

Joel 3:1 ¶ For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

“in those days...time” – This is a reference to a period of time that will result in the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem. To “bring again” in the Greek states to “turn back”; so the prophet is saying that the captivity of the people will be reversed.

Joel 3:2 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.

The Lord is declaring through His prophet that He is the one in sovereign control as these events unfold. The only time in scripture in which a worldwide army of the nations will be gathered against the Lord and His people is known as the Battle of Armageddon.

Revelation 16:14-16 “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto **the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.** Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

Though many explain Armageddon as a campaign, this is an obvious reference to the culmination of that campaign. The “valley of Jehoshaphat,” is identified as the battlefield. Easton’s Dictionary identifies this valley as that between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives; it is also known as the Hinnom Valley and the Kidron Valley.

“plead” = “to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication, to vindicate or punish...avenge....”

Context of the chapter indicates that this judgment will be in vengeance on behalf of “my people...my heritage Israel.” Scripture tells us that God specifically singled out the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob as His unique possession among the nations and the land of Israel as His special allocation on planet earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2 “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.”

Numbers 35:34 “Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.”

Leviticus 25:17-18 & 23 “Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the LORD your God. Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety....The land shall not be sold for ever: **for the land is mine**; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.”

“They” refers back to “all nations.” God holds all the nations accountable for the dispersal of the Jews throughout the nations. As you follow the history of Israel, it is clear that they were driven from land to land due to greed for their wealth, refusal to renounce their faith, and/or unjustified fears or blame for plague, etc. The land of Israel has passed under the rule of empire to empire. However, since the reestablishment of the nation of Israel in 1948, this verse has taken on more obvious application. The predominant news in the Middle East since that time has focused on dividing the land of Israel to make way for another Palestinian state in addition to Jordan. Israel’s borders were initially established by UN mandate and miraculously defended by the fledgling nation. They have since withstood major attacks from surrounding countries in 1967 and 1973 that resulted in their conquering more land. Since that time, the calls for dividing the land have continued nonstop.

Joel 3:3 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.

It seems that the problem of human slavery has existed throughout history. In context, this slavery would be in reference to the Jewish people. The wording indicates little regard for the worth of human life, especially those who are Jews; and history supports the truth that the Jews have been subject to great persecution from the nations reaching the greatest intensity through the horrors of the holocaust of World War II. As referenced in the last chapter, we know that human slavery will once again be a recognized source of trade and profit during the tribulation period.

Joel 3:4 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;

Joel 3:5 Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

Joel 3:6 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.

It is clear that YHWH considers the actions of the nations against Israel as actions against Him. The questions posed in verse 4 are basically stating that the LORD has done nothing to deserve this attack, and His judgment in response is sure.

I could not find specific evidence of correlation with these verses to the times of Joel’s ministry, but there is intriguing connection to the news of recent years. Tyre, Zidon and the coasts of Palestine (the land of the Philistines) would be referencing modern Lebanon (Hizbollah) and the Gaza strip. Israel has often responded to the terrorists’ attacks of these enemies with swift and devastating payback. I personally believe that the Lord is already using Israel (though still in rebellion) in accordance with His purposes for these times just as He often used the enemies of Israel to act against them in accordance with His purposes of past times. These enemies of Israel have abused their material blessings from God by using them to support their false religion, often at the expense of Israel. They have been very vocal in their goal to destroy the nation of Israel. Their public slogan declares their desire to push Israel into the sea; in other words, they want to “remove them [the Jews] far from their border.”

Joel 3:7 Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:

Joel 3:8 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*.

God is basically declaring through the prophet that the time is coming when He is going to regather His people and allow them to pay them back in kind. The enemies of God's people will become slaves to the Jews and in turn subject to being sold into slavery themselves and taken far from home. I have no idea how this specifically applies to the future.

Joel 3:9 ¶ 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:

Joel 3:10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, *I am strong*.

Joel 3:11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.

Joel 3:12 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.

This is describing a call to the Gentile nations, the heathen, to gather for war against YHWH and His mighty ones. It's always confusing yet comforting to me how God is in sovereign control of even the actions of the wicked. In my study of Revelation the call to war is accomplished through demonic spirits sent out from the Antichrist, yet scripture is everywhere clear that this is in accordance with God's plan.

Revelation 16:12-14 "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For **they are the spirits of devils**, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Note that these events are in connection with the 6th vial/bowl judgment coming from the throne of God. Other prophets declared this same truth.

Ezekiel 28:25-26 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, **when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them**; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God."

Ezekiel 36:5-7 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; **Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a**

prey. Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, **Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame.**"

Obadiah 1:15 "For the day of the LORD is near upon **all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee:** thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

Zechariah 2:8-9 "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them [the nations], **and they shall be a spoil to their servants** [the Jews]: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me."
[brackets mine]

Joel 3:13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

In context, the sickle is a reference to a sharp instrument used to reap the harvest of God's judgment among the heathen nations. Verse 13 is very similar to words recorded by the Apostle John in Revelation.

Revelation 14:18-19 "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

It's hard not to think that they apply to the same judgment.

Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

Point is made that the enemy armies will be very large. "The valley of decision" would be a reference to the Valley of Jehoshaphat identified in verse 2. When I looked up the Hebrew for *decision*, the reference to *determination* stood out. One definition from Webster gave even more insight: "The state of decision; a judicial decision, or ending of controversy." This final battle between the forces of Antichrist and the LORD will bring an end to the prophesied wrath of God declared against the nations. His judgment will be final; no more controversy will be tolerated. There will, however, be one final time of proving the true followers of the Lord when Satan is loosed to gather one last army to join Him in a rebellious attack against the Lord and His people.

Revelation 20:7-9 "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints

about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

Joel 3:15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

Joel 3:16 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.

Joel 3:17 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.

The association between darkness and evil and possible connection to the judgments of the tribulation were discussed in chapter 2. The main point of these verses is the result of that judgment—“The LORD also shall roar out of Zion...the LORD your God dwelling in Zion.” The judgment of the nations will result in God’s deliverance of His people through His Son Jesus, Lord of lords and heir to the throne of David. From that point on, the LORD will be the strength of Israel, Jerusalem will be holy, and no enemies will be allowed to even enter the land.

The prophet Isaiah also spoke of this time.

Isaiah 24:21-23 “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

The prophet Amos also describes the Lord as coming in judgment with the roar of a lion.

Amos 3:7-8 “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear?”

I like the way Chuck Smith describes it:

“As a lion that has conquered its prey stands over the fallen prey and lets out this blood-curdling roar, it's a roar of absolute mastery and victory. So when Jesus comes again, there's going to be an earth-rending roar as the lion of the tribe of Judah proclaims His absolute mastery and victory to reign over the earth.”

Joel 3:18 ¶ 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.

“in that day” = When the Lord is dwelling in Zion

Again, other prophets spoke of this time of abundant blessing in Israel's future, the time when Messiah is on the throne. The prophet is obviously using a word picture to describe the richness of that time of blessing.

Isaiah 30:23-26 "Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

Isaiah 65:19-25 "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD."

Micah 4:1-7 "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the

LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever."

Zechariah 14:8-11 "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."

Ezekiel 47:1, 8-9 "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar....Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.""

These will be the most wonderful time of fellowship between God and His people in the history of planet earth. I can't wait!!

Joel 3:19 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.

This verse can be confusing if trying to maintain a strict chronology with the flow of the verses. I have learned from my study of the prophets that as they delivered their message, it was not necessarily according to chronological fulfillment. I know from my study of Isaiah that Egypt will establish a relationship of blessing with the LORD.

Isaiah 19:18-25 "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it. **And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it:** and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the

Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”
I think the resolution is found in verse 22 in bold above. Egypt will surely experience God’s hand of judgment as foretold, but it will just as surely experience God’s blessing according to His word.

The judgment of Edom, however, appears to be more lasting.

Jeremiah 49:17-18 “Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.”

As I continued to search, there is a glimmer of hope for Edom as declared by Amos.

Amos 9:11-12 “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: **That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name**, saith the LORD that doeth this.”

Evidently, there will eventually emerge a believing remnant of the children of Esau (Edom).

Joel 3:20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

Joel 3:21 For I will cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

In stark contrast to their history, the future of Israel and Jerusalem will be one of purity of heart before their LORD. This will be made possible by the new covenant YHWH makes with His people.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This truth is also declared by the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 11:17-20 “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they

shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Ezekiel 36:22-28 "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Scripture is also clear that the nation of Israel has an eternal future.

Exodus 32:13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever."

Jeremiah 31:35-36 "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever."

Ezekiel 43:7 "And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places."