

## “The Books of Joel & Obadiah” (Route 66)

Let’s turn in our Bibles, this morning, to the Books of JOEL and OBADIAH... I must BEGIN this Bible Study with a CONFESSION...

The LAST TIME we were in this series together, I said that that the NEXT BOOKS we would study were 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles—which come AFTER the Children of Israel RETURN from their 70-Year Babylonian Captivity...

But I had FORGOTTEN about the Books of Joel and Obadiah... And—when I went back to CONSULT the little “road map” which I created to keep me on track in this series—I REALIZED the error of my ways...

And, I specifically REMEMBER PLACING a study of Joel & Obadiah at THIS POINT, simply because... we DON’T KNOW WHEN either of these books were actually written...

But since BOTH deal with themes of RESTORATION, I believe it’s APPROPRIATE to consider them HERE in our series BEFORE we look at the Children of Israel being RESTORED to their own land...

Now, if you haven’t been with us, this is where I like to encourage people to go BACK, and make sure you’re listening to ALL of the messages in our series... simply because—when it comes to studying the Bible—CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING...

And—where we’re AT, in this series—is the Northern Kingdom of Israel has been CONQUERED and CARRIED AWAY by the ASSYRIANS... the Southern Kingdom of Judah has been CONQUERED and CARRIED AWAY into Babylon...

We’ve seen the exploits of Daniel and his friends in Babylon, and Esther in Persia...

And—through prophets like Jeremiah & Isaiah—God has promised that a Persian King named Cyrus will make a proclamation that His people can return to Jerusalem & rebuild their temple...

Sure enough, in 538 BC this HAPPENS... And God’s people are ALLOWED to RETURN to their land after 70 years of captivity in Babylon...

So—NEXT WEEK... we’ll look at 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles (I promise)... This morning, let’s consider the SMALL—but POWERFUL—Books of Obadiah & Joel...

And, we’ll START with Obadiah... The Book of Obadiah is FAIRLY SIMPLE... it’s just 21 VERSES long... In fact, it’s been called the MINOR-est of the Minor Prophets...

We don’t know WHEN he was BORN, or WHERE he LIVED... Chuck Swindoll writes:  
*“Though the... identity of this prophet is shrouded in mystery, [his] emphasis on Jerusalem [throughout his writing]... allows us [to] at least to presume [he] came from somewhere near the holy city in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.”*

From what we can tell—it **SEEMS** Obadiah receives HIS vision *around* the SAME TIME that Judah is overthrown by Babylon, about 586 B.C....

But—*interestingly*—Obadiah’s message is NOT to the people of Judah... it’s also NOT to the people of BABYLON... Obadiah’s message is to the neighboring people of **EDOM**... Obadiah 1:1 says: **“Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom...”**

So, the HISTORY becomes IMPORTANT here... The **EDOMITES** shared a COMMON ANCESTRY with the Children of Israel... They were BOTH from the line of Abraham...

Abraham has a son named Isaac, who has TWO SONS—JACOB and ESAU... RIGHT from the beginning (in fact, in the very WOMB)—these two brothers are at ODDS with one another...

Eventually, these brothers are RE-NAMED **“Israel”** and **“Edom”**—which becomes the names of those who DESCEND from them... So, these two groups of people are basically **COUSINS**... and the families LINES display the same STRUGGLES as the two brothers...

ALL of Genesis 36 is ABOUT **“the genealogy of Esau—who IS Edom,”** and the **“Kings of Edom,”** and how they SETTLED in the area of present-day JORDAN...

In Obadiah Verse 3, God CALLS the Edomites: **“...you who dwell in the clefts of the rock...”** – If you’ve ever seen the movie *“Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade,”* the rock city of Petra—in JORDAN—was BUILT by the EDOMITES...

Now—in Numbers Chapter 20—when the Children of Israel are making their way to the Promised Land—**“Moses sends messengers... to the king of Edom, saying: ‘You know... the hardship that has befallen us, [and] how our fathers went... to Egypt [and the hardship we endured]... Please let us pass through your country.’”** – And **“Edom said to him, ‘You shall not pass through my land...’”** – **“So Edom came out against [Israel] with many men and... a strong hand.”** And **“Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory...”**

The Edomites opposed King Saul... they had to be conquered by David & Solomon... In the days of Jehoshaphat, Edom joined with Ammon & Moab to attack Judah...

But—according to the Bible Project—*“The family bond... was [finally] shattered when Jerusalem fell... to Babylon. When Judah is invaded & conquered, the people of Edom... took advantage by plundering the Israelite cities, capturing and even killing their captives.”*

Psalms 137 says the Edomites stood off to the side, crying: **“Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation!”** – They were calling-out for Jerusalem to be destroyed...

Chuck Swindoll says: *“While Edom was too weak a nation to ever invade Judah on its own, [they]... participated with other nations when the winds of change blew in [their] favor. Obadiah pictures the violent behavior that the Edomites carried out on their [cousins... Israel], waiting on nearby roads to cut down those fleeing from the invaders within Jerusalem.”*

N.T. Wright said: “*There is little doubt that the Edomites, who knew the routes and the crossings, **helped** the Babylonians... Obadiah 14 clearly shows what the Edomites did... God says: “**You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut off those... who escaped; nor should you have delivered... those among them who remained in the day of distress.**”*”

This is why God SAYS to Edom—in Obadiah 1:10: “**For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever.**”

Malachi 1:4 SEES this fulfilled. Edom is EVENTUALLY ABSORBED into Israel... We read: “**Even though Edom said, ‘We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called... the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.’**”

Jeremiah 49 says: “**Edom... shall be an astonishment... As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah... “No one shall remain there, nor shall a son of man dwell in it.”**”

And, guess what? – You can go to the rock city of Petra today, and—by and large... except for a few Bedouins—**NOBODY LIVES THERE!** – ... exactly as God said...

Now, just about the time we think we’ll read ALL ABOUT Edom’s DESTRUCTION, the focus SHIFTS... In Verse 15, Obadiah says: “**the day of the LORD is near upon ALL NATIONS.**”

One author writes: “*This Verse acts as a hinge-piece, linking the 1<sup>st</sup> HALF of the book to the 2<sup>nd</sup> ... in which Obadiah announces the Day of the Lord not only for Edom but ALL nations.*”

Now, we’re gonna talk MORE about the ‘Day of the Lord’ in a few moments when we come to the Book of Joel... But...

The combination of these two sections shows WHY Obadiah is interested in such a tiny, little neighbor of Judah... Obadiah will USE Edom as an example of how God is going to—one day—confront ALL THE NATIONS in their pride, and bring about their downfall.

One author writes: “*Obadiah says all nations who act like Edom will face God’s justice...*” – I think this is **NEAT**: “*It’s hardly coincidence that in Hebrew, the word **Edom** is spelled with the same three letters (אדמ) as ‘humanity’ (**Adam**)... The wordplay shows that—for Obadiah—Edom’s behavior is typical of all the nations and deserve to face justice.*”

So—essentially... [according to Dr. Graham Scroggie]—Obadiah is a book about “[the sin of] *unbrotherliness*...” – What an INCREDIBLY TIMELY MESSAGE that is... In a day when our country has become SO SEVERELY DIVIDED....

And, the division isn’t ALWAYS with people who—we might think of—as our “*enemy*.” – There are LOTS of friendships, families, people who used to go to church together, who have **SPLIT**... and—in a sense—“taken up arms” against each other within recent years...

One author writes: *“Logically, Edom should have sided with Judah against Babylon... But years of hatred caused emotion to override good sense. Such fractured relationships always result from pride—pride that prevents our seeing the error of our ways, that builds barriers... The Book of Obadiah calls us to repent of our pride, to seek reconciliation... and to model a lifestyle of forgiveness and acceptance.”*

David Guzik adds: *“There is [also] a sense in which God’s judgment against Edom is simply the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3: ‘I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.’ – The Edomites cursed Israel, so they were cursed.”*

I can’t HELP but comment on this... in the days when—more and more—things like Israel—and MANY OTHER IDEAS—have been weaponized and turned into political buzz-words by the media... and—listen—on **BOTH SIDES**, folks... No political party is INNOCENT of this...

And, I would NEVER stand before you and say that—as a NATION—Israel always makes the right choice... they DON’T! – All we have to do is READ OUR BIBLE to see that!

But... REGARDLESS... they are still the PEOPLE... that God has CHOSEN... **NOT** because of their MERIT... [like the CHURCH, right?...] but to make a name for HIMSELF...

The Book of Obadiah REMINDS us that—what God says in His Word—about WHAT HE’S GOING TO DO on behalf of Israel in the last days WILL NOT BE THWARTED... IT WILL COME TO PASS... So that ALL the world will know HE is Who He CLAIMS to be!

That’s the Book of Obadiah... Now... AS for the Book of Joel... Chuck Swindoll says: *“Dating [this] book... [is] one of the most difficult tasks for Old Testament scholars because—unlike most prophetic writers—Joel gives no... indication of his time period.”* – Dr. Graham Scroggie says:

*“[He either] ministered early or late in relation to [other] prophets. Both views are contended for. The... controversy is that Joel does not mention the Assyrians or Babylonians, and... must have written either before they became formidable, or after they had ceased to be so.”*

Now, there ARE REFERENCES in AMOS & ISAIAH which are ALSO in JOEL... If we compare Joel 3:16 with Amos 1:2, they are almost IDENTICAL. – Joel 3:10 is a variation of Isaiah 2:4... Isaiah 13:6 and Joel 1:15 BOTH say: **“...the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.”**

And so... SOME have suggested that Isaiah and Amos were BORROWING from Joel, and—if that were the case—that makes Joel one of the EARLIEST MINOR PROPHETS...

The OPPOSING view says that it is the Book of Joel which borrows from “*EARLIER Hebrew Bible texts and [that]... suggests a LATE origin...*” – But Dr. Graham Scroggie says:

*“Recent scholarship is almost UNANIMOUS in assigning a date AFTER the exile to Joel, [around] the 4<sup>th</sup> CENTURY B.C. or later... In any case, [his] message is [exclusively directed] to [the Southern Kingdom of] JUDAH, and NOT [the Northern Kingdom] of Israel.”*

The Book of Joel falls into **TWO MAIN PARTS**... In the **FIRST PART**, **JOEL** is speaking... In the **SECOND PART**—**GOD** is speaking... The first part is **HISTORIC**, the second part is **PROPHETIC**... The first tells of **DEVASTATION**; the second tells of **DELIVERANCE**...

Jon Courson writes: “*The first part [of this Book] concerns the day of the LOCUSTS... the SECOND... concerns the Day of the LORD.*” – “*As we’ll see... the LOCUSTS were really an illustration—a ‘sneak preview’—of what was to come in the Day of the LORD. If God’s people [have] a hard time with... GRASSHOPPERS, they will experience even GREATER DEVASTATION in the Day of the Lord.*”

So—in Chapter 1—Joel tells of a DEVASTATING PLAGUE of locusts which came upon the land of Judah... He says—in Verse 2—“**Has anything like this happened in your days, or... the days of your fathers?**” – In Verse 4, he says...

**“What the chewing locust left... the swarming locust has eaten... What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten... And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.”** – One commentary says:

*“Joel prophesies at a time of tremendous devastation... Four waves of... locusts consumed everything, destroy[ing] the countryside of all vegetation... the pastures of both the sheep & cattle, even stripping the bark off the... trees. In only a few hours... a beautiful, verdant land has become a place of desolation & destruction. All crops are lost, the seed crops for the next planting are destroyed. A famine and drought seize the land. People & animals are dying. [As a result] The drinkers have no wine; the priests have nothing to sacrifice... farmers & vine dressers have nothing to care for; there is no part of Judah’s life that was not dramatically and tragically affected... It was so profound... that Joel saw only one explanation: it was a judgment of God.”*

See, ALL THE WAY BACK in Deuteronomy Chapter 28—God WARNED that—if the PEOPLE were DISOBEDIENT—they would: “**...carry much seed out to the field... but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it.**” – He said: “**Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.**”

And, it APPEARS that: “*Joel [has seen] just such a day... come. He graphically describes the... armies of locusts in prophetic and poetic language.*”

According to the BibleHub.com: “*Archaeological and textual sources from the broader Middle East reveal recurring episodes of locust swarms... **Assyrian and Babylonian** sources... demonstrate that severe locust invasions—capable of stripping farmland—were not unusual.*

**Egyptian tomb reliefs** indicate that the destructive capacity of locusts was familiar to surrounding nations. **Syrian Tablets** contain references to famines caused by locust devastations... showing [these] crises were region-wide and memorable.

*Though not labelled as “Joel’s plague,” such records reflect the ancient Near East’s collective memory of overwhelming agricultural crises... [Also], climatological studies of the Fertile*



*Crescent point to droughts or climate shifts, during which locust populations... explode and travel in massive swarms, contributing to regional devastation. These conditions match Joel's portrayal of utter ruin and support the plausibility of a widespread catastrophe."*

James Montgomery Boice said that—in 1915— “A devastating plague of locusts covered what is modern-day Israel & Syria. The first swarms came in March, in clouds so thick they blocked-out the sun. Females laid eggs—100 at a time. Witnesses said that in a square yard, there were as many as 65,000 eggs. In a few weeks they hatched, with the young locusts... march[ing] 400 to 600 feet a day, devouring every speck of vegetation... After two more stages of molting they became adults which could fly – and the devastation continued.”

No WONDER Joel says—in Verse 3, of Chapter 1—“**Tell your children about [this], let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.**”

Now, we might THINK—or HOPE—that after describing this devastation in Chapter 1, Joel would say to God's people: “*But hang in there! Things are going to get BETTER! The Lord works all things together for GOOD!*”

And, I **DO** think that—sometimes, we—as the modern-day church—have a **TENDENCY** to impose a kind of HOPEFUL OPTIMISM onto every situation... Instead of speaking the TRUTH (which people DESPERATELY NEED)...

And—after telling the people of the locusts in Chapter 1, Joel basically says—in Chapter 2—“*If you think THAT was bad... it's about to get WORSE... **IF YOU DON'T REPENT.**”*

You know, I referenced this passage once before, and... I don't think people LIKE it when I do... But—in Luke Chapter 13—Jesus MENTIONS the ‘Tower of Siloam’ collapsing...

And, He says: “**Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them... do you think that they were worse sinners than [the] other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?**” – And, He says: “No.” – But: “**unless you repent you will all likewise perish.**”

Like, there is no statement of SYMPATHY, here... there's no offering of CONDOLENCES... Jesus doesn't even ANSWER THE QUESTION! – What He **DOES** is... He POINTS PEOPLE to WHAT MATTERS! – He TELLS THEM THE TRUTH...

David Guzik writes: “*Jesus was confronted with... a disaster that killed 18 people. Instead of acting as if it were just an accident—or blind fate—Jesus uses it as a wake-up call for repentance. He shows that ‘Why did this disaster happen?’ is the wrong question. The right question is ‘Am I ready to face such a disaster in this fallen world?’*”

- So—in Chapter **ONE**—Joel describes a plague that **HAD COME** upon the land...
- In Chapter **TWO**, he describes a judgement that **IS COMING** upon GOD'S PEOPLE... **UNLESS THEY REPENT...**
- Chapter **THREE** describes a judgement that will come upon **ALL NATIONS...**

And, Joel DOES this by shifting into the SAME LANGUAGE that Obadiah did... He starts to talk about **‘the Day of the Lord.’** – It FIRST happens in Chapter 1, Verse 15... but, within **THREE SHORT CHAPTERS**, Joel mentions this idea **FIVE TIMES**...

What do we MEAN when we talk about **‘The Day of the Lord?’** – This is a phrase that appears over 25 TIMES in the Bible... Isaiah wrote about it... Jeremiah... Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zechariah, Malachi... We see it in the Books of Matthew, Acts, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, 1st Thessalonians...

And, it DOESN’T refer to a LITERAL, or specific, DAY... The idea is more the “*time of the Lord.*” – David Guzik writes:

*“The idea is that now is the day of man... but [that time] will not last forever. One day, Messiah will end the day of man and herald the day of the LORD.” – “[It is] a day of wrath... where mankind receives the... penalty for his rebellion [and] [Joel] paints [a powerful picture of it]...”*

In Chapter 2, Verse 2, he says it is: **“A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness...”** – In Chapter 3, he says: **“The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.”** – **“The heavens and earth will shake...”**

Chuck Swindoll says that the Book of Joel presents: “*one of the most complete pictures in Scripture of this ultimately redemptive event.*” – Again, David Guzik writes:

*“When we are right with God, we WANT the day of the LORD. We long for Him to show His strength because... we abide in Him. When we are not right with God, we fear the day of the LORD, because when God shows Himself strong, His strength [will] work against us.”*

So, the Lord CALLS His people to REPENTANCE in Joel Chapter 2, promising to RESTORE THEIR LAND... In Verse 12, He says: **“Turn to Me with all your heart... Return to the LORD... For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.”**

Verse 18 says: **“Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people. The LORD will answer and say to [them], ‘Behold, I... send you grain and new wine and oil... the open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their strength. Be glad... And rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you... The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.’”**

In Verse 25, He says: **“I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust...”** – Verse 26: **“You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God...”**

**“Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,”** He says in Verse 27: **“I am the LORD your God, and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.”**

This IDEA of **RESTORATION** is one of the MAJOR THEMES of the Book of Joel... In fact—in Chapter 3—Joel **CONNECTS** IT to the idea of them **RETURNING TO THEIR LAND**... Which is WHY I think it's appropriate to insert HERE, before we look at 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles...

This word 'RESTORE' has SEVERAL DIFFERENT MEANINGS... it speaks of RENEWAL, and HEALING... RECONCILIATION... to "*put something **BACK** to RIGHT.*" – And God **LOVES** to RESTORE... Psalm 80 is ALL God's RESTORATION...

- In Jeremiah 30, God speaks of restoring HEALTH...
- In Isaiah 57, God restores COMFORTS...
- In Lamentations, God restores LIFE...
- In Job 33, God **"restores to man His righteousness."**
- In Psalm 23, God **"restores [our] soul..."**
- In Psalm 51, David prayed: **"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation..."**
- In Zephaniah, God is going to—one day—"restore... a pure language..."
- In Joel—God speaks of RESTORING **"the years that the... locust [had] eaten..."**
- Isaiah 49 says God will **"restore the earth..."**
- In fact, Acts 3:21 speaks of the **"restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of... His... prophets since."** – GOD is a RESTORER!

Now—in Chapter 3—Joel CONTINUES this description of 'The Day of the Lord,' and—we SEE—that this will be a time when God calls ALL nations before Him... And, THIS CHAPTER REVERBERATES throughout the rest of scripture...

In Verse 1, God says: **"In those days and at that time... I will... gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations..."**

There **IS** no place in Israel called '*The Valley of Jehoshaphat*,' but '*Jehoshaphat*' **MEANS** '*God Will Judge.*' – So—MOST LIKELY—this is a reference to the Lord gathering the armies of the world to the Battle of Armageddon in Revelation Chapter 16... [it's also called '**The Valley of Decision**' down in Verse 14]...

In Verse 12, God says: **"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations."** – In Verse 13, God says: **"Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great."**

Now, those of you who studied the Book of Revelation with us... will recognize this is REMARKABLY SIMILAR to Revelation Chapter 14... which sees an:

**"Angel came out of the temple... in heaven... having a sharp sickle. And another angel [said]... 'Thrust in your... sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.' So the angel thrust [in] his sickle... and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And... blood came out of**



**the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.”** – Again, this happens at the Battle of Armageddon...

Verse 16 says: **“The LORD... will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So, you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.”**

AFTER THIS we read a description of what CERTAINLY SEEMS like the ABUNDANCE experienced during the MILLENNIUM... Verse 18 says: **“It will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and... A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Acacias.”**

Ezekiel 47 describes waters flowing from the house of the LORD during the millennium... Zechariah 14:8 ALSO speaks of a great flow of water from Jerusalem which empties... into the Dead and Mediterranean Seas. – So, **a LOT of SIMILARITY...**

But—BY FAR—one of the most OUTSTANDING PASSAGES of the Book of Joel... happens back in Chapter 2... When the Lord says—in Verse 28... that: **“It shall come to pass afterward...”**

So, Joel is talking about a **FUTURE TIME...** **“Afterward,”** God says: **“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also, on My men-servants and on My maid-servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”**

Now, the Old Testament contains INSTANCES of those WHOM the Spirit of God FILLED:

Joseph in Genesis Chapter 41... The craftsmen who build the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3)... Joshua, in Numbers 27... Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson ALL in the Book of Judges...

Saul was filled with the Spirit of God (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 10)... David was filled with the Spirit of God (1 Samuel 16:13)... But the Spirit was never poured-out in a **“GENERAL SENSE”** during the days of the Old Covenant... But, here, God says the Spirit.... will be poured out on ALL flesh.

One author writes: *“Young & old alike—men & women—will experience this outpouring. This section of Joel hangs suspended in history for nearly 500 years. Until - on the Day of Pentecost - the Spirit comes with power and force... [and] Peter [says]: ‘This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel!’ [in Acts Chapter 2]... A new age [is] born; the church is empowered, and now—just as Joel said—“**whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**”*

This is the GLORY of the New Covenant! – This is why the writer of the Book of Hebrews says it’s BETTER than the Old Covenant!

And, there is a **SENSE** in which the ‘Day of the Lord’—or the TIME of the Lord—BEGAN with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost...

Listen again to this commentary from David Guzik... He writes: “[*This*] prophecy of Joel was... especially appropriate because the Day of Pentecost ushered in the last days, with the beginning of the church as understood by the New Testament. Since that time, the church has not been rushing towards a distant edge that represents the consummation of all things. Instead, on Pentecost the church **reached** the edge, and has run **parallel** to the brink for some 2,000 years.”

Think of it this way... [You may have **HEARD** this before]... Let’s say I have a glass of water... And, I SPILL that water across a TABLE... The water RUSHES to the edge of the table... But before it SPILLS over the side...

There is a MOMENT—a BRIEF moment—where the POOLS along the edge, BEFORE it spills over the edge. – **THAT** is the day in which we live...

We are not **HEADING** towards the last days... We are **IN** the last days... The ‘Day of the Lord’ – the TIME of the Lord – was ushered-in on the Day of Pentecost... It’s probably **MORE** appropriate to say that we are living in the **LAST** of the LAST days...

And so—one author writes— “*What Joel was to a ravaged Judah, the church is to a ravaged world—a prophetic voice, bringing God’s view into focus, calling for repentance, and extending the hope of salvation from the FINAL and terrible—and ULTIMATE—day of the Lord.*”

The Book of Joel is AMAZING, and—as I say—REVERBERATES through the rest of the Bible... I encourage you to go home and READ this entire Book... it’s VERY SHORT, and I KNOW you will be blessed if you do...

Now—NEXT WEEK... [and I **MEAN** it this time!...]... We’re gonna see the Jews RETURN TO JERUSALEM upon Cyrus’s DECREE in 538 B.C.... and EZRA—the Scribe—will **REHEARSE** THEIR HISTORY for them in 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles...

If you’ve ever wondered why 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel are so SIMILAR to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles, it’s because... ONE was written **BEFORE** the Children of Israel went to Babylon, and the OTHER is written when they RETURN...

And—BELIEVE IT OR NOT—we’ve only got SEVEN BOOKS LEFT to have covered the ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT... and then—we’re at Christmas, and into NEXT YEAR—where we will go through the NEW TESTAMENT together...

So READ AHEAD, that is where we are going when ROUTE 66 continues!