alarm in Zion, the city of God, even from the temple of the Lord throughout all the land of promise, where God's people are supposed to be dwelling and worshipping him. **"for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand;"** This day of the Lord, emblematically represents; the end of the ceremonial and sacrificial law with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Joel 2:2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great 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." It is a day of darkness for Israel because all that they have put their hope in is gone. Their light has gone out with the coming of the age of salvation by grace. There was to be, and was, only one sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. There was not a day like it before, and there will not be one after.

"even to the years of many generations." From this phrase, we understand; this is not prophesy of the return of Christ, at the end of time. There will not be any generations after the second coming of Jesus. Rather, this day of darkness, indicates the end of the ceremonial and sacrificial law service. Remember, the leaders of Israel did not recognize Jesus as the Christ, because their eyes were blinded.

Joel 2:10-11; 10 "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: 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?" "shall withdraw their shining:" Withdraw does not necessarily mean to be destroyed, which is what will happen at the end of time. Remember the three hours of darkness, when Jesus was on the cross? seen in: **Mt 27:45 "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour."** When Jesus surrendered himself to the armies of the devil, the leaders of Israel, and the Romans, giving up his life on the cross; the earth did quake, the sun, the moon, and the stars were dark, and their light was not seen, yet time continues.

"and who can abide it?" Under the law service, the land of promise was once like the garden of Eden to Israel. The law service being ended, it shall be a waste howling wilderness. There will be no more laying aside of sins by the sacrificial law service. No one can offer an animal sacrifice now, that will be acceptable to God for the remission of sins. Who can abide it, are those who are saved by grace.

"for he is strong that executeth his word:" There is no love stronger than that of Jesus who willingly endured the cross for our redemption and salvation. This clause gives us reason to believe, that this is prophesy of the crucifixion of Christ. When he cried with a loud voice **"it is finished"** Jesus had executed and fulfilled this prophesy. From this New Testament interpretation, we understand that **Joel 2:10-11** is fulfilled, and it is not prophetic of the end of time, but rather, the indication that the age, of the ceremonial and sacrificial law, has ended. With the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new age is ushered in, and the light, of the age of salvation by grace, begins shining forth from the Son of God.

In **Joel 2:12-18**, God gives Israel a message of hope. God tells Israel; if they turn back to him, and if they repent, and if they will call upon his name, he will yet hear their cries and prayers. Signifying, there is still time for Israel to turn back to God before the age of salvation by grace begins.

In **Joel 2:32 "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 tells of the deliverance of a remnant of the people. This text speaks in New Testament language, and we understand this remnant to be God's people, saved by the grace of God as seen in:

- **Ro 9:27 "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:"**
- **Re 5:9-10; 9 "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."** In the age of salvation by grace, there shall be a portion of the natural lineage of Israel that will be saved. Also, during the age of salvation by grace, there will be a remnant of the Gentile people saved.

We believe this speaks to us of the age of grace, because of reference in the New Testament taken from **Joel 2:31**, seen in: **Ac 2:20-21; 20 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."** On the day of Pentecost, Peter and the disciples are preaching to both Jews and Gentiles, and there are about three thousand souls saved. Herein is a dual warning. Peter reminds them; Israel and Rome crucified the Christ in the darkness of their blindness, which ended the sacrificial law service and ushered in the age of salvation by grace. He warns them of another day coming when the sun shall be darkened, which will be the end of the age of

salvation by grace. Telling them, when that happens, there will be no more opportunity to repent, or to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved.

Proof of this text in: ***Joel 2:31 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.***" Being the warning of the end of the age of salvation by grace is found in: ***Re 6:12-17; 12 "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*** ***Re 6:12-17*** and ***Joel 3:15-21*** are similar in their language, and this gives us reason to believe they are speaking of the same time. As we read both these text, we can easily understand that this is prophetic of the end of time, and the second coming of Christ. These are events that will happen before the destruction of the earth and heavens.

How can we ascertain this is prophetic of the end of time? ***Joel 3:17 "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 anymore.***" Natural Jerusalem will never be holy because it is comprised of sin cursed earth and people. When will Jerusalem be holy? The New Jerusalem, of the new heaven and the new earth, will be altogether holy, sinless, and pure and eternal.

"and there shall no strangers pass through her anymore." Here on earth, in the age of salvation by grace, some people call themselves Christians, but they are strangers to salvation by grace. They have not been born-again, yet they occupy a seat in the church, calling themselves Christians. However, this will not be the circumstance in the eternal abode of God's people, as seen in: ***Re 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."***

Joel 3:18 "and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD," We have further proof of this being prophetic of the end of time, seen in: ***Re 22:1 "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."***

Now, to address this last reference of the sun, the moon, and the stars, being darkened in ***Joel 3:15 "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.***" Believing this to be a prophecy of the end, of the age of salvation by grace. We understand; the light of these celestial objects will be withdrawn during the events of the end of the time, as seen in Revelation. When the events of the end of time are completed, all of creation past will be destroyed, seen in: ***2Pe 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."*** When ***2Pe 3:10*** is accomplished, the old earth and heaven will have passed away, and there will only be the eternal and new abode of Jesus and his people, seen in: ***Re 21:1-5; 1 ¶ "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming***

down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." The appearing of the new, signifies the ending of the old.

Further proof, of there being no need of the celestial objects in eternity, is found in: **Re 21:23** "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Jesus is the eternal light of all things new, so, there is no need for these past created things to exist.

Why would Joel include an end of time message in this prophesy? Remember the remnant, which were to be saved, included both Jew and Gentile. It is a warning to all of God's people; the end of the present age of salvation by grace will come, just as the end of the ceremonial and sacrificial law age came for the nation Israel, which is why we have the warning in: **2Co 6:1-2; 1** "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

What a glorious day that will be, when we, in new bodies through resurrection and change, shall be enabled to behold Jesus, the true light, in the eternal world. A place where there will be no need of prophetic warnings or of terrible judgments of God. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your selfless sacrifice, and for our eternal life and salvation. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Amen!