

**Watcha Gonna Do When They Come for You?
The Judgement of the Nations
Joel 2:30 – 3:13**

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The book of Joel is all about the Day of the Lord and we are going to fly over a lot of prophetic ground in this study today in order to place what Joel is saying, into the appropriate prophetic context.

If you want more detail on specifics of the Day of the Lord, some of that we will get to as we continue our studies in other books of the Minor Prophets. There is also additional detail in our studies of Daniel, Revelation, Ezekiel and Isaiah.

The Bible is always the best commentary on the Bible. So let me give you my view based on what I see in the Bible here. Acts 17:11 holds, as always.

The picture of the Day of the Lord in Joel comes to us from a supernatural invasion of locusts in Judah, drought and fire all around and when Judah is reduced, suddenly to nothing, a call from YAHWEH to return and repent with promises from Him to be fulfilled if that takes place.

Judah did so. The repented and returned correcting those geopolitical problems they had created for themselves reversing the procrastination with action, and restoration took place with the miracle of abundance and there was a promise of more restoration to come.

For Judah, who repented and returned to the Lord, there is restoration, joy, material blessing, and the promised future blessing of the Holy Spirit not only be poured out on Judah, but on the entire planet.

Before that is ultimately fulfilled, there is another event that has yet to occur, and that is the Day of the Lord.

As we discovered, we are already but not yet, living in that age of fulfillment with the Spirit made available to all, but as a picture of what must take place yet in the future, He is only available for those who have placed their trust in the finished work of Christ.

Paul lamented the fact that his own people, the Jews, were temporarily blinded to this fact (Romans 11:15), yet there were still some who responded, becoming believers. That remnant continues today (Romans 11:5).

A day is coming though when the attention of the Lord will turn back to the Jews and before that day can take place, the church, the body of Christ, must be removed from this planet. We see that shown to us in the book of Revelation when John is called to come up to the throne room (Revelation 4:1) and the church is no longer mentioned.

As God's attention returns to the Jewish people, He restarts His process of disciplining and refining them, just as He stated He would in Daniel 9.

Daniel 9:24–27

“Seventy weeks have been determined concerning your people and your holy city to put an end to rebellion, to bring sin to completion, to atone for iniquity, to bring in perpetual righteousness, to seal up the prophetic vision, and to anoint a Most Holy Place. So know and understand: From the issuing of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anointed one, a prince arrives, there will be a period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times. Now after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing. As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction. He will confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt. On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The 69th week ended with the arrival of Jesus Christ.

A total of 483 years will transpire from the time that the decree is issued until the coming of the Messiah, the prince. Hence, the first 483 years of the 490-year period comes to an end with the First Coming of the Messiah. (Fruchtenbaum, The Messianic Bible Study Collection 1983, 10)

Daniel then predicts that Messiah would be killed. But not for Himself, but for others. Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed, and they were on 9th of AV, 70 AD. And until the 70th 7 begins, continuing war.

Now we come to the 70th 7, based on what we have seen in verse 24, it is clear that those items which needed to take place at the end of the 70 weeks of years have not taken place, so there appears to be a gap between the end of the 69th 7 and the beginning of the 70th 7.

As we have discussed before, the mountain top telescoping of prophecy is not an unusual concept, and it appears we are seeing it here in Daniel 9. We are currently living in that pause between the end of the 69th 7 week of years period and the beginning of the 70th week of years. We do know that the 70 weeks are all about the Jews.

Here in Daniel, we see that there will be a major gentile world leader, arising out of the remains of the old Roman empire.

This future leader is referred to as the Assyrian in Micah 5.

In Daniel 7 there is a reference to the little horn and that the little horn would sweep away three other horns. Another reference to this same individual.

This matches up with Revelation 13 as well as the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Daniel is referring to that same individual here.

The final 7-year period is marked by a covenant, a treaty of protection that will be made between this person and Israel and Jerusalem.

This requires for there to be an Israel as well as a Jerusalem inhabited by Jews, and that has been the case since 1948 and 1967.

This means that we live at the intersection of that time that the Bible speaks more about than any other time, the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

...in the middle of the Seventieth Seven, that is, after 3½ years, this Gentile leader will break his treaty with Israel and cause a cessation of the sacrificial system. The implication here is that by this time, a Temple in Jerusalem will have been rebuilt; the sacrificial system of Moses will have been re-instituted, then be stopped by force...the result of the breaking of this covenant is that that Temple will now be abominated. The "abomination" refers to an image or an idol. Just as it was in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, so it will be again in the future when a Gentile ruler will abominate the Temple by means of idolatry. Fourth, the "abomination" is to be followed by wrath and desolation, persecution and warfare, for the remaining half of the Seventieth Seven, or the final 3½ years. (Fruchtenbaum, Messianic Christology: A Study of Old Testament Prophecy Concerning the First Coming of the Messiah 1998, 98)

The period of time Joel has been writing about is this post-rapture, post-peace deal 7-year period which is also referred to as the Tribulation. Again, Daniel refers to it as the 70th week, Joel refers to it as the Day of the Lord. Another term used is Jacob's Trouble.

Jeremiah 30:7

"Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it." (NKJV)

Jesus, quoting from Daniel 9:27, warns of this significant event in the middle of that 7-year period, when the one who signed the peace deal with Israel reneges on that deal and declares himself to be God (Matthew 24:15). This begins global genocide against the Jews as well as anyone who has trusted in Christ.

Matthew 24:21-22

"For then there will be great suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world until now, or ever will happen. And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." (NET 2nd ed.)

By the end of that second half of the Tribulation, worldwide conditions are grim. The beast believed he had consolidated all power in himself, but coalitions have formed against him, and they are moving to attack his current primary location in Israel where he has been actively trying to kill all the Jews including those who had escaped from Jerusalem and are being cared for by God (Daniel 12:1) near Bozrah (Isaiah 63:1).

The Beast's capital, Babylon, has suddenly disappeared in a nuclear cloud (Revelation 18:1 – 10) and physical manifestations (Revelation 16:17 – 21) are appearing worldwide calling into question the Beast's earlier assertion that he is God when truly he is only Satan's counterfeit to the Messiah (Revelation 13) and Satan's sock puppet being personally possessed by Satan (Revelation 13:1 – 5).

Those remaining of God's people, the Jews, those in hiding as well as those who are left trying to defend the portion of Jerusalem still in their control, as one, pray for Messiah to come and save them (Zechariah 13:9). He does. A picture of what happened back in Joel, repeats again at the end of the Tribulation.

Messiah intervenes.

As the invasion begins and Christ and His armies descend to deal with the nations, the earth dwellers of Revelation (Revelation 19:11 – 17). Joel provides us a picture and in it, a promise.

Joel 2:30–32

"I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And it will come about that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD Will be saved; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, Just as the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls." (NASB 2020)

Joel is about to further develop what will take place when the end of the Tribulation is reached. But "before this theme is developed the prophet supplements Yahweh's message with a reassuring word to his people. They have nothing to fear." (Allen 1976, 101)

As Christ returns, and the whole world sees Him, those who have not taken the mark of the beast, have may have also lost the ability to make a decision. How did they treat the Jews? Time is up.

When Christ comes to the earth to establish His kingdom, there is going to be the greatest time of individuals turning to God that the world has ever seen. Also during the Tribulation Period there will be a great turning to the Lord—much greater than there has been during the church age. (McGee 1997, 675)

But don't wait until then to make a decision. You see, those remaining alive at the end of the Tribulation may number 1 billion or less.

Isaiah 55:6–7

"Seek the LORD while he makes himself available; call to him while he is nearby! The wicked need to abandon their lifestyle and sinful people their plans. They should return to the LORD, and he will show mercy to them, and to their God, for he will freely forgive them." (NET 2nd ed.)

We truly have no idea if we have a tomorrow which is why the emphasis is on now. Joel has already urged Judah to take advantage of God's grace and they did.

Judah receives a promise that those who have turned to the Lord, despite what is going on around them and God actively judging the nations on their behalf, they will be saved.

Just as He provided a way out from the locust problem, He will also provide a way out during the Tribulation.

After making sure that this promise is communicated to Judah, we come to judgement on those nations who have abused and misused YAHWEH's own. And we find ourselves wondering, when will this be?

Joel 3:1–3

"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." (NASB 2020)

This is a time period seen also by Isaiah and Daniel. To understand it, we have some unpacking to do.

We tend to think that when Jesus returns, everything happens quickly, but the Bible says otherwise. At the end of the Tribulation, there is a 75-day interval prior to the beginning of the Millennial rule of Jesus Christ which takes place (Daniel 12:11-12). “A special blessing is pronounced on those who will make it to the 1,335th day (v. 12). The blessing is that those who survive until the seventy-fifth day of the Interval will enter the Messianic Kingdom.” (Fruchtenbaum, The Messianic Bible Study Collection 1983, 3-4)

Daniel 12:11–13

“And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.” (ESV)

As we unpack this, we must remember that a Jewish year has 360 days. What we read in verse 11 is that 3 years and 7 months after the Abomination of Desolation takes place, 30 days after Jesus has returned, is when the Tribulation Temple is “cleansed.”

The Antichrist and his prophet are already dead and gone as the first permanent residents of hell (Revelation 19:20 – 21). The armies of the Beast are in sheol waiting on judgement (Revelation 9:9 – 11). Satan and his minions are in the abyss (Revelation 20:1 – 3), so what is going on here? Why does the image set up by the False Prophet remain in the Holy of Holies an additional 30 days? The Bible does not tell us why.

Remember, this is the Third Temple, unlike the first two Temples which were approved by YAHWEH to be built, this one never was. But the one He will reside in is about to be built. Ezekiel 40 – 48 has the details on that Temple.

What this appears to tell us is 30 days after the end of the Tribulation, the Tribulation Temple is destroyed and with it, the image set up by the False Prophet of the Beast (Revelation 13:14– 15). In its place will go the Millennial Temple which is approved by YAHWEH.

Other things also are taking place. First there is the immediate need for food, housing and medical needs for those remaining (Revelation 16:17 – 21). Many are physically in a serious way as the Lord takes over. We do not know if it is all who are physically restored or only those who are the sheep, the scriptures are silent. For many, without it, they would not make it.

Basic infrastructure worldwide is gone (Revelation 16:19) and now is being restored.

Crops are being restored as well as wildlife as Eden like conditions spread worldwide (Joel 2:31 – 32).

Messiah’s people, Jew and Gentile, are being gathered up from around the planet and so is every remaining unbelieving living human (Joel 3:2).

Major restoration projects are being completed worldwide to provide for the transportation infrastructure (Isaiah 19:23) enabling this to happen.

There is an event still to take place. The judgement of the nations.

Yes, billions will indeed perish during the Tribulation. Those who were believers will be resurrected, those who were not believers will wait in sheol until the Great White Throne Judgement at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11 – 15).

Armageddon has ended and the armies of the beast were destroyed, and apparently in the same valley that the sheep and goats judgement takes place in; but there are millions worldwide who have survived the Tribulation. Jewish and gentile believers as well as other survivors.

Everyone will be brought to a central location in Israel. Believers are excited about what is coming, others, not so much.

For the unbeliever, an invasion force has arrived and is not leaving. Resistance truly is futile. Everything they thought they could achieve on their own failed and now they see Edenic conditions beginning to take place.

Isaiah 33:14

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”” (ESV)

At the end of the age, those who do not know Him yet survived the Tribulation, have an entirely different terrifying view of their new reality than the Jewish and gentile believers have.

That is what is being expressed here in Isaiah 33:14. As we look a bit deeper into the Hebrew, we see that the word translated as “live” is יָגוּר (yagur) “to tarry anywhere, as a sojourner and stranger, to sojourn; used of individuals...” (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 164) This is a temporary holding camp.

It might be more appropriate then to restate what the last half of verse 14 says. “Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. Who among us can even temporarily live with the consuming fire (YAHWEH)? Who among us can even temporarily live with continual burning (YAHWEH)?” (Isaiah 33:14, NASB95)

At the end of the Tribulation, during the time period between the end of the battle of Armageddon and the beginning of the Millennial rule and reign of Jesus Christ (Daniel 12:11 – 12,) there is a period prophesied about in order to gather everyone together for what Jesus refers to as the sheep and goats judgement (Matthew 25:31 – 46).

It is the judgement of the nations.

This is also what Joel is writing about here in Joel 3.

Jesus provides details about what Joel is talking about.

Matthew 25:31–46

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”” (NKJV)

It is during this interim time period that the fourth Temple is being built. Those who are being brought to Israel are struck with the realization that there have been massive changes in the geography of Israel not to mention the entire planet.

For example, there are no more islands and no more mountains anywhere (Revelation 16:20) and there have also been changes in the topography of Israel as well (Zechariah 14:1 – 5.) This is all to prepare the planet for the rule of Messiah as well as the restoration of Edenic conditions on earth. The restoration promised in Joel 2 taken to its ultimate end.

With the fourth Temple will also come the presence of YAHWEH to physically dwell with His people in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 43:1 – 12.)

Those who did not repent, who do not wish to follow Jesus Christ and be obedient to Him, as they arrive in Jerusalem, can see this Temple being constructed from where they are being held.

We overhear them in Isaiah 33:14 discussing that they do not even want to be around God, even temporarily. For them, judgement and immediate eternal damnation in hell are just hours or days away depending on when they arrive.

These are the same people who just a few days earlier were in hiding.

Revelation 6:15–17

“Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”” (ESV)

What have all of those who survived the Tribulation, experienced?

They have seen Jesus Christ and His invasion force return in power destroying the armies of earth arrayed against Jerusalem and God’s people (Joel 2:30 – 31, Zechariah 14:12 – 13, Revelation 19:11 – 19, Isaiah 63:1).

They have seen His armies of resurrected glorified humans and faithful divine beings arrive with Him and then spread out across the entire planet consolidating His victory and begin the establishment of His kingdom (Revelation 2:25 – 28, 20:6).

They have heard the praises of the remnant and those remaining Tribulation believers as He did so. Love and concern suddenly become real.

Then there are the massive geological, topographical and atmospheric changes which took place and continue to. The poisoned air and water are no longer that way.

The planet is being restored to Edenic conditions and it is clearly visible everywhere. An example is the new valley in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4).

Major road construction is also visible (Isaiah 19:13).

The survivors have put up with fallen angels and demons (Revelation 9:1 – 11, 13 – 19) being visibly among them and they have witnessed massive manifestations of evil (Revelation 12:12), all now gone. They now are experiencing the one thing some of them did not want any part of...the Messiah or His people. These are earth dwellers who had worshiped the Beast (Revelation 13:8.)

They have seen the vast numbers of those who are in glorified bodies and returned with Him as part of the invasion force (Revelation 19:14). They may have already had to deal with some of them.

They also see those pre-flood and pre-incarnation believers (OT saints) who have now been resurrected (Daniel 12:2, Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:13 – 14), as well as the all of faithful divine beings. The impact of learning that the Bible was all true has hit full force.

For the earth dwellers, the followers of the Beast, they have also encountered true horror. All those people who they worked so hard to kill the last few years and eliminate from the surface of the planet, they have been resurrected as well (Revelation 20:4 – 6). They have seen that too.

This is all visible to them while they wait in the holding facilities until Messiah judges them. They want no part of this new world.

There are also those though, who will become permanent subjects of the King because they believed, or they treated His people with compassion. These are those who will still be here after this judgement ends. Jesus called this the sheep and goats judgement.

Joel provides the timing, location, and the grounds for this judgement of the nations which is about to take place.

Joel 3:1–3

“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.” (NASB 2020)

The timing is in connection with the restoration of Israel. That 75-day period beginning with the end of Armageddon.

We are told this will take place in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There is no valley with that name at present. “Traditionally, the Valley of Jehoshaphat has been associated with the last judgment and has been identified by Jews, Christians, and Muslims with that part of the Kidron Valley just E of Jerusalem, including the valley slopes.” (Mare 1992, 668-669)

Some scholars suggest it is a yet-future valley, to be formed by the splitting of the Mount of Olives at the Messiah’s return (Zech. 14:4). At any rate, the importance of the name is not in its geographical location, but in its meaning, “the Lord judges.” (Chisholm, Jr. 1985, 1421)

That may be the place, but technically there is no place in Israel by the name of the Valley of Jehosaphat. The name means “the LORD judges; i.e., he pleads for him; whom Jehovah judges; Jehovah is judge.” (Smith and Cornwall 1998, 125)

God’s complaint against the nations is that they have mistreated His people. Primarily, this has in view the way the nations treat Israel, but also extends to how the nations treat the Church. When God’s people are mistreated, God takes it personally and will avenge it. (Guzik 2000, Joel 3:1-3)

As we see from what Jesus says of this event, it is all about how you treated His people. The criteria is not faith in Christ, but treatment of the Jews. If held after WWII, it would have meant Schindler is in.

The summons to the courtroom in the Valley of Jehoshaphat is followed by an indictment. The charges against the defendant are entered into the record. (Busenitz 2003, 199)

The list of crimes God will judge include:

- Scattering God’s people over the planet
- Dividing up the land and giving it to others
- Placing the children into slavery and using them like money

Joel 3:4–8

“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.” (NASB 2020)

It is never a good thing when, in a litany of charges and judgement coming down from the Lord, that a few examples of wrong doers are made, and you find your nation is on the list. Three show up here as examples of wrongdoing that will be dealt with.

Tyre, Sidon and the Philistines. “The use of moreover in the text signifies that something of remarkable note is being introduced, that special attention is to be given, both to the identification of the defendants and to the elucidation of the charges announced in the previous verse. Both the Phoenicians and the Philistines are to be included with the ‘nations.’ Not only are they equally culpable, but they also provide an excellent historical example.” (Busenitz 2003, 201)

Part of the restoration of God’s people is those who have been responsible for their pain and suffering, receive punishment for what they did. Justice will be done, and the Lord uses the example of Tyre, Sidon and the Philistines. These nations conducted warfare against His people and are referenced because they will be held up as a type of the judgment to come on the rest of the nations.

Tyre and Sidon and all the border of Philistia have already passed under the swift and righteous judgments of the Lord. As they had done so it was done unto them. They had sold the children of Judah to the Greeks and the children of Tyre and Sidon were sold to the Sabeans. History shows a fulfilment of this. Philistia had conquered Judah and done all this evil and in turn they were spoiled and retaliation came upon their heads. This shows how the Lord will judge in that day. (Gaebelein 1909, 150-151)

Joel 3:9–13

“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)

Earlier we saw a reference to the forces of the Beast being used by the Lord as a means to refine and discipline His own people, but now the tone changes. This is a call to the same valley, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, that will also be the scene for the final judgement of the nations. This signals the beginning of that same judgement and even though Joel does not use the term Armageddon, he is one of the first prophets to predict its coming.

Again, the nations’ call to the valley of Jehoshaphat is reiterated (cf. verse 2). Of their own volition and yet compelled, in obedience to His providential control they assemble in the valley of ‘Yahweh judges,’ for there I will sit to judge. (Busenitz 2003, 210)

But God is now mocking the nations and He does so by calling them out, all of the earth dwellers who do not want His rule, for judgement and He does so in terms of a call for holy war. It is holy because God Himself is the instigator of this and will show His holiness in judgement.

Those who are of the nations and are earth dwellers who are on the soon to be losing side, do not have peace on their minds. They do not intend to go without a fight. Jesus is about to be King, but not everyone has received the memo yet.

God does not summon people to judgement when they decide they are adequately prepared with a defence for their actions. The nations of the world are being mocked by this encouragement to arm themselves. Even the weak and sickly among them are not exempt. But their most valiant efforts will hardly be able to withstand the Lord's judgements. His righteous assessments will prevail over all human resistance. Judgement comes when the Judge is ready. (Robertson 1995, 108)

God knows the hearts of those who want no part of His rule. He knows of the rebellion in their hearts and how they are ready to fight Him over what is about to happen. So, He says, mocking them, "bring it." Do whatever you think you need to do in order to defend yourself from what will happen. Create weapons, but they will not work. Even your weakest citizens will think they can stop this. Even after Armageddon, there will be those who will come to judgement fighting the entire way.

God tells the nations to be quick about it.

There are some scholars who say this speaks of the final battle of Armageddon yet to take place, or that it is a reference to the battle which has just taken place. I think it is a discussion about Armageddon and it could also another description of the events that Jesus talked about in Matthew which He called sheep and goats judgement. Here we see, with the mocking of those earth dwellers, that for them, it truly is war.

They are fighting for their survival and God says arm up and show up.

But notice where the Lord is and what He is doing.

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)

"This is a war, for sure, but it is very different from any other—set apart from the normal conduct and activities of war, set apart for God to conduct his own strategy and to pursue the activities he will choose. These are all linked with his one intention: there I will sit to judge all the nations round about (12). Because there is going to be such a war, and because the LORD himself is going to be the sole person on one side of the conflict, it is striking—if not rather strange—to see him sitting down to fight. Sitting is done once everything has been accomplished. We then realize that this holy war involves no actual combat, only decisions or verdicts and their execution." (Prior 1988, 91-92)

Revelation 19:15

"Out of his mouth came a sharp sword, with which he will defeat the nations. He will rule over them with a rod of iron, and he will trample out the wine in the winepress of the furious anger of the Almighty God." (GNB)

The primary weapon referenced here in Revelation tells us this is all about the King being judge as well as warrior and the avenger of blood.

Isaiah 63:5

"I was amazed when I looked and saw that there was no one to help me. But my anger made me strong, and I won the victory myself." (GNB)

Joel is anticipating that this is a full and complete mobilization, everyone will come. This is why the terms soldiers, plows into swords and a reference to the weak. There will be no exceptions to this call. All of the nations will be there, just as envisioned by Jesus and seen by Isaiah. It will indeed be a confrontation

as the nations do not want to be there, but they will be compelled to be there. Note the call to His army to also be there. “Bring down, Lord, Your warriors.”

It is time for judgement to begin. These are representatives of the nations who went to war with God.

There is no expectation that once they are in one place together, that it will be a peaceful action. Most know what is coming and they will continue in their rebellion to the very bitter end. Not only at Armageddon, but also those who are there for the final judgement in this same valley.

What happens in this valley?

Joel 3:13

“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)

The vision we are being given here by Joel is the one of the judgement of the nations. This is the King dealing with the lawlessness of mankind, those who have rejected what He did for them on the cross. We still have time today to decide, one that prevents potentially being part of the group before the Lord in the Valley of Jehoshaphat either time.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

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)

Let’s recap what we just learned.

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.

We wrap up the judgement next time and see the future in store for Judah.

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