

**Back to Armageddon
God's Judgement of the Nations and the Future for Judah
Joel 3:9 – 21**

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As we approach the end of this book, let's review. The book of Joel is all about the Day of the Lord. As we have learned, that is not a single 24-hour time period but is a period lasting over 1,000 years. "The Day of the Lord includes the whole program from the beginning of the tribulation period through to the new heaven and new earth after the millennium." Revelation 4:1 through 22:7. (Pentecost 1964, Kindle Location 9902)

There are other views of this, but I agree with the view of Dr. Pentecost. We are at the end of the Tribulation based on where we are in Joel, but not at the end of the Day of the Lord.

We must not get confused from the terms and actions taking place around us as the church in Thessalonica did. "It is critical to understand that the day of the Lord cannot possibly begin until the church has been removed from the earth. Paul consistently taught the rapture of the church must take place first, and only then can the day of the Lord begin." Things are getting weird now, but then, totally off the hook. (Olander 2008, 271)

Zephaniah 1:18

"Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land." (NKJV)

We learned that during that “Day,” there are numerous actions which take place impacting primarily earth dwellers, some of which are outlined for us here in Joel, but parts are also in Isaiah, Zechariah, Zephaniah, Amos, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Luke, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter and Revelation.

The theme is removal of the usurpers who are type that was shown to us by Joshua as the Lord used Him to remove the squatters in the land. Yes, the book of Joshua also provides insight into the day of the Lord.

I will not claim that book list to be exhaustive either.

We have been examining that time during the Day, at the end of the Tribulation, when the nations of the world are being judged; the major event of that being Armageddon, but that is not the conclusion. There is still more to come before the Day ends.

In the chronology of the last days, we are past the end of the Tribulation and the battle of Armageddon, but before the beginning of the Millennium, and we will look back to Armageddon again. Last time we learned about a 75-day time period that exists in the Biblical text of which we do not have a lot of information about. But we do have enough to produce some conjectures of what is happening during that time.

Joel 3:1–13

““For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land. They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a prostitute, And sold a girl for wine so that they may drink. Moreover, what are you to Me, Tyre, Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you repaying Me with retribution? But if you are showing Me retribution, swiftly and speedily I will return your retribution on your head! Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory, behold, I am going to stir them up from the place where you have sold them, and return your retribution on your head. I will also sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a distant nation,” for the LORD has spoken. “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for holy war; stir up the warriors! Have all the soldiers come forward, have them come up! Beat your plowshares into swords, And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak man say, “I am a warrior.” Hurry and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, LORD, Your warriors. Let the nations be awakened And come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread the grapes, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.”” (NASB 2020)

There is a clear contrast between this part of Joel, and what we studied earlier about the invasion of the locusts. Judah was completely laid waste and their only hope was in YAHWEH. They recognized that, repented and were restored by Him. We have seen that repeated as well during the Day of the Lord in the lead up to the conclusion of the battle of Armageddon.

There is another contrast here too though. Where Judah was destroyed by the army of locusts and completely laid waste; this is now where the nations are at the end of the Tribulation.

Judah repented and they were restored by YAHWEH. The nations, though invited to do so by 144,000 Jewish evangelists, refused to do so. So now arriving here, the nations, personally invited and supernaturally drawn to this location, deep in rebellion; gather to fight God.

Dramatically as the forces of the beast turned from fighting the Jews as well as other armies arrayed against them in the land of Israel, they then turned and joined forces with those same enemies against a common enemy, the Messiah, Jesus Christ as He and His invasion force suddenly appear in the sky.

They have all been drawn to a single location in order to expedite the beginning of the judgement on the nations.

Their stated goal was one last battle to deal with the Jews and the enemies of the state, but when God shows up, everything changes. The true reason they have been drawn to this location by the Lord is they are here for judgment.

Zechariah 14:12–13

“But this will be the nature of the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will decay while they stand on their feet, their eyes will rot away in their sockets, and their tongues will dissolve in their mouths. On that day there will be great confusion from the LORD among them; they will seize each other and attack one another violently.” (NET 2nd ed.)

As the earth dwellers realize who their enemy is, the one who ends their rule on this planet, they turn as one to attack Him and it does not end well for them.

Joel 3:9–12

“Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for holy war; stir up the warriors! Have all the soldiers come forward, have them come up! Beat your plowshares into swords, And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak man say, “I am a warrior.” Hurry and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, LORD, Your warriors. Let the nations be awakened And come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.” (NASB 2020)

This is the “final end-time attack of the kingdoms of this world against the kingdom of our God and His Christ (as) mentioned over and over again in Scripture (cf. Isa. 8:9, 14; 17:12–14; Ezek. 38–39; Zech. 12–14; Rev. 16:14–16; 19:17–19). (Uttley 2008, 88)

The King has used irony in His command to the nations to show up. He tells the enemy to prepare, to consecrate themselves, mocking them and their worship of the beast.

Revelation 13:3–4

“One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”” (ESV)

The nations of the world are about to learn just exactly who can fight against the beast. God mocks them all with His call here in Joel.

Why do I say mocking, it shows up in the Hebrew. The nations have no conception of reality and believe they are serving their god by serving the beast (Revelation 13:4), thus the word in Hebrew we see translated as ‘prepare.’ It is קָדְשׁוּ (qaddsu) which means to “be set apart, consecrated, hallowed...” (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 872)

They are going to war on behalf of their god against the one who is God. This requires some serious courage building and incredible spiritual blindness.

The picture being drawn is one of total and full mobilization, no exemption. “The nations will actually draft the farmers who would normally be exempt to keep the food supply flowing and to turn their farm tools into weapons. Even the weak—the young and disabled of society—will be drafted. The hour will be so critical that the nations will be summoned to the battlefield as quickly as possible (v. 11).” Remember that the battle will be fought in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 2008, 40)

In Isaiah 2 and Micah 4, we read of the implements of war being turned into agricultural tools during the rule of Christ, but here, we again see irony being employed as the opposite is being encouraged. These people may not have initially thought they were going to war with God, perhaps they only thought this was a final battle for the beast, but God intends to turn it into judgement as we see the true heart of man turn against his creator in open warfare. All bets are off and total commitment to the combat operation has been made. All agricultural production worldwide has been halted for this to happen.

In that decision, we see the enemy's true hatred for those who think they are worshipping him (Revelation 13:4) by being part of this army. They are being led to slaughter. Even those who normally are considered not worthy for combat because of physical infirmity are in this too. They are not aware of the assessment of Jesus about the one they worship. The thief is Satan, and he has one goal.

John 10:10

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (ESV)

The earth dwellers, those who are firmly entrenched in the world's system, believe they are going out to fight a final battle to achieve victory for the Beast. Their god is the dragon (Satan), and his false Christ is the beast. One would think that they would be wise enough to see the insanity of what they are doing, but as the Bible teaches us, they are no longer in their right mind and are seeking after madness (Deuteronomy 28:28).

They are convinced that once that is done, he will make everything alright. Jesus though warned what the true goal of Satan is.

Matthew 24:22

"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (NKJV)

Satan's goal is to kill off all of mankind, all of those created in the image of God. A final battle against the Jews and those who have turned against him at the cost of agricultural production ensuring starvation of everyone else will help to achieve his goal, no one left for Messiah to rescue.

It is all a trap as God is the one calling the shots and bringing all the rebels into one location for judgement.

Joel 3:11–12

"Hurry and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, LORD, Your warriors. Let the nations be awakened And come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations." (NASB 2020)

The Lord tells them to hurry up. Again, His timetable is to prevent the destruction of all of mankind, but it does include judgment of these rebels, those who have aligned with the Beast and those who have mistreated His people. He is returning as the avenger of blood and He will be seated, as a judge, for this military action.

He also calls for His armies to be there, but we do not read of those forces engaging the enemy. I tend to think they are there to prevent anyone who is destined for judgment from getting away. They are guarding the battlefield for His next action.

Isaiah 63:4–6

"For I looked forward to the day of vengeance, and then payback time arrived. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was shocked because there was no one offering support. So my right arm accomplished deliverance; my raging anger drove me on. I trampled nations in my anger; I made them drunk in my rage; I splashed their blood on the ground." (NET 2nd ed.)

Joel 3:13–17

“Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread the grapes, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon have become dark, And the stars have lost their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge for His people, And a stronghold for the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling on Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will no longer pass through it.” (NASB 2020)

We have a harvest scene drawn for us of a crop that is ready for harvest, to the point of being over ready. This same scene is repeated for us in Revelation making it clear for us that this is judgement.

It is clear that the scenes in the Revelation are taken from this prophecy, and describe the accomplishment of the events here foretold. We learn, therefore, the time, connection, and object of these judgments. The time is the advent of the day of the Lord, the period when He judges the Gentiles and restores Israel. Here, therefore, we see Israel to be the centre of His purposes, Jerusalem the centre of His interests, Zion the centre of His government. The Gentiles, who have long oppressed them, are gathered for judgment, and the power and glory of Jehovah are manifested on the side of His chosen people, and issue forth from His chosen city. God has permitted the Gentiles to have their day, and the pass to which they have brought things is the terrible blasphemy and wickedness of the beast acting under Satanic inspiration. At this point He must intervene in judgment—“the harvest of the earth is ripe.” (Baines 2005, 202-203)

Revelation 14:14–20

“Then I looked, and a white cloud appeared, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man! He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple, shouting in a loud voice to the one seated on the cloud, “Use your sickle and start to reap, because the time to reap has come, since the earth’s harvest is ripe!” So the one seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Another angel, who was in charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, “Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes off the vine of the earth, because its grapes are now ripe.” So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the grapes from the vineyard of the earth and tossed them into the great winepress of the wrath of God. Then the winepress was stomped outside the city, and blood poured out of the winepress up to the height of horses’ bridles for a distance of almost 200 miles.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The imagery shows the Lord, sickle in hand, prepared to reap. It is at this point that an angel comes from the Temple in heaven to let Him know the hour has arrived. This is not a command, but an announcement from the angel, the time has arrived. Note the condition of the harvest. Another angel is involved in making sure all who are to be there, are there.

The word translated “ripe” is the Greek word ἐξηράνθη (exeranthe). This word means to “become dry to the point of being immobilized, be paralyzed. To become dry and therefore be ready for harvesting, be ripe. (Arndt, Danker and Bauer 2000, 684-685)

The idea is of something that is over-ripe. This means that God will judge the earth only when it is over-ripe for judgment. He doesn’t rush into judgment. (Guzik 2013, Rev 14:14-16)

For Joel, he began talking about how the locusts destroyed the crops of Judah as a type of the Day of the Lord, and now he comes back to the same image as the Lord begins judging the nations of the world. They are over ripe and almost past time for harvest, just right for a full vintage to be harvested.

Joel 3:14

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.” (NASB 2020)

As the various armies of the world are drawn to this one location, we are given a picture of them all in their military splendor coming into a central location where they will initially fight each other. “The prophet viewed many multitudes in the valley, which he now referred to as the valley of decision because there, God will make a decision concerning their fate. This day of the Lord was near from his perspective, which for the prophets was often deceiving due to their foreshortened view of the future.” (Constable 2003, Joel 3:14)

Even as these armies enter into the valley to engage, they are still, each one of them, responsible for the decisions they make. They could turn and leave or continue on as most do. We have already seen what happens to those who are engaged in the attack on Jerusalem, and we know that the armies will turn on each other.

Another, perhaps more appropriate, translation, would be, “Mobs of people, mobs of people, in the Valley of Verdict.” There is no opportunity of salvation here; the throngs of people are described simply as “mobs” and not as individuals for whom there is any hope. (Garrett 1997, 392)

The word is *הַמִּוֶּנֶה* (hamonim) horde, a host or a vast multitude. (Lexham Press 2017)

For those who enter...doom.

Scripture though is appearing to be conclusive on the only one to be engaged in combat is Jesus Christ. We know this from what we have seen in Isaiah 63:1 and Revelation 19:11 – 16. We also know that the sword He uses is His word, what He speaks. The plague we read about in Zechariah 14 sounds like something is impacting this army on a cellular level.

What is it that Jesus says or does that could have that impact? Simple, He is the creator, and He holds all things together. This also means He could cease to hold things together. We really do not know but we do get hints from scripture.

Colossians 1:15–20

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (ESV)

Jesus is the nuclear glue. It could be Jesus simply ceases holding them together and they learn the truth stated in Colossians 1. We really do not know.

How Jesus judges the nations is something we will see firsthand since we, as believers, are part of that army coming with Him referenced in Revelation 19. He does it all.

The valley of decision is a picture of His wrath. “The metaphor of warfare has almost disappeared from the text at this point; this is no battle but simply the execution of a divine judgment.” (Garrett 1997, 392)

There are two pictures in this chapter, the one of the sheep and goats judgement with all mankind in the valley as He is seated in judgement (Joel 3:1 – 8), and there is also the picture of Him seated in judgement prior to that, when He returns as the avenger of blood on behalf of His people as He rescues them at Armageddon (Joel 3:9 – 17).

When Jesus says the word, and the plague comes upon them, the blood will flow 5 feet high for a distance of 200 miles (Revelation 14:20). Joel though hears the battle, and provides some background, but no detail.

We hear the roar and thunder of the battle, but we see no fighting, as if a heavy cloud hung over the valley shutting out of view the scene. There is a lack of detail and of definiteness which creates a feeling of vagueness, not unsuited nor unimpressive. We might interpret this as due to the writer's shy regard and reverence which prevented him from describing minutely the battle between the heavenly and the earthly armies... (Powis Smith, Ward and Bewer 1911, 136)

Joel 3:15–17

“The sun and moon have become dark, And the stars have lost their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge for His people, And a stronghold for the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling on Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will no longer pass through it.” (NASB 2020)

All of creation reacts to the Day of the Lord. Those who worshiped darkness get what they wanted, darkness. God though maintains protection for His people.

This is seen in the bowl judgements (Revelation 16:10) and reiterated here by Joel and later by Isaiah (Isaiah 13:10, 24:23).

In verse 16 the Lord roars from Zion. We hear His intervention on behalf of His people. We will see this again in another week as we pick up with the book of Amos, He roars in Amos 1:2.

The voice which spoke the universe into existence at creation has the power to rattle it (as his locusts did the land in 2:10) in judgment and restoration. The context suggests that the divine Lion is roaring words of assurance to his own (cf. Hos. 11:10–11) more than threats of disaster to the outsiders. (Hubbard 1989, 84)

As horrid as the conditions are for those being judged, for His people, He is a refuge and a stronghold. Before everything goes dark, they see this.

Revelation 19:11–16

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” (ESV)

And then everything goes dark except for the light that is Jesus. For those being judged, they are now in darkness, staggering and groping around in the dark (Joel 3:15) trying to acquire the targets they are desperate to destroy.

Psalms 2:4–6

“He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”” (ESV) They are killing each other rather than hitting their intended target. Above the noise and screams they hear a sound louder than any of the noises and sounds of the battlefield; a sound that strikes fear in their hearts. That sound, a roar from the Lion of Judah, the King in judgment, is the last thing they ever will hear in this life.

Amos 1:2

“And he said, “The LORD roars from Zion, And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; And the shepherds’ pasture grounds mourn, And the summit of Carmel dries up.” (NASB 2020)

There is terror on the battlefield. Millions who had gathered to fight each other, then turned to fight God, are now gone. All that is left is animal food for the carrion birds. Silence begins to grow. The reversal that takes place is stunning. The sun suddenly shines.

Revelation 19:17–18

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” (ESV)

With the same suddenness of reversal that was experienced by Judah when they repented and YAHWEH restored them from the locust invasion, the threat is gone, the Beast and his forces are gone, and Messiah has come. And His people are now filled with the Holy Spirit.

Joel 3:17

“Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling on Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will no longer pass through it.” (NASB 2020)

As the noise dies down, it is replaced with the praises of joy from those whom Messiah has rescued.

He will be known by his people as the Lord their God, the one who saves them. The fact that the Lord once more will inhabit Zion explains why it has finally become inviolable. The Israelites had wrongly attributed invincibility to the locale itself. But now that the person of the Covenant LORD will be there for ever, the people can be assured that his city will never fall to foreigners. (Robertson 1995, 111-112)

Jerusalem has been set apart by YAHWEH. His intent is to dwell there with His people and because He will dwell there, that makes it Holy and a place that no unbeliever can ever come through again. We see that exhibited in the conditions of the city yet to come (Revelation 21:27).

For the nations, Yahweh’s presence on Mt Zion, in conjunction with the cosmic display of power and the roaring of His voice from Jerusalem, generates fear and panic (cf. Rev 6:12–17). The Judge of all the earth has taken up residence and is dispensing His righteous judgment upon the unrighteous. But for His own people, His presence and the sound of His voice provide assurances of protection. (Busenitz 2003, 215)

Joel 3:18–21

“And on that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Shittim. Egypt will become a wasteland, And Edom will become a desolate wilderness, Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, In whose land they have shed innocent blood. But Judah will be inhabited forever, And Jerusalem for all generations. And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the LORD dwells in Zion.” (NASB 2020)

The restoration being promised here by the Lord is staggering. The planet has been devastated by the earth dwellers and judgements that have been poured out on them by God. His people have responded the same way as they responded earlier in Joe when they repented and looked to Him to restore them from the loss of everything. They are in that same place at the end of Armageddon.

Just as He did the past, those in Jerusalem visibly see the formerly destitute surroundings of the city turn green with crops. Abundance is again the word.

God is a promise keeping God. He has saved His people by direct intervention and removed the usurpers from the land. He has restored the land above and beyond anyone's wildest dreams. "He predicts that the environment where God's future people will live will be marked by superabundant fertility." (Patterson and Hill 2008, 147)

We are talking about superabundance here. On top of that, all of the streams have water in them.

No more drought, no more disease, no more insects, no more wars, no more enemy armies, no more economic ruin. "The soil will become fertile; the harvest will be enormous; and prosperity will flow throughout the nation. In fact, the economy will flourish so much that it will be as though the mountains drip with new wine and the hills flow with milk. At last, the land of Israel will become the land that flows with "milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8; Le. 20:24; De. 11:9). In addition, the water supply will be endless, satisfying the thirst of every dry tongue." (Leadership Ministries Worldwide 2008, 43)

Joel 3:18b

"And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Shittim." (NASB 2020)

This is a new water source. Other prophets expand on this. Imagine, water gushing out from the Temple where YAHWEH resides. A physical sign of what is also taking place spiritually on all, the Holy Spirit filling everyone post sheep and goats judgement. No shortages of water and no lack of His Spirit. Zechariah gives us a hint of the same (Zechariah 14:8), but it is left to Ezekiel to provide the details and the source.

Zechariah 14:8

"On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter." (ESV)

Zechariah calls the water, living waters. This is physical, but again, also a fulfilled promise which is available even today for those who follow Christ.

John 7:38

"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " (ESV)

Ezekiel 47:1-12

"In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw a stream flowing east from beneath the door of the Temple and passing to the right of the altar on its south side. The man brought me outside the wall through the north gateway and led me around to the eastern entrance. There I could see the water flowing out through the south side of the east gateway. Measuring as he went, he took me along the stream for 1,750 feet and then led me across. The water was up to my ankles. He measured off another 1,750 feet and led me across again. This time the water was up to my knees. After another 1,750 feet, it was up to my waist. Then he measured another 1,750 feet, and the river was too deep to walk across. It was deep enough to swim in, but too deep to walk through. He asked me, "Have you been watching, son of man?" Then he led me back along the riverbank. When I returned, I was surprised by the sight of many trees growing on both sides of the river. Then he said to me, "This river flows east through the desert into the valley of the Dead Sea. The waters of this stream will make the salty waters of the Dead Sea fresh and pure. There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. Life will flourish wherever this water flows. Fishermen will stand along the shores of the Dead Sea. All the way from En-gedi to En-eglaim, the shores will be covered with nets drying in the sun. Fish of every kind will fill the Dead Sea, just as they fill the Mediterranean. But the marshes and swamps will not be purified; they will still be salty. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, for they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing.'" (NLT)

Isaiah gives us a picture of that day as well.

Isaiah 44:3–5

“For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’ another will call on the name of Jacob, and another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’ and name himself by the name of Israel.” (ESV)

Joel 3:19

“Egypt will become a wasteland, And Edom will become a desolate wilderness, Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, In whose land they have shed innocent blood.” (NASB 2020)

Just as the Lord is fulfilling His promises to His people and bringing prosperity, He reminds them again that He is a promise keeping God and brings up the future of two nations that cursed them.

Essential to the message of salvation for Israel is the certitude that God has avenged the innocent blood which Edom and Egypt have shed in Judah. (Hubbard 1989, 87)

Because the enemies of His people have been dealt with by God, never to cause a problem again, the nation is now fully able to enjoy the fulness of life that flows from the Temple. He is there to never leave.

Joel 3:20–21

“But Judah will be inhabited forever, And Jerusalem for all generations. And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the LORD dwells in Zion.” (NASB 2020)

The promise of restoration, ultimate restoration is now stated clearly by the Lord. Once they are fully restored, they will never leave.

There is also a promise that for those who abuse Israel, in the past, present and future, of a future as well. When Jesus Christ returns, He does so as the avenger of blood.

The promise is sobering, “—namely, that the eternal desolation of the world-kingdoms mentioned here will wipe out all the wrong which they have done to the people of God, and which has hitherto remained unpunished. But Zion will rejoice in the eternal reign of its God. Jehovah dwells upon Zion, when He manifests Himself to all the world as the King of His people, on the one hand by the annihilation of His foes, and on the other hand by the perfecting of His kingdom in glory. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 153)

Joel began with judgement and an appeal to repent and return in order to experience His restoration. When He restores, He goes beyond anything we could dream of even recovering lost years for us by providing overwhelming blessings in the current day.

This promise is amazing, but then when you add in the outpouring of His Holy Spirit on all flesh...wow.

Once the Spirit has been poured out, the way is clear for the arrival of the final Day of Judgement, the last manifestation of the Day of the LORD. On that one day, the wicked will be utterly destroyed and the righteous will stand vindicated for ever in his presence. This message presents great hope for God’s people, while also sending forth a warning to all the nations of the earth, a warning that must be heeded. (Robertson 1995, 114-115)

Join us. Be part of that group that will be standing together with His people in that day, returning, as we have learned, as part of the heavenly host. He is a promise keeping God.

His promise of salvation is for whoever listens and takes action on the offer He has presented to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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