

# NOTE

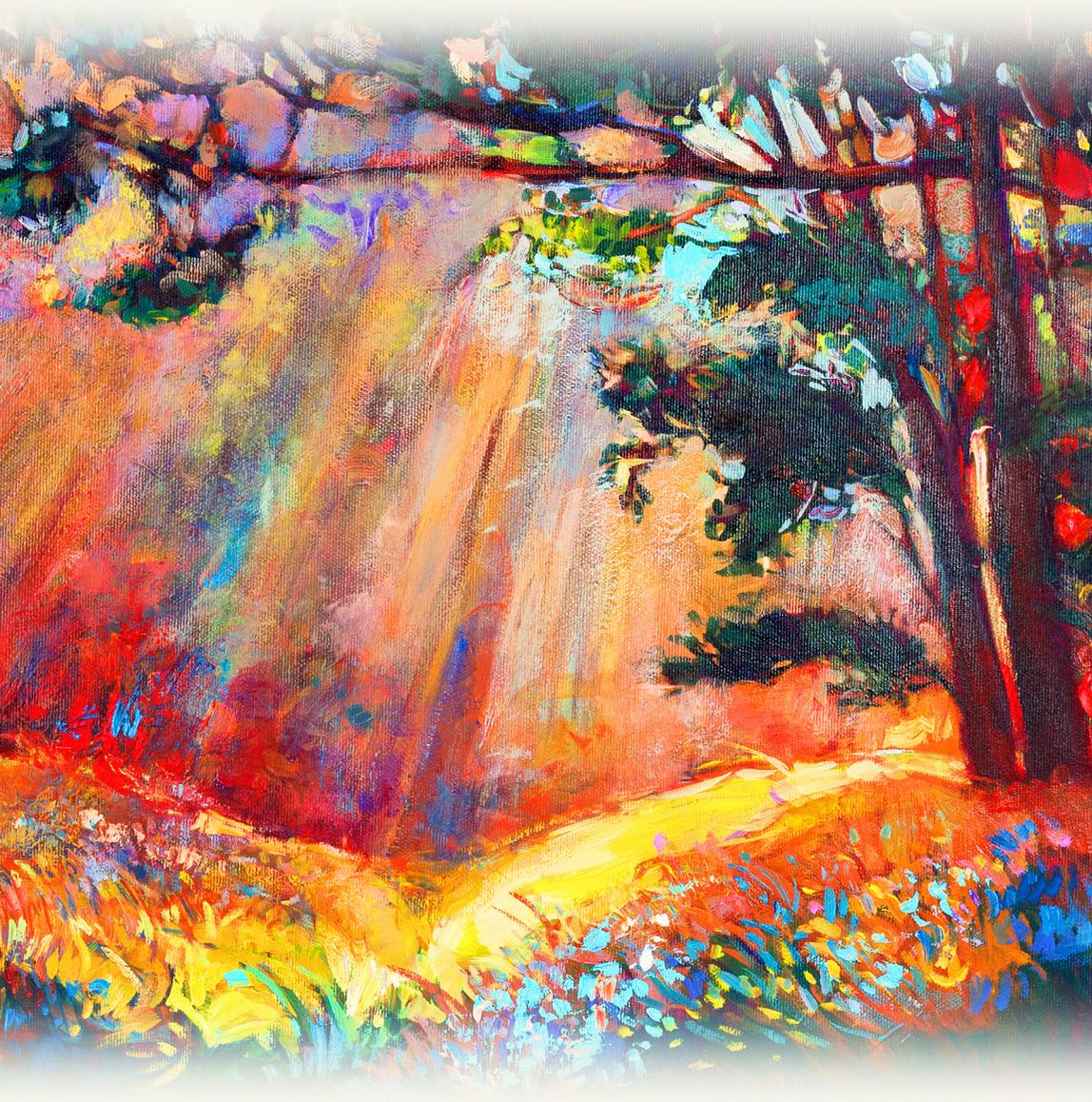
This PDF file is a sample of the book, “Salvation in the Name of YHWH,” by Pastor Rosablanca Suen. It contains about one-third of the full book, namely, all the front matter and chapter one. The three appendixes are available as a separate free download.

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*An Exposition of Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, and Romans 10:13*

# SALVATION IN THE NAME OF YHWH



Rosablanca Suen

*“And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved” (Joel 2:32)*

God desires that all people come to salvation, for He does not want anyone to perish. This book focuses on one aspect of Soteriology: how we experience God’s salvation in the calling of the name of the Lord. I have woven into the writing a Biblical word study method to help readers gain a clearer understanding of broader themes that emerge from the book of Joel, the Pentecostal message in Acts 2, and the salvation message in Romans 9 to 11. God is dynamically moving forward His plan of salvation in progressive stages. The exciting news is that God’s Kingdom is coming ever so nearer according to His time. My prayer is that Yahweh, my God and King, will move your heart to call on His Name. We experience God’s salvation by calling on His Name, not only in times of crisis but more so in every breath that we take each day. It is in the many ordinary events of life that God awakens us to experience His care, presence, protection, and salvation. May God be pleased to use this book to lead people to have faith in the one true God and in Lord Jesus the Messiah.

ROSABLANCA SUEN was born in Hong Kong. She graduated from the University of British Columbia in Education and worked as a professional teacher in Canada. She completed her post graduate studies at Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary and Tyndale Seminary. In 1989, she and her husband joined the full-time pastoral training in Christian Disciples Church and were ordained in 1996. They served in the Shatin Church, pioneered a church in Sydney, and have been shepherding the Tsuen Wan Church in Hong Kong in the last 30 years. Their publications include *Media Photo Library of the Holy Land*, *Video Productions on The Seven Churches of Revelation*, *John at Patmos*, and *Paul at Athens*.



SALVATION IN  
THE NAME OF YHWH

*An Exposition of Joel 2:32,  
Acts 2:21, and Romans 10:13*

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ROSABLANCA SUEN

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Acts 2:21, and Romans 10:13*



ROSABLANCA SUEN

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Salvation in the Name of YHWH:  
An Exposition of Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13  
Rosablanca Suen

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# FOREWORD

Bentley C.F. Chan

Given the popularity of the name Joel, it is surprising how little we know about the prophet Joel. We know almost nothing about him beyond his name and his father's name. We are not sure of his occupation (though he was familiar with the temple services) or even the historical period in which he lived (probably shortly before one of the exiles, the Assyrian or the Babylonian).

Joel is never explicitly called a prophet, not even in the book that bears his name. He is mentioned nowhere in the Old Testament outside the book of Joel (though there were others named Joel in the historical books).

Yet the name Joel means "YHWH is his God," and we read that the word of Yahweh came to Joel, the son of Pethuel. And it was through this obscure prophet that Yahweh, the God of Israel, has chosen to give one of the greatest prophetic statements in all of Scripture:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of YHWH comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved. (Joel 2:28-32a)

It is no exaggeration to say that this proclamation is one of the pillars of New Testament salvation—even *infusing it with its special soteriological language and vocabulary*. C.H. Dodd notes that Joel "played a

significant part in moulding the language in which the early Church set forth its convictions about what Christ had done and would yet do”.<sup>1</sup>

The key sentence in Joel’s proclamation—“And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved”—contains the theology of salvation in a nutshell. It is God’s answer to the timeless question, “What must I do to be saved?” The answer is simple yet far-reaching: The one who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved. It is efficacious for salvation because it draws us directly to the very person of Yahweh our God, the one who saves.

In scope and purpose, Joel’s pronouncement is eternal and not merely occasional, for it covers the sweep of God’s plan of salvation, beginning with the Israel of Joel’s own time and place.

Yet in Yahweh’s eternal plan, Joel’s pronouncement later became, on the day of Pentecost, the inaugural statement to usher in the age of the church and the Holy Spirit, thus providing the exegesis of Peter’s soteriology (Acts 2:16f) and the seeds of Paul’s (Romans 10:13).

We notice that Peter’s statement in Acts 2:21 and Paul’s in Romans 10:13 both speak of calling on the name of “the Lord” rather than on the name of “YHWH” (Yahweh). This adaptability is to be expected on account of the Jewish reluctance to vocalize the name YHWH. Yet it leads to the vital question of whether Peter and Paul also had in mind the calling on the name of Jesus.

The evidence, notably in Acts 2, points to both calling on the name of YHWH and calling on the name of Jesus, with the former being the foundation and antecedent of the latter. In his Pentecostal message, Peter cites, almost verbatim, an entire passage from Joel 2, which then becomes the wellspring for his salvation message. As a Jew, Peter would know that “the Lord” is a substitute term for YHWH, all the more so because Peter quotes extensively from Joel, even speaking of the “day of the LORD” (the day of YHWH).

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<sup>1</sup> C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology*, pp. 63-64, James Nisbet & Company, London, 1952.

Peter and Paul both refrain from modifying “call upon the name of YHWH” to “call upon the name of Jesus,” preferring to leave it in its Septuagint rendering, “call upon the name of the LORD” (which would be understood as referring to YHWH if read from the LXX).

Yet at the same time, the flow of Peter’s message indicates that he is drawing his listeners to salvation in the name of Jesus, the one whom God had made “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

This is neither doublespeak on Peter’s part, nor an unthinking conflation of the names Yahweh and Jesus in the title Lord, for a resolution can be found in one of Peter’s key statements, embedded in his own sermon, that the works of Jesus are ultimately the works of God *done “through” Jesus*:<sup>2</sup>

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did **through him** in your midst, as you yourselves know (Acts 2:22).

Just as Yahweh is our Savior,<sup>3</sup> so Jesus Christ is our Savior.<sup>4</sup> Just as Joel 2:32 is the foundation and antecedent of Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13, so the calling on the name of YHWH is the foundation and antecedent of the calling on the name of Jesus.

**I**n this light, I am pleased to commend to all readers the present work by Pastor Rosablanca Suen, “Salvation in the Name of YHWH”. I am impressed with the title she has chosen for the book, for it immediately places our focus on the name YHWH. This is most appropriate not only because Joel 2:32 itself speaks of the name YHWH, but also because it sets right the dependence of Jesus’ name upon Yahweh’s.

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<sup>2</sup> The dependence of Jesus’ works on God’s is seen in statements such as, “The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works” (John 14:10); “I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me” (8:28); “The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (5:19).

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 43:11; 49:26; 60:16; Hosea 13:4; Titus 1:3; 1 Timothy 2:3; Jude 1:25.

<sup>4</sup> Titus 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 2:20.

Rosa deftly—and with moderation—navigates the multiple layers in Joel, whose pronouncements touch on several eras of salvation history, including Joel’s own historical setting, but also the New Testament age and even the eschatological future. For example, Joel speaks of Judah and Jerusalem in the context of his own historical milieu, yet also in the language of eschatological fulfillment (“Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations,” Joel 3:20).

Finally and most vitally, Rosa’s overarching purpose for her book is that people may be inspired to draw near to God by calling on His name. The book is an interweaving of biblical exposition and devotional writing that will guide the reader to God’s salvation in Jesus Christ.

To Rosa my friend and coworker over the decades, thank-you for writing this book, and may God use it to bless many to the glory of His great name, Yahweh.

Montreal, Canada

[biblicalmonotheism@gmail.com](mailto:biblicalmonotheism@gmail.com)

July 2021

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to my Heavenly Father for granting me salvation and giving me the new life in Christ. There is no greater privilege and joy than to be a servant of God.

I want to thank Pastor Bentley C.F. Chan for his professional guidance and the many hours of tireless work, from formatting, proofreading, editing, designing the front cover, compiling the Scripture index, to finally getting the manuscript ready for publication. It is with great joy that I have this opportunity to co-work with Bentley closely in bringing this book to reality. Ever since the time we both finished our Fifth Team Full-Time Training in 1991, we have been serving in different churches without any opportunity to co-work together until now, 30 years later. I am particularly grateful for his readiness to share his insights into the more difficult Bible passages as they have helped sharpen my thinking. His diligence, attention to detail, suggestions, support, and constant encouragement on the manuscript are deeply appreciated. May God bless him and his wife in their ministry.

I would also like to thank many coworkers, pastors, brothers and sisters, and fellow teammates in different parts of the world for their involvement in proofreading and giving me invaluable feedback. Many have sacrificially spent countless hours to check the accuracy of the Bible statistics and references. Much appreciation is also due to those who graciously helped me with their computer skills (our hard disks crashed more than once in the process of writing this book!). May the Lord reward these precious ones deeply for their faithful prayers and labor in God's love.

I am profoundly grateful to Raymond, my husband, for his friendship and partnership in the Gospel in the last 40 years. I thank him for the endless hours we patiently sat in front of the computer to go over each word of the manuscript to make sure they are worded effectively. Thank you, my love. May God's Name be glorified in our humble service to Him and His people.



# PREFACE

God desires that all men come to salvation for He does not want anyone to perish. I am deeply grateful to God for saving me from sin and granting me the new life in Christ early on when I was in my teens. God has put in my heart a deep hunger and thirst for Him and His Kingdom. I always cry out to God, “O Yahweh, I want to know you more and follow you all the days of my life.”

Since 2005, I came to have a clear understanding of God’s salvation for mankind through a series of teaching on Biblical monotheism given to us by our beloved teacher, Pastor Eric H.H. Chang. Being able to sit in teaching sessions taught by Pastor Eric was a great privilege and blessing to all our coworkers. We would get inspired spiritually. Our spirits would get uplifted. The fire of God would burn deeply in our hearts. Yahweh God opened our eyes to see Biblical truth through His servant.

This book comes from Chapter 17 of a longer book (400+ pages) that I am presently working on, “Our Road to the One True God, YHWH,” which, if God willing, will be published at a later date. As I was working on this chapter on “Salvation in the Name of YHWH,” the Spirit of God kept urging me to write a more thorough exposition of Joel 2:32, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” This significant statement is cited by the apostle Peter in Acts 2:21, and the apostle Paul in Romans 10:13. A lot of spiritual riches are packed in this short statement regarding God’s salvation for humanity, and how we can live a life of faith prayerfully under the Lordship of God and Christ. Calling on the Name of the LORD concerns our salvation. In the course of meditation and writing, the freshness of the content has taken on a new life such that the present work is put into a short book for use in evangelism.

Calling on the Name of the LORD has been a life-long spiritual discipline in my life. Through God’s Name, we encounter the one true God. God is not silent. He is silent only to those who resist drawing near to Him. I have learned to call on God’s Name to love Him, to walk with

Him, to learn to be His friend, and to let God come close to me in all areas of my life. I call on God's Name to save me from temptations to sin, selfishness, self-deception, and pride. Daily, I call out to God to cleanse and purify my inner being. Many times, God rescued me physically even before I knew that my life was in great danger. Living in a spiritually complacent world in which Christians are falling asleep spiritually, I often need to cry out to God for His fire to burn fervently within me so that my heart does not grow cold. Calling on the name of the Lord has indeed taught me to have the right fear of God. In serving the church these past 30 years, I have learned to call on the Lord to mourn for the sins of the church and to overcome weaknesses that hinder my service to Him. God answers. God saves.

We experience God's salvation by calling on His Name, not only in times of crisis but more so in every breath that we take each day. It is in the many ordinary events of life that God awakens us to experience His care, presence, protection, and salvation.

Salvation is a vast subject. This book focuses on one aspect of Soteriology, namely, how we experience salvation in the calling of the Name of YHWH. The message we hear in today's churches is mostly centered on the popular precept that Jesus saves us. This begs a further question: How does Jesus save us? Apparently, the role of YHWH as Savior has been obliterated. I started my Christian life with such a proposition, and after listening to Pastor Eric's expositions on Biblical monotheism, I searched the Scripture and consolidated the conclusion that YHWH God is the One who saves us through Jesus. With the title of the book "Salvation in the Name of YHWH," I would like to share my first-hand experience and understanding on this Biblical theme. Our faith needs to be grounded on the authority of the Word of God.

In this book, I have woven into the writing a Biblical word study method to help readers gain a clearer understanding of the broader themes that emerge from the book of Joel, the Pentecostal message in Acts 2, and the overall salvation message in Romans 9 to 11. In a wider framework of these three passages, we can get a bird's eye view to see the wood for the trees. God is dynamically moving forward His plan of salvation in progressive stages with the prophecies of the Old Testament

fulfilled in the New. The Kingdom of God is advancing mightily and steadily according to His time. The exciting news is that God's Kingdom is dynamically coming ever so nearer to us. Are you part of this movement in the Kingdom of God?

In our outreach work at church, people often ask me about God's salvation and how they can be saved. I pray that this book can answer some of their questions so that they too can experience God's salvation and enter into the Kingdom of God. I welcome my readers to write and share your thoughts with me.

My prayer is that Yahweh, my God and King, will move your heart to call on His Name. May God be pleased to use this book to lead people to have faith in the one true God and in Lord Jesus the Messiah. Together, let us learn to call on the name of the Lord to experience God's salvation in every aspect of our daily life.

Rosablanca Suen  
Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong  
YahwehDeHua@gmail.com  
February, 2021



## Chapter 1

# JOEL 2:32

“And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the **LORD** will be saved.” (Joel 2:32)

Calling on the name of the LORD concerns our salvation. Ever since the beginning of Genesis, people have been calling on the name of the LORD (Gen 4:26). From generation to generation, people like Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David, Elijah, Jonah, the Psalmists and the prophets habitually called on the name of the LORD (Gen 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25; 1Sam 12:18; 1Ki 18:24; 1Chr 21:26; Psa 88:9; Psa 99:6; 116:4, 13, 17; Jonah 2:2; Lam 3:55 etc.; though cp. Gen 12:8 and Exo 6:3). Calling on the name of the LORD is a vast subject that deals with the spiritual discipline of prayer life as well as the proclamation of the Name. In this book, we will only be able to scrape the surface of what it means to call on the name of the LORD. At the very least, we can make an initial start in calling on the name of the LORD since our salvation is a result of such a call.

The “LORD” in small capitals signifies that the original word in the Hebrew Bible is יהוה (YHWH). YHWH is God’s name. Our God is a personal God with a Name.

The text for Joel 2:32 should be rendered: “Everyone who calls on the name of YHWH will be saved.” YHWH in its full written form is Yahweh.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> With the immense progress made in the study of Hebrew in the last century, Biblical scholars generally agree that the pronunciation of YHWH is Yahweh. There is still an ongoing debate among Hebrew scholars regarding the precise vocalization of “Yahweh”.

Take note of the specific wording: “Everyone who calls on the name of YHWH”. The text doesn’t say to call on “God,” which is a generic term, but specifically to call on “Yahweh” for our salvation. God and Lord are titles but they are not names. Yahweh is the name of the one true God whom we call on.

In the name of Yahweh, we have salvation. Salvation is in Yahweh. We call on Yahweh, for Yahweh is the One who saves us.

When I call on Yahweh, I witness God’s saving power in action.

## YHWH – A Key Word in Joel

In the book of Joel, God’s name יהוה<sup>6</sup> occurs 33 times.<sup>6</sup> In Old Testament times, the people of God knew God by His personal Name. Yahweh is not a remote God somewhere out there in the universe, but a personable God whom the Israelites related to in their prayers. When they prayed, they would often address God by His Name.

The Book of Joel				Chapter			
Strong’s Number	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation	1	2	3	Total
H3068	יהוה	YHWH	Yahweh	7	18	8	33

The book of Joel is Yahweh centered. The name “Yahweh” occurs in all three chapters, with a significant concentration in chapter 2.

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<sup>6</sup> In the table, the statistics for the occurrences of YHWH for each chapter of Joel are taken from the Leningrad Codex. The statistics can be tabulated from the Bible statistics tool at the following website: <http://yahwehdehua.net/cn/wfstats/ot>. Select the book of Joel, key in H3068 which is the Strong’s number for יהוה (translated as LORD), and hit search. Also key in H3069 as this is another Strong’s number for יהוה (translated as GOD). There are no occurrences of H3069 in Joel.

Joel begins with the “word of Yahweh” coming to him (1:1). Yahweh has a message to give to His people through the prophet Joel, the son of Pethuel. The book ends with the final words, “Yahweh dwells in Zion” (3:21). From beginning to end, Yahweh is fully present with His people.

The concept of Yahweh as God weaves through the entire book of Joel. The word for God, אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), occurs 11 times. Sometimes it is found in the phrases “my God” (1:13), or “our God” (1:16), or “their God” (2:17), or “your God” (1:13). Seven times the Name *Yahweh* is attached to *God*—“Yahweh your God”. The Israelites knew God personally by His Name, Yahweh.

## Significant Words in Joel

We can determine the theme of Joel by doing a thorough word study on all the significant words used in the book. This will give us a bird’s eye view to see the wood for the trees. The following table shows 16 words that occur 10 times or more in Joel.<sup>7</sup>

Book of Joel – Significant words				Chapters			
Strong’s Number	Hebrew	Translation	Parts of Speech	1	2	3	Total
H3068	יְהוָה	Yahweh	noun	7	18	8	33
H3588	כִּי	that, because	conj	11	13	8	32
H5921	עַל	upon, over	prep	6	9	4	19
H0853	אֵת	(untranslated)	particle		8	8	16
H3605	כֹּל / כָּל	all, the whole	noun/adj	5	5	6	16
H1121	בֶּן	children	noun	6	2	7	15
H3117	יּוֹם	day	noun	4	6	3	13

<sup>7</sup> The statistics for all the Hebrew words for each chapter of Joel are taken from the Leningrad Codex. The table statistics can be tabulated with the Bible statistics tool at <http://yahwehdehua.net/cn/wfstats/ot>. Select the book of Joel, key in 1:1 to 3:21, and hit search.

H5971	עַם	people	noun		10	3	13
H0413	אֶל	into	prep	4	4	4	12
H0776	אֶרֶץ	earth	noun	3	6	3	12
H0834	אֲשֶׁר	which	pronoun	1	6	5	12
H3808	לֹא	not	adverb	1	9	2	12
H0430	אֱלֹהִים	Elohim / God	noun	4	6	1	11
H1961	הִיא	to be	verb	2	5	4	11
H0398	אָכַל	devour, eat	verb	5	5		10
H1471	גֵּוֹי / גֵּוִי	nations	noun	1	2	7	10

(1) Putting all the significant words in table format can reveal the major themes of the book of Joel efficiently at one glance. I inserted the Strong's numbers for those who do not read Hebrew. I have left the cells blank where the word does not occur in that chapter.

(2) For the sake of thoroughness, I even took into account all the usages of conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns in the tabulation even though these words might not carry particular significance in the initial observations. Naturally, these words would occur frequently as they are necessary for proper sentence structure.

(3) The Name YHWH has the highest frequency of 33 occurrences, even above all the conjunctive and prepositional words. Evidently, Yahweh is the focus of attention in Joel.

(4) Nouns often reveal key themes of a book. The major nouns in Joel are: all (16 times), children (15 times), day (13 times), people (13 times), earth (12 times), God (11 times), and nations (10 times).

(5) Verbs are also important for they are action words that often point to life applications. Take note of two verbs, "to be" (11 times) and "devour" (10 times). "To be" is a common verb that is used frequently in sentences, and we should pay particular attention to the tenses used. "Devour" or "eat" has a high frequency of occurrences, and is found mainly in chapters 1 and 2.

**The Bible word statistics method**, which Pastor Eric H.H. Chang taught us in our full-time training, is a reliable tool for exegetical studies as it leads to conclusions objectively and scientifically. (1) Find the *key words*; (2) look up the *definitions* of the words in the original language;<sup>8</sup> (3) *analyze* how and where these words occur in the book; (4) note their *emphases*; (5) and then *interpret* them correctly within the *context* of the passage, the book, and the entire Bible.

As I prayerfully dig into the specific details of the word study, I often get practical insights into applying God’s word to my daily life.

## Key phrases in relation to YHWH

- |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. The day of YHWH       | (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14)          |
| 2. YHWH your God         | (1:14; 2:13, 14, 23, 26, 27; 3:17) |
| 3. The house of YHWH     | (1:9, 14; 3:18)                    |
| 4. O YHWH                | (1:19; 2:17; 3:11)                 |
| 5. The ministers of YHWH | (1:9; 2:17)                        |

“YHWH your God” (7 times) and “the day of YHWH” (5 times) are the two prominent themes in Joel. The word “day” occurs 13 times in Joel, of which 9 times it refers to the day of Yahweh (1:15, 15; 2:1, 2, 2, 11, 31; 3:14, 18). The day of Yahweh is the key theme of the book of Joel.

Once we know the key theme, we can observe and analyze how the significant words relate to the main subject or to each other.

All<sup>9</sup> the inhabitants, children and people, need to know and learn about the day (1:2-3). The locusts devour their crops so completely that

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<sup>8</sup> For the Old Testament, I use the Brown-Driver-Briggs *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (BDB) and *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT). For the New Testament, I use Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), Bauer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Earlier Christian Literature*, and Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

<sup>9</sup> I underlined the significant words to make it easier for you to follow the word study.

the land is devastated to an extreme crisis. All the trees of the field are burnt and dried up (1:10-12; 19-20). One day, the earth will quake and the heavens will tremble with the cosmic signs of blood and fire. While there is still time to repent, Joel urges the Israelites to return to “Yahweh your God” with all their hearts before the day comes (2:12-13). God has spoken repeatedly to His people, “I am Yahweh, your God” (2:27; 3:17). Yahweh God challenges all the surrounding nations to prepare for war against Him, but the people of God need not fear, for Yahweh dwells in Zion and have not forsaken them (3:21). In a battle crisis, Yahweh is there for them, present in Israel as a refuge and stronghold (3:16-17). Salvation will come to Judah and Jerusalem. By trusting in Yahweh, the Israelites can call out to Yahweh for deliverance. The day of Yahweh is a day of judgment, but also a day of salvation.

Joel has first-hand experience of God’s salvation for he belongs to the remnant who calls on God’s Name: “To you, *O Yahweh*, I call.” (1:19).

## Call on the Name of YHWH

The word “call” in Hebrew is קָרָא (*qara*). This verb in the Qal imperfect tense indicates that the action is incomplete; usually the verb is translated either as a present or a future tense. The action of calling is not a one-time event, but a repetitive occurrence of calling on the name of Yahweh.

*Qara* in Hebrew means “call, utter a loud sound, cry for help, or proclaim” (BDB). The calling is not silent but loud enough to be heard. Praying can be silent but calling must be audible.

Most of us pray quietly in our hearts. Do you pray aloud? We pray out loud when we give thanks before meals or in prayer meetings. What about when you are alone at home, do you pray aloud? Calling on the name of God is expressed audibly. Come before God with a pure heart and pray aloud. Repent of your sins and focus sharply on Yahweh God to call His Name. Yahweh answers.

## 1. Acknowledge that YHWH is your God

Not everyone can call on the Name of Yahweh. To call on the Name of Yahweh, you must acknowledge that Yahweh is God. The name “Joel” means “Yahweh is God”. This is an honorable name. Many parents like to choose the name Joel for their children. Joel is a prophet who knows Yahweh intimately as his God.

Is Yahweh your God? Sadly, most Christians today do not recognize Yahweh as their God. If Yahweh is not your God, how would it benefit you to call on the Name, Yahweh?

### (1) “I am Yahweh *your* God” — spoken by Yahweh

**Joel 2:27** “You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that *I am Yahweh your God, and there is none else.*” (ESV, Yahweh restored and italics added)

**Joel 3:17** “So you shall know that *I am Yahweh your God* who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.” (ESV, Yahweh restored and italics added)

Here are some points that can be developed progressively:

- i) “I am *Yahweh*”. The first thing God wants to draw your attention to is that God has a Name, and His Name is Yahweh. God is Yahweh.
- ii) “I am Yahweh *your* God”. Acknowledge Yahweh as *your* God before you call on Yahweh.
- iii) “I am Yahweh your God” occurs more than 30 times in the Old Testament. It is a personal message that God often gives to His people. The first time God spoke these words was to the Israelites when He delivered them from the bondage under the Egyptians (Exod 6:7). Know that Yahweh is a personable God who truly cares for you as He did for the Israelites.

- iv) “I am Yahweh your God *and there is none else*” in Joel 2:27. There is only one God. In the significant event of the giving of the Ten Commandments, God says: “I am Yahweh your God,” and then “you shall have no other gods before me” is the first commandment (Exod 20:2-3). Yahweh God warns against idolatry. “There is none else” means that there is no other god that is equal to Yahweh or besides Him. (Deu 4:35, 39; Isa 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22; 46:9). To call on the name Yahweh means that you worship only one God, and the one God is Yahweh.
- v) “*Yahweh dwells in Zion*” is stated twice in Joel (3:17, 21). Yahweh sits enthroned in Zion (Psa 9:11) and His holy mountain will be His dwelling place with His people. “Yahweh is exalted, for He dwells on high; He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, and He will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of Yahweh is Zion’s treasure.” (Isa 33:5-6). Yahweh dwells among His people and blesses those who fear Him and call on Him. He will grant to them the abundance of salvation.

## **(2) “Yahweh your God” — spoken by Joel**

In speaking directly to the people, Joel is speaking to an audience who truly acknowledge Yahweh as their God. Joel specifically uses the phrase “Yahweh your God” five times: “the house of Yahweh your God” (1:14); “return to Yahweh your God” (2:13); “a grain offering and a drink offering for Yahweh your God” (2:14); “rejoice in Yahweh your God” (2:23); “praise the Name of Yahweh your God who has dealt wondrously with you” (2:26).

The basic foundation of calling on the Name of Yahweh is to know that God’s Name is Yahweh and to acknowledge Yahweh as your God.

## 2. “O YHWH”

“O YHWH” is found in all three chapters of Joel. Joel calls out to Yahweh and addresses God in prayer.

### (1) To you, O YHWH

**Joel 1:19-20** To you, **O YHWH**, I call. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has burned all the trees of the field. Even the beasts of the field pant for you because the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness. (ESV, YHWH restored and boldface added)

### O YHWH

Joel addresses God by His Name. When we want to talk to another person, we would usually call the person’s name, wouldn’t we? Do you address God’s Name when you pray? Calling on the Name of Yahweh is the path to connecting with the living God by faith.

In serving the church, I am often approached by people who tell me they don’t know how to pray. They tell me they are not good with words. A few years ago, an elderly lady in the church told me that she wanted to pray like her pastor. She wanted to know how to compose all these beautiful words. Prayer, first and foremost, is to connect with God through His Name, and then the words will come. If we do not make contact with God first, yet start talking, we have not begun to pray. We would just end up talking to ourselves and not to God.

We make prayer so difficult because we have skipped the initial step of connecting with God through His Name. The problem that Christians face today is that they don’t really know God’s Name and the importance of God’s Name. Visitors coming to our church for the first time often ask us who is Yahweh for they don’t hear the name Yahweh in other churches. Christians may have a lot of information about God, but Yahweh is foreign to them. Start with a desire to know Yahweh.

## To You

“To you” are two small words that can easily go unnoticed, but they are the two most important words when it comes to the direction of prayer. “To you” is to *turn your full attention to* Yahweh.

In Hebrew, the word **לְךָ** (to you) has the preposition **לְ** which can be translated as “towards, into, to”. The preposition denotes “a motion to or a direction towards, whether physical or mental” (BDB). When Joel calls out to Yahweh, he *turns his mind towards* Yahweh.

(i) To call on the Name of Yahweh, we need to *turn our whole attention towards* Yahweh. I’ve counseled many Christians who tell me that they have a hard time focusing on God, because as soon as they close their eyes, they are still thinking about their own little world, their needs, their families, their jobs, and their problems. Their minds are very much preoccupied with their own needs when they pray. Their whole being is still turning inward when they pray. The result is that they say a lot of things in their prayers, but it is all a monologue. It is like the Pharisee “praying to himself” in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. To turn towards Yahweh, we must turn away from the “self” and look outward “to You” Yahweh. This is how the Psalmists pray.

**Psa 25:1** “To You, O YHWH, I lift up my soul.”

**Psa 28:1** “To You, O YHWH, I call”

**Psa 30:8** “To You, O YHWH, I cry and to the Lord I plead for mercy.”

**Psa 69:13** “As for me, my prayer is to You, O YHWH.”

**Psa 142:5** “I cry to You, O YHWH.”

(ii) Joel has his entire focus fixed on “You, Yahweh”. Stop thinking about “I”. Be still and stop striving. Be willing to spend time to quiet your heart before God so that when you pray, it is “You, Yahweh”. This is how great men of God pray.

**Psa 9:10** “And those who know your name put their trust in you, for You O YHWH, have not forsaken those who seek you.”

**Psa 31:14** “I trust in You, O YHWH; I say, You are my God.”

**Isa 63:16b** “You, O YHWH are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name”

**Jer 10:6** “There is none like You, O YHWH, you are great and your name is great in might.”

Spending the needed time to quiet before God is often pushed aside in our busy and fast paced life of Hong Kong. Too many Christians are in a rush to unload their anxieties and problems to God as soon they start to pray. It is all “I”. Change the “I” to “You” Yahweh.

(iii) Be quiet and wait expectantly for “Yahweh”. This principle of waiting is easy to understand but hard to practice. Ponder on the analogy of you calling someone by phone. When you dial the phone to get connected with the other person, you would wait for the person to pick up the phone before you start talking. It would be absurd to start talking to the person before he or she comes to the phone. But this is the sad situation many Christians are in when they pray. They would ramble on without a care of whether God is there or not. They have no time to wait for God in prayer.

(iv) When we call on Yahweh, seek His face.

**Psa 27:7-9** “Hear, O YHWH, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, “Seek my face.” My hearts says to you, “Your face, YHWH, do I seek.” Hide not your face from me.” (ESV, YHWH restored)

We cannot see God, so how do we seek after the face of God? The Hebrew word for face is פָּנִים (*paniyim*) often translated as “presence”.

**Psa 105:4** “Seek YHWH, and his strength; seek his *presence* (פָּנִים) continually!” (ESV, YHWH restored)

To seek the face of God is to seek His presence. This is the essence of our Christian life, to live a life that walks with God by seeking His favor and presence. We are to seek God's face always. This is how we get strengthened in our spiritual life.

When we look intently at someone's face, there is intimacy. We also get to know the character of the person intimately. In the same way, it is in seeking God's face that we get to know God and learn about His character.

**2 Chron 7:14** "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and *pray and seek my face* and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (ESV)

Yahweh God instructs the people of God to seek His face because they have abandoned Him and need to repent and return to Yahweh. When we pray, we humbly trust in Yahweh by seeking His face. Then God's face shines on us. This is how we experience God's salvation. So important is this concept that the Psalmist repeated it three times in his prayer.

**Psa 80:3** "Restore us, O God, let your face shine, that we may *be saved!*" (ESV)

**Psa 80:7** "Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may *be saved!*" (ESV)

**Psa 80:19** "Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!" (ESV, YHWH restored)

These are truly words of salvation when we experience God's restoration by calling on His Name to return to Him.

(v) Be still. Be fully present before God without any distractions in prayer. Learn to be fully present before Yahweh. Often times, it is not that God is not there, but you are not there. You cannot focus because

many distractions are pulling you in different directions. Suddenly you remember the number of tasks that need to get done. A million thoughts race through your mind. There's the special project, the blog posts, the laundry, the appointments, and all the people you will meet during the day. Cease all your activities and stop striving in prayer.

Imagine how frustrating it is to talk to a person whose eyes are rolling everywhere but are not fully concentrated before you. It takes discipline to stop all the things that distract the mind and heart. Only with focused attention on the other person can a meaningful relationship take place, when we are in each other's company.

True prayer is when I am not in charge. Let go and let God take over. Direct your mind and heart "to you Yahweh".

## (2) Spare your people, O YHWH

**Joel 2:17** "Spare your people, **O YHWH**, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (ESV, YHWH restored and boldface added)

God is looking for servants to stand in the gap to intercede for His people. "Spare your people O Yahweh".

Joel instructs the priests to mourn and weep in front of the altar and cry out to God. The priests are called "ministers of Yahweh" (1:9; 2:17). Priests minister by interceding for His people.

Call on the name of God to mourn for the people of God and pray for God's mercy on them so that they will not become a reproach among the nations (vv. 17, 19).

Let us learn to approach God directly, and let the Spirit of God pray through us to intercede for His people.

## (3) Bring down your warriors, O YHWH

**Joel 3:11b** "Bring down your warriors, **O YHWH**". (ESV, YHWH restored and boldface added)

This is a short but powerful and focused prayer of Joel. Joel chapter 3 speaks of a prophecy of the final gathering of the nations. The prophet Joel proclaims to the surrounding nations, telling them to march into the valley of Jehoshaphat to war against God's people. Joel compels them to gather for war, then suddenly he calls on God, "Bring down your warriors, O Yahweh." And Yahweh answers him.

In facing the hostility of God's enemies, we call out to Yahweh to intervene. God gives us victory. His enemies will be defeated and judged.

Joel chapter 3 is prophetic. We too need to get ready for the final battle, to come together and to call on Yahweh to win, to bring in the final redemption for God's people.

### 3. Wake up, weep and mourn

**Joel 1:5** "Awake, you drunkards, and *weep*, and *wail*." (ESV, italics added)

Joel chapter 1 speaks of the locust plague and its devastating results on the land. Locusts are ravenous eaters. "What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten" (1:4). The destruction was catastrophic as the locusts moved in four stages of successive swarms, destroying all the crops. Farmers lost their harvest. Drought came. The fields were ruined and the ground dried up. The wheat and barley were destroyed. The fig trees languished, and the vine, pomegranate, and apples shriveled. All the trees in the field withered away.

God's judgment came, yet His people were still asleep and drunk in their pitiful spiritual state.

It is time to wake up, to repent, and to put on sackcloth to cry out to God in mourning over sins. Weep, wail, and lament.

**Joel 1:8** "*Lament* like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth. (ESV)

Calling the Name of Yahweh is not a mere uttering of God’s Name, but a deep plea of a repentant heart that is filled with lament, like that of a bride wearing sackcloth who mourns for the death of her husband on her wedding day. It is unthinkable that a bride would be wearing sackcloth on her wedding day, but when joy turns to deep sorrow, the agony of the grief would be intensely overwhelming. Wail and weep. It was out of this kind of contrite heart that Joel calls out to Yahweh to save the Israelites from their desperate plight.

This is a wake-up call for us too. Pray that we may have this deep mourning to weep over our sins when we call on the name of Yahweh.

#### 4. Cry out to YHWH together

**Joel 1:13-14** “Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. Consecrate a fast; **call a solemn assembly**. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of YHWH your God, **cry out to YHWH.**” (ESV, YHWH restored and boldface added)

Joel exhorted the priests to gather the elders into the house of Yahweh in order to “cry out” to Yahweh to get right with Him. The grain offerings and drink offerings had been cut off from the house of Yahweh. Calling for a fast for repentance was surely a most appropriate move.

The Hebrew word for “cry out” is צָעַק (*zaaq*) which means “to call, to cry out in need” (BDB).

The locust plague, the drought, and the famine were not a result of natural disasters but “a destruction that came from the Almighty” (v.15). So severe was God’s judgment that food was cut off before their eyes (v.16), seed shriveled under the clods, storehouses were ruined, granaries were broken down, the grains dried up (v.17), the cattle moaned and had no pasture, and the flocks of sheep suffered (v.18).

The destruction on the land was God's judgment on His rebellious people. The raging fire destroyed everything (v.19). The land was threatened by successive crises. Even the beasts of the field panted for God (v.20) and the creation groaned. But what about God's people?

The situation was truly desperate. God sounded the alarm to wake up the entire nation of Israel. "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain" (2:1, 15). Joel warned the people that the crisis was not over yet, but would escalate in intensity. While greater destruction was arriving with an army of rumbling horses and chariots charging for war, Joel called on the nation of Israel to wake up.

## 5. Return to YHWH with all your heart

**Joel 2:12-13** "Yet even now," declares YHWH, "**return to me with all your heart**, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend *your hearts* and not your garments." **Return to YHWH** your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster." (ESV, YHWH restored and bold-face added)

Returning to Yahweh must begin from the heart. Indeed God searches our hearts. Putting on sackcloth and rending the garment are pointless if a heart of repentance is not there. God will be gracious and merciful to us if we return to Him with *all* our hearts.

Let our hearts be completely open to Yahweh God. Let us draw near to Yahweh and let God come close to us. Any resistance on our part will close the channel for God to cleanse us thoroughly from within.

Yield our hearts over to God. Give your whole heart to God and do not hold back. Many Christians are afraid of God getting too close, and don't want Him to touch their hearts. With sadness I watch them as their hearts slowly become hardened towards God. Their hearts grow cold and they become lukewarm. The fire of God is no longer there.

In my early Christian days, maintaining daily devotion was a daunting task. I would be in such a rush to do my daily activities that I did not make time for God. I had difficulty getting up early in the morning to

spend time with God. I was lazy. As a result, my spiritual life was a roller coaster ride going up and down with no fire for God. Many times I would kneel before God to ask for His forgiveness for not returning to Him with all my heart. We need to be zealous in our repentance. Only then will God's fire burn within our hearts, empowering us to love and serve Him with our all.

When we have sins in our hearts, we must repent and return to God. When Bible reading gets stale and prayer is feeble, return to Yahweh with all your heart. Let Him turn all your restlessness into restfulness in Him.

Call to Yahweh from the depths of your heart to return to Him. The calling is not done in any mechanical way. Neither do we use the Name of Yahweh as a formula. Do not “mouth” His Name, or pay lip service to God. Call on Yahweh from your heart to deliver you.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> full-time training conducted by Pastor Eric in 1994, he taught us how to call on the name of Yahweh. It was the first time I had learned to call on Yahweh in prayer. When I call on His name, I feel His pleasure. When I watch myself and others call out to Yahweh from the depths of the heart, there is a deep stirring in our souls to take hold of God. It is a moment of inner awakening. You yourself will know it when the calling is from the heart. You will experience an intense desire to draw close to God, and you will let Him draw close to you all the time. We are strengthened when we call on God's trusted Name. He always hears this kind of prayer.

## 6. Call on YHWH for the Day of YHWH is Near

**Joel 1:15** “Ah! For the day! For **the day of YHWH is near**. It will come like destruction from Shaddai.”

**Joel 2:1** “Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for **the day of YHWH is coming** — it is indeed **near**.”

**Joel 2:11** “And YHWH utters his voice before his army, because his encampment is very large; strong is the one who carries out his

decree, for great is **the day of YHWH** and exceedingly fearful. Who can endure it?”

**Joel 2:31** “The sun will be changed to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and awesome **day of YHWH**.”

**Joel 3:14** “Commotion, commotion in the valley of decision! For **the day of YHWH is near** in the valley of decision!” (all five verses quoted from LEB, boldface added)

Joel speaks of a significant day: the day of YHWH יוֹם יְהוָה. Not only is the day of Yahweh coming, it is near.

The Hebrew word for “near” is קָרוֹב (*qarob*), which means “near in place or time” (BDB). The day of Yahweh is indeed imminent; therefore the wake-up call to spiritual alertness demands an *immediate* response from us. Do not procrastinate any longer but get yourself spiritually ready for that day. Call on Yahweh.

How often do you ponder on the day of Yahweh? I often meditate on the day of Yahweh as we are moving ever closer to that day. Let’s call on the name of Yahweh, for God’s judgment has come. The Covid-19 pandemic has turned the world upside down since 2020. The music stopped. 2.3 million people died from the virus in one year. We were globally forced to stop in our tracks altogether. Many of our lives came to a halt with city lockdowns and social distancing. But even long before Covid-19, many of our lives had already been in effectual lockdown, and the coronavirus outbreak simply brought our pitiful situation to the surface. Already in the past decade, have you noticed that with smart-phones and social media, sitting together with friends and family has ironically become less sociable, with people disengaged from one another in self absorption in their phones? People don’t like to engage in meaningful conversation anymore. Everything is done in quick and easy messages. We seem to be more efficient, but we have become more isolated and self-centered. Loneliness, fear, anxiety, stress, and depression have started controlling many lives. Has Covid-19 wakened us up to put our lives in order before God?

The judgment of the locust invasion in Joel has parallels—whether physical or spiritual—in modern times. While everyone’s attention has been focused on combating the coronavirus, many may not be aware of the locust swarms migrating across Africa, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, India, and southwest China, destroying crops. We are living in critical days of the end times. Pandemic, locusts, plague, drought and famine are all signs of the end times (cf. Luke 21:11). Just as the locust plague and the famine in Joel foreshadow a far greater and devastating judgment to come, we are now living in the *shadow* of the nearness of the day. Are we prepared for famine when it comes our way? It may be just around the corner. Could it be that from now on, wearing face masks is a necessity of life until the day of Yahweh? That day does not suddenly come without signs and warnings. Each sign ought to prompt us to repent speedily.

Joel describes the day of Yahweh as “a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Joel 2:2). It is a great and terrible day, who can endure it?

We can also get a better understanding of the day of Yahweh from the messages of other OT prophets. The day of Yahweh is also called “that day” (Isa 2:11) or “the great day” (Zeph 1:14). The day of Yahweh often conveys a sense of the imminence and nearness of impending judgment. Destruction from the Almighty will come soon (Isa 13:6). The day of Yahweh is near, a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations (Ezek 30:3). The day of Yahweh is darkness and gloom with no light and brightness (Amos 5:18, 20). The day of Yahweh is a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and lofty battlements (Zeph 1:14-16). In a nutshell, the day of Yahweh is a great and dreadful day (Mal 4:5). It is a terrible day of wrath, who can withstand it? (Rev 6:17)

As the day of Yahweh is yet to come, we now wait for its eschatological arrival. The end times will be dreadful. Who can endure the intense crisis? The day of Yahweh is great yet terrible—great for the remnant as they will experience salvation, and terrible for the wicked as they will be punished in judgment.

## 7. The Call to YHWH for Salvation is in YHWH

**Joel 2:32** “And it shall come to pass that everyone *who calls on the name of YHWH shall be saved*. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as YHWH has said, and among the survivors shall be *those whom YHWH calls*. (ESV, YHWH restored and italics added)

(1) Joel is referring to a *future* event that will take place in the *final* salvation for mankind. The day of Yahweh will be impossible to endure without God’s mercy. Those who call on the Name of Yahweh *will be saved*.

(2) In Joel, the promise of salvation comes in the form of blessings from Yahweh. The blessings that He pours out are twofold: earthly physical abundance (2:18-27) and spiritual empowering (2:28-32). Blessings will come upon the land as Yahweh satisfies His people with grain, wine, and oil. The wilderness will turn into green pastures, trees will bear fruit, and the vine and fig tree will give their full yield. Abundant rain will come to nurture the crops. The threshing floor will be full of grain, and the vats will overflow with wine and oil. The people of God will eat in plenty and be satisfied. Later, spiritual blessings will come with the outpouring of the Spirit upon *all* flesh—sons and daughters, the old and the young; even male and female servants are included. The promise of the Spirit of Yahweh upon all flesh is a sign of the salvation that God promises to His people.

The fulfillment of God’s prophecies often takes place in stages. One day, the entire people of Yahweh will become a prophetic community with the empowering of the Spirit of Yahweh. Visions and dreams will be given to young and old such that everyone, no matter what their status is, can receive direct revelations from God and so become messengers of Yahweh.

(3) Salvation is experienced by those who call on the Name of Yahweh. There will be deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. It is a day of salvation as God delivers the remnant who are faithful to Him. Bear in

mind that those who call on Yahweh are not just crying out to escape from the destruction but expressing their faith in Yahweh in total reliance on Him, the one in whom they take refuge (3:16). They trust in Yahweh as their God, and He delivers them. There is a remnant whom Yahweh calls.

**The promise of salvation spoken by Joel is relevant to us** as we are now nearer to the day of Yahweh. As Paul says, “For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11). Do you see the urgency to call on the Name of Yahweh? How can you call on Yahweh if you don’t know His Name? For most of my Christian life, I was not aware of the significance of God’s Name Yahweh. It is only in the last ten years that I spent almost every day learning about Yahweh my God in Scripture. Since 2013, I started writing blogs to share about the Name of Yahweh with the world. The motivation behind this book is also to inspire you to grasp the significance of the Name so that you call on Yahweh. Calling on Yahweh is not invoking the Name in a mechanical manner as though the calling is something magical. The calling must be exercised with faith in Yahweh God.

I call on God’s Name because I trust in Yahweh and desire to build an ongoing friendship with Him. The calling is not a casual uttering of the Name but a deep cry expressing my full submission to Yahweh, to live under the authority of His Name. “Yahweh is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” (Psalm 145:18). Call on Yahweh with a pure and honest heart that trusts in Yahweh alone without wavering.

**Let’s heed the message of Joel** and call on Yahweh God in truthfulness of heart, with fasting, weeping and mourning. At the beginning of Joel, God’s judgment first came upon the people of Yahweh, so that the people of God learned to lament and return to Yahweh by calling on His Name for deliverance. After Yahweh delivered His people, the judgment then came upon the enemies of Yahweh in Judah. Yahweh saves us for He is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and he relents over disaster” (Joel 2:13). Those who don’t repent have much to fear, but those who call on Yahweh with a contrite heart can rejoice in His salvation.

Call on Yahweh today. If you don't call on the Name of Yahweh now, how will you call on the Name of Yahweh for your final salvation? Calling on the Name of Yahweh expresses a lifestyle that fully trusts in Yahweh with a total heart.

Salvation and blessings come on those who call on Yahweh and those whom Yahweh calls. The end time will be beyond human endurance, so the only way we can survive is to call on God's Name. Start today to live a lifestyle that calls on the Name of Yahweh.

## End of Sample File

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