

“The Valley Of Decision”

Joel 3:1-16

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Teaching Aim: To realize Israel was restored to the Promised Land on May 14, 1948, just as God had promised in Scripture. To understand God will hold nations accountable for the way they treated Israel. To recognize the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, along with His holy angels, will obliterate the enemies of God on the ultimate “*Day of the LORD*” when He sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: God promises to bring His chosen people (*the Jews*) back home (Joel 3:1-7)

1. What did the LORD promise to do for the captives of Judah and Jerusalem in **verse 1**? How did World War II help set the stage for the Jews to return to the Promised Land after almost 2,000 years of dispersion? On what date was this promise answered? What was Hitler’s goal with the Jews? What actually happened? Although partially fulfilled in 1948 (See **Ezek. 37**), when will this prophecy ultimately be fulfilled? (See **Zech. 14:3-4; Rev. 20:1-6**)

2. According to **verse 2**, what will God do sometime after Israel returns to the land? Nobody knows for sure where the “*Valley of Jehoshaphat*” is located geographically, the important point here is the name “*Jehoshaphat*”. What does the name mean? (See Bible footnotes) What will God do when He gathers the nations to this valley (**vs. 2b**)? Why? What two crimes are specifically mentioned here (**vs. 2**)?

3. During World War II, Hitler removed the status of personhood from the Jews by declaring them subhuman and lower than the animals. In his goal to achieve an Aryan superior race, Hitler convinced people the Jews needed to be exterminated. This freed up many Germans to slaughter the Jews and not feel guilty about it. How low had the wicked nations stooped in Joel’s time (**vs. 3**)? What do these examples teach us about the morality of the enemies of God? What can we learn about God Himself from **verses 1-3**?

4. The Phoenicians were well known as slave traders in the ancient world (**vv. 3 & 4**). (See **Amos 1:6,9**) What makes slave trading such a horrendous crime? According to God, when Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia were fighting against Israel, whom were they really fighting against (**vv. 4 & 5**)? If these nations retaliate against Israel because of God's protection, what can they expect in return from God? What happens to us when we fight against God today?
5. In **verses 2, 3, and 5**, God uses the personal pronoun "My" some 8 x: (*"My people"; "My heritage Israel"; "My land"; "My silver" and "My gold"; "My prized possessions", etc.*) When nations attack Israel, they attack God and He takes it personal. Today many nations around the world hate Israel and would love to see the nation annihilated. What can they expect in return from God?
6. Why did the people of Tyre, Sidon and Philistia sell the citizens of Judah and Jerusalem into slavery (**vs. 6**)? It is interesting to note that these nations prospered financially because of their crimes against the Jews. What did God promise to do to them in return (**vs. 7**)? Did He?

Part II: God will repay the wicked nations for the way they treated the Jews (Joel 3:8-11)

1. Have you ever heard the saying, "*What goes around comes around*?" According to **verse 8**, what will happen to the children of those who dared to sell the Jews into slavery? Who will be selling who next time? To whom? What famous queen in Solomon's time came from this area? (See **1 Kin. 10:1-13**)
2. God sends a call to the nations, "*Prepare for war!*" (**vs.9**). If you were preparing to go to battle, how would you prepare yourself mentally? How about spiritually? **Verse 9** says to "*Wake up mighty men!*" Do you think most of the people in the world today are asleep to the coming judgment of God? Why? (See **2 Cor. 4:4**) How can we as Christians be used by God to awaken people from their sleep? (See **John 3:16-17; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:14-17**)

3. Israel was an agrarian (*or farming*) society as were many of her neighbors. In what unusual way did God tell the wicked nations to prepare for war (**vs. 10**)? In **verse 10**, even the common folks are told to prepare for war, but most don't realize they are headed to Armageddon. How does the description in **verse 10** differ from similar descriptions in **Isa. 2:4** and **Mic. 4:2-3**? What future period in time do these verses describe?

4. God calls the wicked nations to war in **verse 11** (*now symbolizing the final battle at the end of the age*). Who will the armies of these nations have to fight against according to **verse 11b**? (**See Exod. 15:2-3; Psa. 24:8; Rev. 19:11-16**) Do they have any chance of winning? According to **Amos 5:18-20**, should the unbelievers look forward to this day? What should unbelievers expect?

Part III: The Lord will avenge Israel by destroying her wicked enemies (Joel 3:12-16)

1. In **verse 12**, the nations are commanded to "*awaken.*" Do you think our nation is asleep today to its desperate need for Jesus Christ? Do the people of our country realize judgment is coming? What are some of the factors that have caused our country to move so far away from God? Who do we need to turn to if we are to avoid this coming judgment? (**See Isa. 55:6-7**) According to **verse 12**, who will judge "*every*" nation?

2. Stanza 1 of "*The Battle Hymn Of The Republic*" reads: "*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He has loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword – His truth is marching on. Glory, Glory Hallelujah*" (*Hallelujah meaning "Praise Yahweh" or "Praise the LORD"*). How does stanza 1 of "*The Battle Hymn Of The Republic*" relate to **Joel 3:13**, **Rev. 14:14-20** and **19:13-16**? Why do you think our government plays the music but avoids singing the words of "*The Battle Hymn Of The Republic*" today at public events? Who is this song about? What is this song about? What has changed, the song or our government's view of Christ?

3. Repetition in the Hebrew mindset is used to demonstrate special emphasis. What emphasis is being proclaimed in **verse 14** and why is this message so important to us today? Who are the "*multitudes?*" What is the approximate world population today? (Google it!) What do we find "*the Valley of Jehoshaphat*" (**vs. 2**) being called in **verse 14**? Who is called to make a decision here?

4. What cosmic disturbances will take place on “*the Day of the LORD*” according to **verse 15**? Do we find similar descriptions elsewhere in the Bible? (See **Joel 2:30-31; Amos 5:18; Matt. 24:27-30**) What period in history do each of these passages refer to?
5. During His First Advent, Jesus came as “*the tender Lamb of God.*” What will Jesus come as at His Second Advent or Second Coming (**vs. 16**)? (See **Rev. 5:5**) According to **verse 16**, where will Jesus reign from when He returns in glory? What will the response of heaven and earth be to the coming wrath of God? If inanimate objects like heaven and earth have the sense to tremble at the holiness of God, shouldn't we tremble as well?
6. According to **verse 16b**, how will the LORD treat His people on this day? Who will shelter and protect God's people during the coming storm? Is Jesus your protector and shelter today? If you have never received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, why not repent of your sin and do so in prayer right now?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The nations will be gathered to “*the Valley of Jehoshaphat*” (meaning “*Yahweh judges*” or “*the LORD judges*”); this valley is also referred to as “*the Valley of Decision*” (**vs. 14**).
- God will repay Israel's enemies for the way they mistreated His chosen people.
- Every human being will one day be judged by God; we will either be judged on our own merits or on the merits of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ will obliterate the enemies of God at His Second Coming when He returns to earth with the holy angels to set up His Millennial Kingdom.
- The Lord will be a shelter for His chosen people and their strength during the end time conflict and then throughout all eternity.
- It is important for us to remember in hard times, “*God plus us equals a majority,*” no matter what we are facing in life.