

Through the Bible

JOEL

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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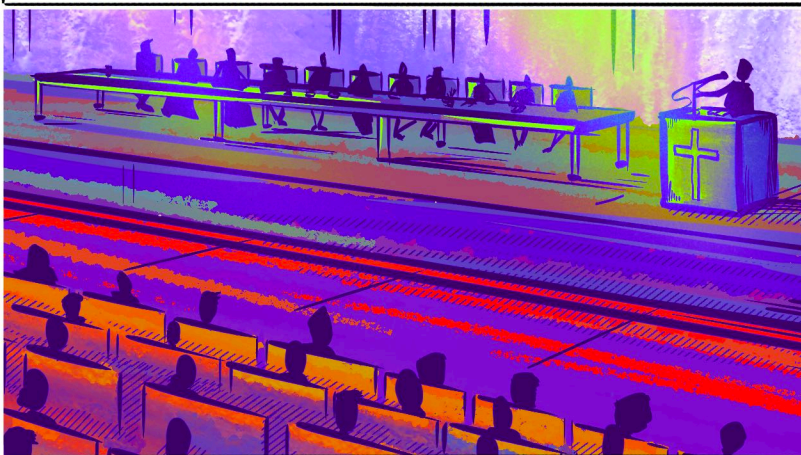
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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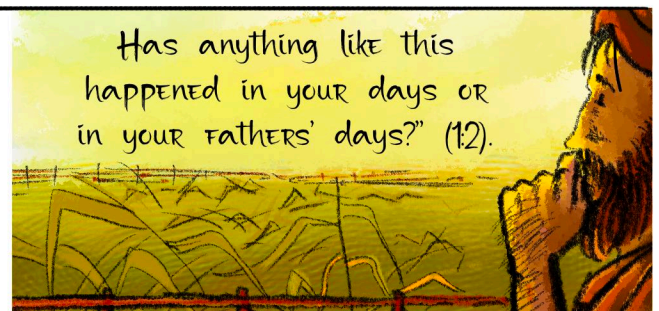
JOEL



JOEL WAS A **PROPHET** TO **JUDAH**, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM. HIS PROPHECY IS A SHORT ONE AND HIS SUBJECT IS THE **DAY OF THE LORD**. THE LORD SENT HIM TO JUDAH AT A TIME WHEN A **SWARM OF LOCUSTS** HAD CAUSED A SERIOUS **DEVASTATION OF THE CROPS**. **SOMETIMES**, IN **NATURAL CALAMITIES** WE HAVE TO SEE THE **HAND OF GOD** -- AND WE NEED A **PROPHET** AT SUCH TIMES TO TELL US **WHY GOD ALLOWED THIS TO HAPPEN**. INSTEAD OF **EXPLAINING AWAY** ALL THESE THINGS AS **NATURAL PHENOMENA** OR **ACCIDENTAL**, WHY NOT STOP AND ASK, "LORD, IS THERE SOMETHING YOU ARE **TRYING TO TELL ME** THROUGH THIS?"



NOTICE ONCE AGAIN THAT JOEL SPEAKS TO THE **LEADERS** PRIMARILY: "HEAR THIS, O **ELDERS**, AND LISTEN, ALL INHABITANTS OF THE LAND."



Has anything like this happened in your days OR in your fathers' days?" (1:2).

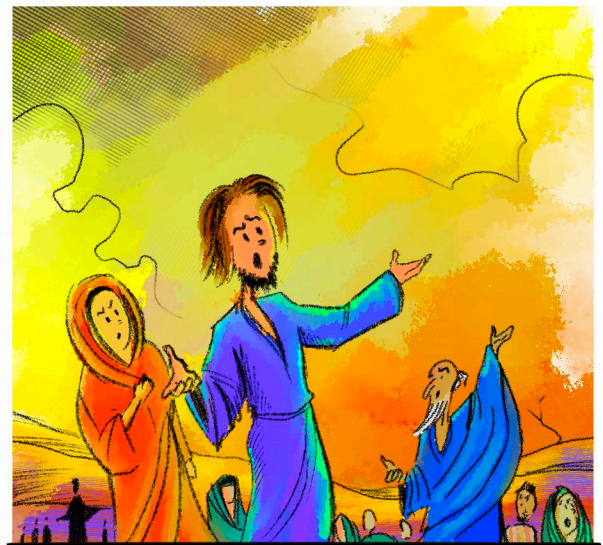
IN ALL THEIR LIFE, THEY HAD **NEVER** EXPERIENCED ANY SUCH THING. THIS WAS **GOD** TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING TO THEM. WHEN YOU LISTEN -- AND DISCOVER THAT GOD WAS CHASTENING YOU FOR YOUR SINS -- YOU CAN **REPENT** OF THOSE SINS AND SET THOSE MATTERS **RIGHT**. THEN YOU CAN TELL YOUR **CHILDREN** ABOUT IT IN LATER YEARS (1:3)



JOEL ASKS THE DRUNKARDS TO **WAKE UP** AND **WEEP** (1:5). SEE WHY THERE IS NO **FRUIT** IN YOUR MINISTRY. ASK YOURSELF WHY THE GRAPES HAVE ALL BEEN **RUINED** AND THE NEW WINE **GONE** (1:7). IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT WE SHOULD BE **FRUITFUL** -- FRUITFUL IN OUR **CHARACTER**, PRODUCING THE FRUIT OF THE **SPIRIT**, AND FRUITFUL IN OUR **MINISTRY** TOO, WHATEVER OUR **PARTICULAR** CALLING IS.



JOY ITSELF HAD **WITHERED** AWAY FROM THE LIVES OF GOD'S PEOPLE (1:12). A **TRUE** DISCIPLE OF JESUS IS ALWAYS **FULL OF JOY**. HE MAY HAVE MANY **TRIALS** AND **SORROWS**; BUT HE HAS JOY IN THEM ALL. **MURMURING** AND **COMPLAINING** ARE SIGNS OF **BACKSLIDING**.



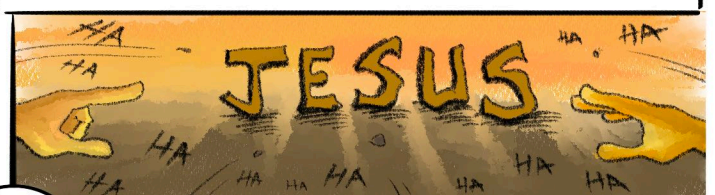
WHEN DID THE CHILDREN OF **ISRAEL** **MURMUR**? WHEN THEY WERE IN THE **WILDERNESS**. AND GOD DESTROYED THEM FOR **MURMURING**. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:10, 11 TELLS US THAT WE ARE NOW BEING WARNED NOT TO **MURMUR** LIKE THEM. WHAT SHOULD WE DO THEN? GO TO GOD AND **FAST** AND **PRAY** AND **WEEP**, ESPECIALLY THE **LEADERS** AND THE **PREACHERS** (1:12--14).



BLOW THE **TRUMPET** IN ZION (THE CHURCH) AND SOUND THE ALARM, BECAUSE THIS IS A **SERIOUS** MATTER THAT MUST BE SETTLED BEFORE THE **DAY OF THE LORD** ARRIVES (2:1). THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL BE A DAY OF **DARKNESS** AND **GLOOM** FOR ALL WHO HAVE NOT **CONFESSED** THEIR **SINS** AND SETTLED MATTERS WITH GOD NOW. THE DAY OF **CHASTENING** WAS ONLY A **WARNING** TO BE READY FOR A **GREATER JUDGEMENT** THAT WAS COMING. WE NEED NOT **FEAR** TO TURN TO GOD, FOR HE IS **GRACIOUS** AND **MERCIFUL** (2:13). HE IS FILLED WITH **KINDNESS** AND HE IS NOT AT ALL EAGER TO PUNISH US. HE WANTS TO SEND US A **BLESSING**. SO LET US **SEEK** HIM (2:14, 15). WE ARE **ENCOURAGED** HERE TO CALL ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE TO **FAST** AND **PRAY** AS A CHURCH -- THE **ELDERS**, THE **CHILDREN**, THE **BRIDEGROOM** AND THE **BRIDE**, EVERYONE

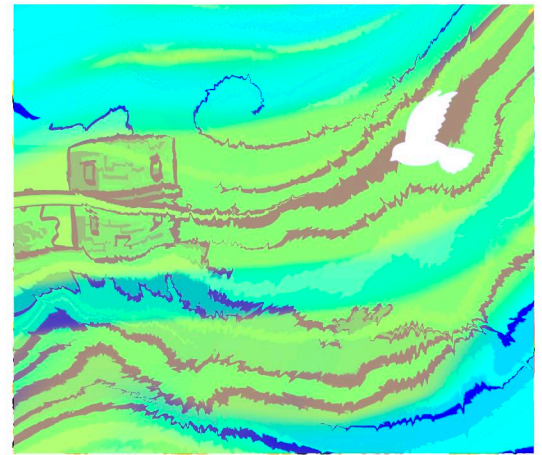


AND LET THEM ALL PRAY SAYING, "LORD, SPARE YOUR PEOPLE. DON'T LET US BECOME AN OBJECT OF **MOCKERY** AMONG THE **HEATHEN**" (2:16, 17). DO YOU KNOW THAT **CHRISTIANS** ARE AN **OBJECT OF MOCKERY** AMONG THE **HEATHEN** IN MOST COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD? THERE WAS A MEETING IN INDIA WHERE A CHRISTIAN PREACHER **CLAIMED** TO BE ABLE TO HEAL THE SICK. SOME **ANTI-CHRISTIAN** PEOPLE BROUGHT A **DOCTOR** AND SOME **SICK** PEOPLE (WITH PROBLEMS MUCH LESS THAN BLINDNESS) TO THE MEETING, AND ASKED THE PREACHER TO HEAL THEM. OF COURSE HE **COULDN'T** HEAL ANY OF THEM. THEN THEY **REBUKED** THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER AND HIS TEAM AND TOLD THEM **NOT TO DECEIVE** PEOPLE WITH **FALSE CLAIMS**, WHEN THEY DID NOT HAVE THE POWER TO HEAL ANYONE. I AGREE **100%** WITH WHAT THOSE PEOPLE SAID. WE MUST NOT **DECEIVE PEOPLE** BY MAKING **FALSE CLAIMS**. THAT IS WHY THE **NAME OF JESUS** IS BEING **MOCKED** TODAY.

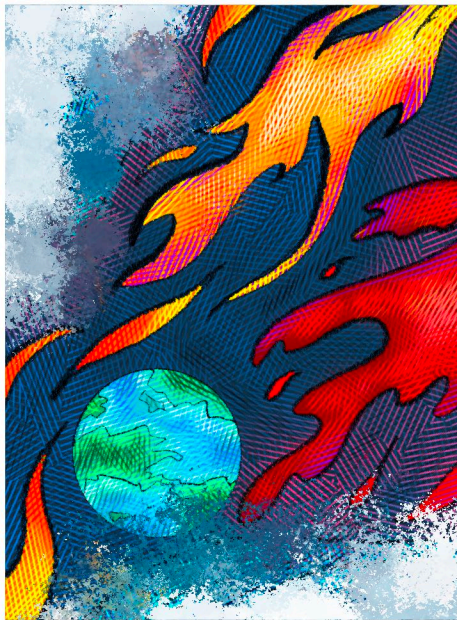




"THEN THE LORD WILL BE **ZEALOUS** FOR HIS LAND AND WILL HAVE **PITY** ON HIS PEOPLE" (2:18). WHEN WE **SINCERELY REPENT** AND **CONFESS** OUR **SINS**, THE LORD WILL BE **INDIGNANT** FOR THE **HONOUR** OF HIS **NAME** AND WILL ANSWER US. AND HOW WILL HE ANSWER US? HE WILL **POUR** OUT HIS SPIRIT UPON US. "I WILL **POUR** OUT MY **SPRIT** ON ALL THE PEOPLE, AND YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL **PROPHECY** AND YOUR OLD MEN WILL **DREAM DREAMS**"



THIS WAS THE VERSE THAT PETER QUOTED AS BEING FULFILLED ON THE DAY OF **PENTECOST**. 120 OF THEM FASTED AND PRAYED IN THE UPPER ROOM FOR TEN DAYS, **REPENTING**, **SEEKING** GOD AND SAYING, 'LORD, DON'T LET YOUR PEOPLE BE THE OBJECT OF **MOCKERY** HERE IN JERUSALEM'. AND THE **SPRIT** WAS **POURED** OUT ON THEM, AND THEY WENT FORTH, AND THE LORD'S NAME WAS **GLORIFIED** WHERE IT HAD ONCE BEEN **DISHONOURED**.



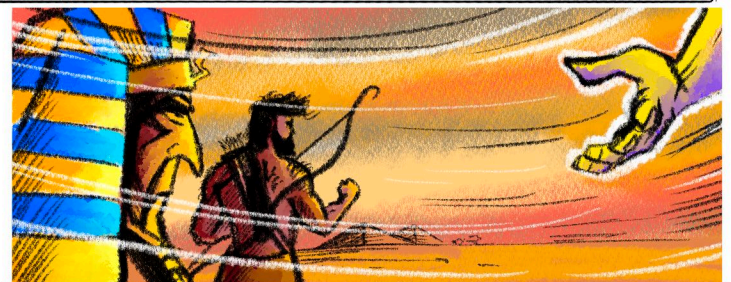
WHAT A WORD OF **PROPHECY** JOEL HAS FOR US **TODAY! SEEK GOD NOW**. VERY SOON THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME. WHEN THE DAY OF THE LORD **FINALLY** COMES, THERE WILL BE MANY **WONDERS** IN THE SKY AND ON THE EARTH, **BLOOD** AND **FIRE** AND COLUMNS OF **SMOKE**. BEFORE THAT DAY, ANYONE WHO CALLS ON THE **NAME** OF THE LORD **JESUS** WILL BE **SAVED** (2:30--32).



CHAPTER 3 DESCRIBES THE DAY OF **JUDGEMENT** AND THE MILLENNIAL **REIGN** OF **CHRIST**. BEFORE THAT DAY ARRIVES, THERE IS SOMETHING THAT WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT. MULTITUDES ARE **WAITING** IN THE **VALLEY** OF **DECISION** (3:14), NOT KNOWING WHICH WAY TO TURN.



THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL SOON COME TO THIS **VALLEY** OF **DECISION**, WHEN HIS VOICE WILL **ROAR** FROM **ZION**. BUT FOR HIS PEOPLE, THE LORD WILL BE A **REFUGE** AND A **STRONG FORTRESS** AT THAT TIME (3:16). TODAY WE HAVE TO WARN THESE MILLIONS TO BE READY TO FACE THE DAY OF **JUDGEMENT**. THE LORD WILL THEN ESTABLISH HIS **KINGDOM** OF **PEACE** ON EARTH (3:17, 18).



"EGYPT WILL BECOME A **WASTELAND** AND EDOM WILL BECOME A DESOLATE **WILDERNESS**" (3:19). WE HAVE **THREE ENEMIES** -- THE **WORLD**, THE **FLESH** AND THE **DEVIL**. ALL THREE ARE PICTURED HERE -- **EGYPT** (THE **WORLD**), ITS RULER **PHARAOH** (THE **DEVIL**) AND **EDOM** (THE **FLESH**). EDOM REFERS TO THE DESCENDENTS OF **ESAU**. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN **ESAU** AND **JACOB** IS A PICTURE OF THE **CONFLICT** BETWEEN THE **FLESH** AND THE **SPRIT**