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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Joel 3.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Joel 3.

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### Topics.

- The valley of Jehoshaphat.
  - Trading a boy for a prostitute, and sold a girl for wine.
  - Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia.
  - The people of god have been sold.
  - Beat your plowshares into swords and the valley of Jehoshaphat.
  - The harvest is ripe, put in the sickle.
  - The sun and the moon are darkened and the lord roars from Zion.
  - God's promise of a glorious and prosperous future for Judah.
  - Egypt and Edom will become desolation.
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**INTRODUCTION:** little is known about the prophet Joel, although his concern for Judah and Jerusalem suggests that he ministered in the southern kingdom. While the date of the book is uncertain (ninth to sixth century B.C. Joel urged everyone to repent, and told of a day when God would "pour out (His) Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28), that day arrived on Pentecost (Acts 2:17). At this time the inhabitants of Jerusalem are still in captivity to Babylon, while other Jews and their families have been sold as slaves to various nations.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**The LORD uses secular nations:** the LORD uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment. He used Assyria to bring judgment on Israel in the land of Samaria (the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom) and Babylon to bring judgment on Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem). Prior to Joel's prophecy Assyria had taken Israel captive. In the book of Joel Babylon (called the Northern Army) is pictured as an army of locusts. Many times God through the prophets warned Judah they would be taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years, because of their rebellion against the LORD, but God would look after them while they were held captive and at the end of the seventy years He would deliver them.

Joel's focus is Judah, God is about to use Babylon to bring Judgment on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land of Judah because of their gross sin. Joel is warning the people of Judah that the armies (the locusts) of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon are about to besiege the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding land. Sadly the people did not heed Joel's warning of impending doom. Babylon spent about two years besieging Jerusalem, the people were without food and the inhabitants of the city were taken captive for seventy years, Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple of God pillaged (see Jeremiah chapters 50, 51, 52).

Though Joel's focus is upon Judah at this particular period of time in history his prophetic message carries with it an echo of a future day when God will intervene in the history of the world once again and judge not only Judah, but the entire world.

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## The Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Joel 3:1-2 ----- <sup>1</sup>"For behold, *in those days and at that time*, when I (the LORD) restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land.

**NOTE:** the valley of Jehoshaphat is all about making a decision and judgment.

Though some of the events prophesied in this chapter are spoken in the present tense the actual events in real life are still to take place in the near future. This is a vision that Joel is seeing in his mind in the present moment, but the events are still to be fulfilled in real life in the future.

**In those days and at that time:** refers to the days God restores Judah and Jerusalem, God sees how oppressed and cruelly His people are being treated. It is during these days God says He will gather together the surrounding nations to the valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment.

**Jehoshaphat:** means God judges, since the fourth century the Kidron valley has been named the valley of Jehoshaphat, but there is no real reason for believing that this is the spot referred to by Joel. He may have spoken of an ideal spot only, since there is no evidence that any valley ever actually bore this name.

**I will gather all nations:** refers to all the nations that fought with Babylon against Judah and were in political and trading partnership with Babylon's King some of which were Tyre, Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia (Joel 3:4).

The nations the LORD is gathering to battle are those nations that have been involved through war or political trade in scattering His people among the nations and dividing up His land. When Babylon invaded Jerusalem multitudes of Jews fled to the surrounding nations.

Joel says, Tyre, Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border, thus through war and political greed for financial gain the Jews were scattered throughout the land. (Joel 3:4-6).

### Trading a Boy for a Prostitute, and Sold a Girl for Wine.

Joel 3:3 ----- <sup>3</sup>and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute (Harlot in KJV) and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

Tyre, Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia (v4-5) do not value human life they are totally self-centred living to satisfy the cravings of their own lust. In this verse they are pictured as a people that consider the pleasure of a prostitute more valuable than the life of a boy and the intoxicating alcohol of wine of greater value than the life of a girl (see verses 5-8).

### Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia.

Joel 3:4 ----- <sup>4</sup>"What are you to me (the LORD), O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will return your payment on your own head swiftly and speedily.

**Tyre:** was famous for maritime activities, commerce and trade, it was a rich city, but was eventually besieged by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

**Sidon:** was a city of commerce, a place of seamen and a principal city of Phoenicia. It is frequently mentioned in the Bible in connection with Tyre, especially in prophetic literature.

**Philistia:** is the same as the Philistines who were a major contender against the Hebrews for possession of Palestine. The people of Philistia are called Philistines; (today they are the Palestinians).

**Are you paying me back for something:** God is referring to the nations who have scattered His people and treated them cruelly and as merchandise to be sold. The LORD is basically saying, "Do these nations think they are paying Him back for something he has done to them, if that is their motive then He will quickly judge them and sell them to foreign nations.

### **The People of God have been Sold.**

Joel 3:5-8 ----- <sup>5</sup>For you (Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia) (v4) have taken my (the LORD'S), silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. <sup>6</sup>You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border. <sup>7</sup>Behold, I will stir them (the people of Judah and Jerusalem) up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head. <sup>8</sup>I will sell your (Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia) sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for the LORD has spoken."

**Sabeans:** the name Saba is coupled with Ethiopia, and Sheba it was known to the Hebrews as Cush. God says because the people of Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia traded God's people for their own selfish gain, He will sell them to the Sabeans.

### **Beat your Plowshares into Swords and the Valley of Jehoshaphat.**

Joel 3:9-12 ----- <sup>9</sup>Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate (declare or set apart) for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. <sup>10</sup>Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." <sup>11</sup>Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD. <sup>12</sup>Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I (the LORD) will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

God through Joel is telling Judah to proclaim to the surrounding nations that they are to prepare themselves for war by turning their agricultural and farming tools into weapons of war and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat where God will judge them (see Joel 3:1-2).

**KEY:** this is not a battle between Judah and the surrounding nations. The people of Judah are still in captivity to Babylon or living as slaves to the nations they have been sold to. God is telling the surrounding nations if they are not going to repent and let His people go free He will judge them.

### **The Harvest is Ripe, put in the Sickle.**

Joel 3:13-14 ----- <sup>13</sup>Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their (all the surrounding nations) (v12) evil is great. <sup>14</sup>Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

**Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe:** means sin has reached its peak, the time to judge and punish has come.

**The valley of decision:** Joel's vision presents a picture of God sitting in a valley (called the valley of decision) ready to judge the nations that have been gathered together in the valley. It is called the valley of decision because the nations that have traded God's people and sold them as slaves to the surrounding nations, and Babylon who has held the Jews in captive for nearly seventy years have to decide if they are going to repent, let God's people go free, do good and live in peace and harmony with them.

The nations did not let God's people go so at the end of the seventy year captivity God used Cyrus the King of Persia as His anointed shepherd to conquer the kingdom of Babylon. Cyrus gave written permission allowing the Jews to return to their land to rebuild Jerusalem, the temple their houses and farm their land that had laid waste for seventy years and so God's word came to pass.

Multitudes of Jews from every nation returned to help rebuild the city and the Temple of God, the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem were restored (Joel 3:1-2), but this scenario may also echo a similar but far greater event which will take place in a future age when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and the world will have to decide whether they are going to side with the King of kings and Lord of lords or the world leader in power at the time of Christ's reign calling the nations to make war against the Lamb of God.

John inspired by God in the book of Revelations wrote: -

- They (kings of the world) will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. (Rev. 17:14)

### **The Sun and the Moon are Darkened and the LORD Roars from Zion.**

Joel 3:15-16 ----- <sup>15</sup>The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. <sup>16</sup>The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge (Hope in the KJV) to his people, a stronghold (strength in KJV) to the people of Israel.

The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem is another way of saying, God fights for His people. The LORD did this by using Cyrus the king of Persia who God called his anointed shepherd. At the end of the seventy years the LORD used Cyrus King of Persia to fulfil this Promise. The following verses show that Cyrus was called the LORD'S Anointed Shepherd.

- The LORD says of Cyrus, *'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose';* saying of Jerusalem, *'She shall be built,'* and of the temple, *'Your foundation shall be laid.'* ----NOW GO TO CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE ---- <sup>1</sup>Thus says the LORD *to his anointed,* to Cyrus, whose *right hand I have grasped,* to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed (Isaiah 44:28-45:1).

God calls Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd. Isaiah pictures the LORD holding Cyrus's right hand while Cyrus opens all doors that no man can shut and subdues all nations (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1). The LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing that the LORD had charged him to let His people go and build the LORD a House in Jerusalem.

(2 Chron. 36:22-23) (Ezra 1:1-2) (Ezra 5:13-17) (Ezra 6:3) (Ezra 6:14).

**The sun and moon darkened and the earth quaking:** when the LORD from Jerusalem judges the surrounding nations that have come up against His people, the battle is so horrific and terrifying and there is so much death it is described as the sun and the moon being darkened, the stars withdrawing their shining and the heavens and the earth quaking. (See Joel 2:10), but during this time the LORD will be a hope for His people and their strength.

### **God's Promise of a Glorious and Prosperous Future for Judah.**

Joel 3:17-18 ----- <sup>17</sup>So you (Judah and Israel) shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And *Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.* <sup>18</sup>And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and *a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD* and water the Valley of Shittim.

Zion is called God's Holy Mountain because God's Holy City Jerusalem sits on it. In a limited sense this was fulfilled when Israel and Judah returned after their seventy year Babylonian captivity to rebuild Jerusalem, but it also echoes a future time when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Egypt and Edom will become a Desolation.**

Joel 3:19-21 ----- <sup>19</sup>"Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. <sup>20</sup>But *Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations.* <sup>21</sup>I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, *for the LORD dwells in Zion.*"

Zion is another name for Jerusalem and by extension embraces all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Judah and Israel.

**Edom:** Esau is the father of Edom, the people are called Edomites. The LORD promised Rebekah two Nations, Isaac and his wife Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob (the two promised nations). Jacob deceptively took Esau's Birthright and Isaac made Jacob Lord over Esau. Nevertheless both became great nations. Esau (Edom) was a skillful hunter and man of the field settled in the land of Canaan the hill country of Seir, south of the Dead Sea on the opposite side of the River Jordan to the Promised Land.

**Egypt and the Bible:** Egypt appears in the Bible as a type of short lived earthbound system called the world. In one instance it is an allegorical synonym for Sodom and for rebellious Jerusalem (Rev 11:8).

**Significance and future of Egypt:** it is remarkable that Egypt so often was a place of refuge or a means of sustaining life. Though Egypt is regarded by typological extremists as a type of "the world", it has the Scriptural prediction of a wonderful future.

Isaiah prophecies a day will come when: -

- In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. <sup>20</sup>It will be a sign and a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt. When they cry to the LORD because of oppressors, he will send them a saviour and defender, and deliver them. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day and worship with sacrifice and offering, and they will make vows to the LORD and perform them. <sup>22</sup>And the LORD will strike Egypt, striking and healing, and they will return to the LORD, and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them. <sup>23</sup>In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. <sup>24</sup>In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, <sup>25</sup>whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance." (Isaiah 19:19-23).

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End.