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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**“THE VALEY OF DECISION”**

**Joel 3:1-21**

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

The days that are spoken of, here, are the same as the day of the Lord in the last chapter, when God would pour out of His Spirit on all flesh. The time when Jerusalem and Judah were brought, again, to their land, is in our times. In 1948, Israel became a nation, and Jerusalem is the spiritual city, again.

***Joel 2:28-32***

***28And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:***

***29And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.***

***30And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.***

***31The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.***

***32And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.***

The promised outpouring of God’s Spirit will be on all ages and classes of people: sons and daughters. Accompanying the outpouring of the Spirit will be full salvation, or deliverance, for all who put their trust in the Lord as their Redeemer. Joel has compressed together, in true prophetic fashion, events separated by millennia. The crucial points of history are the events of the locust plague in Joel’s day; the Day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Spirit was indeed poured out universally and made available to all mankind, about A.D. 33; the events of the Great Tribulation (separated from the Day of Pentecost by over 2,000 years); and the establishment of the earthly Davidic millennial kingdom that follows the events of the Great Tribulation.

***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."***

This is speaking of the great battle of Armageddon. There has never been a time in history before, when all nations were gathered in battle here in Israel. This is the same as the battle we dealt with in the 39th chapter of Ezekiel. God fights the battle for Israel in this valley of Jehoshaphat. Israel was promised this land back in Abraham's time. It was, also, promised that there would be a King that would rule on the throne in Jerusalem, who would be like unto David. The physical house of Israel is, even now, returning to the land of Israel. They have been scattered in all the countries of the world. God's plan all along was to restore Israel. When God restores the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, he will enter into judgment with the godless nations.

***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."***

The people of Israel have been treated with very little respect since the time of the prophets. They went into slavery and were sold for a very small amount. The worst thing that happened to them was, possibly, in Adolph Hitler's time, when he killed so many Jews, and even made soap out of some of them.

***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 recompence me, swiftly [and] speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;"***

Vengeance is the Lord's. Tyre and Zidon, along with the coastal area of Palestine, were well known for oppressing the people of God. They will, now, taste of the very same injury they had done to God's people. They had allied with the evil nations that came against Judah, instead of helping Judah.

***II Thessalonians 1:6 "Seeing [it is] a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;"***

***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."***

They had taken the silver and gold in the temple and robbed the people of their silver and gold. They worshipped false gods and used God's precious metals in that false worship. They had sold them to the Greeks to get them further away from their homeland, so there would be less chance of them returning. This speaks in the past tense, and is not connected to the end time prophecy, except that God had not forgotten what they had done.

***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 will restore them to their land and punish those who sold them. Whatever they did to Judah, happened to them in return. God is just in His judgment. These Sabeans were Arab traders. Because of how they treated the Lord’s people, he will bring retribution on [their] heads.

***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."***

In anticipation of the judgment that will be visited on them, God taunts His enemies and urges them to get ready for war, to come and fight Him, even though it is a hopeless cause; to get their armaments ready, though they will be of no avail; to get their allies ready, though they will be of no help; and to get all the nations ready to fight Him. The Gentiles, here, would be speaking of the unbelieving world. Whatever their rights were before they went to war, is what is spoken of here. The Hebrews had prayer and made sacrifices to God before war. This is the opposite of beat your swords into plowshares. They are to prepare for the great battle. This war would be so great, that all the farmers and husbandmen would have to fight, too.

***Revelation 16:16 "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."***

***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."***

***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."***

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

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

These multitudes are the heathen armies of many nations, that are judged in the valley, and found guilty as charged. God, Himself, destroys them. This is speaking of that day of judgment. They are rushing to their doom. The mighty ones could come to battle, but they are no match for God. God, Himself, fights for Israel. This is the same battle where 5/6 of Gog in the land of Magog will die in battle. So many die in this battle, that people on the Mediterranean Sea must put clothes pins on their noses to stop the death odor. All Israel will be 7 months burying the dead.

***Ezekiel 39:12 "And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land."***

This plainly says that the deaths in this great battle are a judgment of God against the heathen people. He will gather them in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which means “the Lord judges.” Because there is no known valley with this name and it’s also referred to as the valley of decision, it’s likely the site of the end-time battle of Armageddon, meaning “hill or mount of Megiddo.” Megiddo was in the Valley of Jezreel, the site of many significant battles. God will go to war with the nations, and he will triumph easily.

***Revelation 14:14 "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud [one] sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."***

***Revelation 14:15 " And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."***

***Revelation 14:16 "And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."***

***Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:"***

All of their efforts and preparations will be futile, for God will judge them. Just as the land was helpless before its devastators, so they will be helpless before God, who will judge them on behalf of Judah and Jerusalem. The valley of decision is synonymous with the valley of Jehoshaphat. The scene is not one where the multitudes are in the midst of making a decision in favor of the Lord and repenting of their sin. Rather, the decision is made by God, a decision to judge the multitudes for their treatment of Judah and Jerusalem! This judgment will be meted out against them in the day of the Lord that takes place in the Great Tribulation.

***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."***

Zion is the church. When Jesus comes to the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, He will set His feet on the mount of Olives, and it will cleave in two. Jesus will enter the eastern gate, and set up His reign in Jerusalem. Jesus will reign as King. He is our Salvation.

***Zechariah 14:4 "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which [is] before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, [and there shall be] a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."***

***Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."***

***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."***

***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 contrast to the fate of the nations, Joel describes the exaltation of Israel in that day when Jerusalem will be holy, and foreigners will never overrun it again, and the blessings of the Lord will be on the land. This is speaking of that perfect time, when there is perfect peace, and God provides for all the needs of His people. He is LORD, and there is no other. Zion, again, is the church. This is New Jerusalem which comes down from God out of heaven. He will be our God, and we will be His people. Jesus will reign as King.

***Revelation 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."***

***Psalms 46:4 "[There is] a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy [place] of the tabernacles of the most High."***

***Revelation 22:1 "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."***

***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."***

***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."***

Egypt symbolizes the evil world. Edom was opposed to God from the beginning. This is a curse spoken against the enemies of God and His people. The world had shed the blood of God's people, and God will punish them for it. It will be enough when they are destroyed, and Judah established forever. The LORD dwelleth in His church.

***Zechariah 8:8 "And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness."***

***Revelation 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."***

They will be in full fellowship with the Lord. Judah will be inhabited forever, and their sins will be pardoned. Thus, the day of the Lord will bring judgment and destruction on God’s enemies but blessing and deliverance for his people. The rider on the white horse, Jesus Christ, will come and set all things right. Come, Lord Jesus.” Joel’s final prophecy pictures the great millennial age when the LORD dwelleth in Zion. The word “dwelleth” indicates the abiding presence of the shekinah glory of old with His repentant and restored people.

***Ezekiel 48:35 “It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there.”***

**QUESTIONS**

1. When is the day spoken of in verse 1?
2. In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Israel became a nation.
3. Who fights the battle for Israel?
4. How had the people of Israel been treated by the heathen world?
5. Who did the very worst to the Israelites?
6. What had Tyre and Zidon done to Israel?
7. What silver and gold had they taken?
8. Why had they sold the children to the Grecians?
9. Who were the Sabeans?
10. Who were the Gentiles speaking of?
11. Beat your plowshares into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
12. Verse 11 tells the heathen to do what?
13. Where were they to gather?
14. How many of Gog die in this valley?
15. Who are the multitudes in verse 14?
16. Zion is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
17. What happens to Egypt and Edom?
18. The tabernacle of God is with \_\_\_\_\_\_.