

### Comments on Joel 3

The last chapter of Joel informs us that part of the reason the invading army is brought to Jerusalem is to have them judged. While the Lord used them to chasten the wicked among Israel, all of the wicked will be punished on the Day of the Lord, Israelite and Gentile alike. Only the righteous are spared.

**1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and [for] my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.**

**3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. 4 Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly [and] speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; 5 Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: 6 The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.**

**7 Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head: 8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken [it].**

v1-8 The Lord states that when He is preparing to restore the fortunes of Israel, His people (v. 1), He will also be preparing to take care of the Gentile nations as well (v. 2). The nations who have scattered, and harassed, sold people into slavery, and looted the Temple of the Lord will be recompensed for their actions (v. 3-8, cp. Micah 4:11-12).

v2 "valley of Jehoshaphat", the Jewish Publication Society (JPS) translation states "here understood as 'The Lord contends'; contrast v. 12." The Lord brings all nations into this valley so as to strike down all who are wicked.

**9 Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: 10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I [am] strong. 11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. 12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.**

13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness [is] great. 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD [is] near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. 16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake:

but the LORD [will be] the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. 17 So shall ye know that I [am] the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

v9-17 The nations are all summoned to gather for war (v. 9-10). They are told to bring their mightiest warriors (v. 11), but it will be to no avail as the Lord will judge them (v. 12). They will be crushed like grapes (v. 13) on the Day of the Lord (v. 14), when the Lord manifests His power over all Creation (v. 15-16, cp. Isa. 24:23) to the salvation of His people (v. 17).

v10 The opposite case of Micah 4:5 and Isa. 2:4. This is time for war, not peace.

v12 "valley of Jehoshaphat", the JPS translation states "Here understood as 'The Lord judges'; contrast v. 2."

v13 This verse uses the imagery of the harvesting and pressing of grapes to symbolize the gathering and destruction of the wicked, cp. Rev. 14:14-20 for a similar statement and Isa. 33-34 for a less figurative reading. See also Rev. 19:13, D&C 133:49-51.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim. 19 Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence [against] the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. 20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. 21 For I will cleanse their blood [that] I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

v18-21 On the Day of Judgement the righteous will be blessed (v. 18) and the wicked will be annihilated (v. 19). By way of contrast to Egypt and Edom, Judah will be prospered and Jerusalem will be inhabited (v. 20), as vindication for her suffering (v. 21). A fountain from the House of the Lord (v. 18) will go out and cleanse Zion from her blood (v. 21).

v18 "a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord", while it is probable the fountain of water is a literal one (cf. Ezek. 47:1-12, Zech. 14:8), more important is the spiritual cleansing of Judah by the Holy Spirit suggested in v. 21 and 2:28-29, which the literal fountain would represent.

Copyright © 2002 by S. Kurt Neumiller <kurtn@cybcon.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.