

JOEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Joel chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we finish up this book. We have seen in our study of Joel that God used a devastating locust infestation as a picture or type of the coming judgment. First the Babylonians but ultimately looking at the Last Days judgment that God is going to pour out upon a Christ rejecting world.

Now I do realize that for many they see this as unfair. How can a loving God do that to the people that He created? Yes God is loving but He is also righteous and He must deal with sin and He has, at the cross of Calvary. But for those who reject Jesus they will stand in their own righteousness, which is like filthy rags and they will be judged for their sins!

Listen to what James Montgomery Boice wrote regarding this issue of God's judgment in the Last Days. He wrote,

But the fact that there will be a judgment of God on his disobedient people does not mean that God is forgetting about the sins of the ungodly or that he will neglect to mete out judgment to them. On the contrary, like waters collecting behind a great dam, God's wrath has been gathering and increasing as it awaits the day when it will be released in fury against individuals and nations. Paul spoke of this day when he told the Athenians: In the past God overlooked the ignorance of pagan worship but "now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed [that is, by Jesus]. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30–31). This is what Joel speaks of as he closes his prophecy. He has warned Israel of God's judgment. Now he reminds even pagans that they will be called to account for their offenses.

The idea of God's wrath is unpopular for obvious reasons. Yet this is the only point in God's final dealings with sinful people that has real logic to it. In most theological systems the doctrine of the last things centers around three great truths: the return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of men and women, and the final judgment. But it is only the last of these that is logical. There is nothing logical about the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus came once and was rejected. If he went away and never came again, it would be only what we should expect. There is nothing logical about the resurrection either. "Dust you are and to dust you will return" is God's word to sinners (Gen. 3:19). Yet God promises "unlogically" to raise us to life. The only really sensible thing is God's judgment.

Why? Because we have broken God's laws and have sinned against him in thought, word, and deed. And the Judge of all the earth must do right! If we will not repent of sin and return to God in the way he has provided - through Christ - that judgment is even now waiting at the door.

- James Montgomery Boice, *The Minor Prophets*, p. 124

So our focus this evening is the judgment of the nations, those who are in rebellion against God, fighting against Him and the Jewish people. They will be gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat and God will judge them there.

The second division or point of this chapter is dealing with the restoration of Israel. Not only will the land be restored but God will also pour out His Spirit upon the people. Thus, instead of ending with Israel being in a backslidden condition with no King and everyone doing what was right in their own eyes, the book of Joel ends with Jesus Christ reigning as King from the throne of David in Jerusalem.

The last five verses of Joel chapter 2 set us up for what we will be looking at this evening. So let's just read through those verses and then we will pick up our study in Joel chapter 3. Let's start reading in verse 28 of Joel chapter 2 where we are told, "**And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.**" Joel 2:28-32.

Prior to the Lord returning to set-up His Kingdom all these cataclysmic events will occur upon the earth, besides the many other things that the book of Revelation speaks of as well as other books in the Bible.

That is where we will pick up our study this evening, as the Lord has returned and has put down man's rebellion and He will judge the Gentile nations who have rejected Him and restore the Jewish people. So let's start reading in Joel chapter 3 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

JOEL 3**VERSES 1-3**

1. Now you can say that the near fulfillment of the Jews returning home speaks of their return from the Babylonian captivity. Yes, it is a type, a picture but when you read what is before these verses, in Joel chapter 2 and you see that **“all nations”** will be judged, this has not happened yet!

Joel tells us, **“For behold, in those days and at that time . . .”** Joel 3:1. What days and what time? In the Last Days at the end of the Tribulation Period God will **“bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem.”** Joel 3:1. And it is during this time that He will judge the Gentile nations!

First of all let's deal with this idea of God bringing back the Jews into the land of Israel once again. I think we are living in the days where we see a type or picture of what God is going to do at the end of the Tribulation Period. What do I mean by that?

Back on May 14, 1948 this dead, lifeless nation came back to life again just as God said would take place. On the heels of the Jews almost being wiped out by Hitler, 6 million Jews murdered, this dead, lifeless people and nation came back to life!

We read of this in Ezekiel 37:21-22 where we are told, **“Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.””**

Again, this is a type or picture, it is not the end point, not yet. You see, as you look at what Joel has said, he is speaking of the Last Days and specifically, because we are living in the Last Days – they began with Jesus’s earthly ministry, the end of the Tribulation Period!

In Matthew 24:31 we are told, “**And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**” This occurs at the end of the Tribulation Period and you can clearly see that as you look at what was previously said in Matthew chapter 24, “**Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**”

Matthew 24:29-30.

You see, the Lord comes back and He will gather His people, the Jews back into the land of Israel once again!

Also, in Jeremiah 30:3 we see this spoken of, “**‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’**” The short term fulfillment is they are back in the land today. The complete fulfillment will come to pass when the Lord returns to set-up His Kingdom here on the earth.

2. The Lord will gather His people into the land and He will also judge the nations and this will take place after the Battle of Armageddon, at the end of the Tribulation Period as the Lord prepares to set-up His Kingdom.

And we are told that the people will be judged in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, also called the Valley of Decision in Joel 3:14. Now understand this, it is not the people who are deciding, but it is the Lord who will judge them. In fact, the name Jehoshaphat means **YAHWEH JUDGES!** If they rejected the Lord they have already made their decision as well as those who have come to Him!

Now there are some who say that there is no such valley and thus, this must be symbolic! Clarke has this view as he wrote, "There is no such valley in the land of Judea; and hence the name must be *symbolical*. It signifies the *judgment of God*, or *Jehovah judgeth*." I disagree. Let me explain.

I also don't believe this is speaking of the Kidron Valley but some do. But I tend to lean in another direction. In Zechariah 14:4 we are told, "**And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.**" This large valley that the Lord creates could be this Valley of Jehoshaphat or the Valley of Judgment spoken of here in Joel chapter 3. It would make sense because He will rule and reign from Jerusalem!

3. Now why are these Gentile nations being judged? Listen to Joel 3:2b-3 once again and I think you will see the reason. We are told, "**. . . Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy as payment for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.**"

As you read these things that the Gentile nations and of course people did upon the Jewish people you can clearly see that the worth of the Jewish people was very cheap among these nations. They treated them as objects of possession instead of human beings, and don't forget the Jewish people are the people of God.

The Jewish boys were being sold so their owners could obtain the services of a prostitute. And the Jewish girls were sold so their owners could buy wine. That is the way these Gentiles thought of the Jews. They were worthless to them. They could buy nothing more than a cheap prostitute or some wine to fulfill their body appetites. The lives of the Jewish people were worth nothing more than a moment's pleasure!

Now, in saying that listen to what we are told in 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.”

They will be judged according to how they treated the Jewish people during the Tribulation Period! Now I know what you are thinking, that sounds like a works theology, that they are saved by doing good and they are damned for doing bad!

Remember what I have told you before. If there is something in the Scripture that does not seem to fit with what the rest of the Scriptures are saying, you need to look deeper because God’s Word does not contradict itself!

I think the answer is simple. This is the fruit that is born in their lives. You see, they are damned for their rejection of Jesus because He is the only way to be saved. And thus, if they are not saved they are not going to be treating the Jewish people kindly, in fact they will be persecuting them. Those that are saved, those Gentiles will treat the Jews kindly because it is the fruit that is born out of a relationship with Jesus Christ! I hope that makes sense!

And for those who have rejected Jesus and have persecuted the Jews, they will not enter into the Millennial Kingdom!

VERSES 4-8

1. This is interesting to me. They rejected God, they retaliated against God and in the end they did not win, they lost! They rejected the saving grace of God in their lives and thus, they get what they deserve before the Righteous Judge!

It is as Paul said in Galatians 6:7, “**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**” And that certainly applies here. We also see that God speaks of judging Tyre, Sidon and Philistia for their actions against His people which, in reality, are actions against Him!

Now this idea of retaliating against God, let’s look a little closer to this question that God puts forth, “**Will you retaliate against Me?**” How many times do we, as God’s people, try and fight against God?

“I don’t care, I am going to do it my way, I am in charge, and if they don’t like it, tough!” Now we may not use those exact words, and I am sure we can use spiritual jargon to make ourselves sound better than that, but in reality, we are not listening to God but are more interested in doing it ***MY WAY INSTEAD OF HIS WAY!***

Another way to put it is like this, ***NOT MY WAY BUT YAHWEH!*** Understand this, we are the clay and He is the Master Potter and why are we telling Him what to do? That is just foolish, but we do it anyway many times! God desires fellowship with us, not wars. But, if you want to fight against God, understand that He will deal with you, but that is not His desire for your life. Listen to His voice and then obey Him!

2. Now let's look at what these nations did against God's people because that is the reason for this judgment upon them. They took His possessions and treated His people harshly, beyond what God intended.

Thus, God says to them, **“Behold, I will raise them Out of the place to which you have sold them, And will return your retaliation upon your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters Into the hand of the people of Judah, And they will sell them to the Sabeans, To a people far off; For the Lord has spoken.”** Joel 3:7-8.

Did you see that? God's judgment is poured out against these nations in the same manner that they treated the Jewish people. What you sow you will reap as we read in Galatians!

How did God do this? First of all the people of Sidon were sold into slavery by Antiochus III in 345 B. C. And Tyre and Gaza were enslaved by Alexander the Great in 332 B. C. The Sabeans or Arabians controlled the eastern trade routes in northern Arabia. And it is very possible that the Jews were among the buyers of some of these slaves.

3. These verses have been completed in history. God's judgment has come upon these nations for what they have done upon the Jewish people and in reality against God. But now in verse 9 Joel comes back to the Day of the Lord and His judgment!

VERSES 9-11

1. God is awakening the people for war. And this call does not only go out to the mighty men, but to all the men. The weak, the farmers, everyone is to get ready. In fact, they are called to bring their agricultural implements and make them into weapons of war!

Now who are they fighting against? They are fighting against the Lord! Thus, this is the last battle, the battle of Armageddon which we can read of in Revelation 16:12-16, where we are told, **“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to 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 am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.’ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”**

We are told that these demonic spirits gather the armies of the world to the Valley of Megiddo which is about 20 miles long and some 14 miles wide. And this area forms what Napoleon called, “The most natural battle field of the whole earth.”

Also, Napoleon, in his disastrous excursion into Egypt, passed through this Valley and said, “If there is a place on earth where the last war must be fought, it is here.” He is right, and it will take place in this area, just as we are told here in Revelation.

Now there is a problem and it is a pretty big one. The problem is this. If we look at the dimensions of this valley they don't seem to fit what Revelation 14:18-20 tells us. In Revelation chapter 14 we are told, "**And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.'** **So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.**"

So how do we reconcile this problem? I think it is pretty simple. This battle will overflow those 20 miles or so that the Valley of Megiddo covers and it will stretch from Bozrah, in Edom, northward to Megiddo at the foot of Mount Carmel, some 184 miles. It is this area that we will see the blood flow some 4 to 5 feet or splash upon the horses' bridles some 4 to 5 feet!

There is a great slaughter that is coming and in Isaiah 63 we get a description of the wrath of God crushing the rebellion of man like grapes in a winepress. Beginning in verse 1 of Isaiah chapter 63 we read, **“Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?—‘I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’ Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? ‘I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.”** Isaiah 63:1-6.

The Valley of Megiddo is located in the Plain of Esdraelon, which has been the site of many great battles. It was the place where Gideon and his 300 men defeated the Midianites. It is the place where Samson took on the Philistines. It is the place where Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera. Also, this is the place where Josiah was killed by Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt. And there is one more great battle still to come, the final battle!

This place, Armageddon in the Hebrew and Harmageddon in the Greek, can be broken down like this. HAR means mount, and MEGIDDO means rendezvous, so it is the mount of rendezvous where the armies of the world will gather together. It will be a massive army!

Remember in our study of Daniel chapter 11, we were told that the Antichrist will move his forces southward, towards Egypt and North Africa, to put down a rebellion against him. Now just as he is getting a handle on this rebellion in the south, he gets more bad news. This time trouble is coming from the east and the north.

These Kings from the east or from the rising sun are most likely China and very possibly Japan. Back in 1965 China boasted of having a 200 million man army! Which is interesting to me when you read in the sixth trumpet judgment an army coming together that has 200 million men.

As this massive army moves westward, it seems to split in two, some coming down from the northern route and the rest coming from the eastern route to enter this Valley, possibly because their numbers are so massive. And these Kings of the east will meet the forces of the Antichrist in this area. And at one point they stop fighting each other and they join forces to fight against the Lord and His people.

In Revelation 19, beginning in verse 11, we see the Lord return at the climax of this battle as we read, **“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”** Revelation 19:11-21.

Now as some read of this devastating defeat, this judgment of God upon these Gentile nations who have come against God's people, the Jews and Him, and they laugh at it. They think it is funny, they mock us who believe this will happen.

Listen to what Herbert Stevenson wrote,

Men dismiss the Biblical teaching concerning judgment to come, for individuals and nations, as a now outmoded concept. But the people of God have held fast through all the generations to the assurance that, in the "day of the Lord," the Judge of all the earth will do right. That is our confidence, based upon the rock of Holy Scripture.

- Herbert F. Stevenson, *Three Prophetic Voices. Studies in Joel, Amos and Hosea.* P. 40

That is so true. It does not matter what man has to say in regards to God's righteous judgment. It does matter what God has to say and I will believe what He says and that one day, all this violence, all this immorality, all this wickedness that man has perpetrated upon their fellow man will be done away with. These plowshares that were made into swords will be made back into plowshares!

Yes, before God judges the nations this battle will take place but then, as His Kingdom is set up, we are told in Isaiah 2:2-4, **“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”** What a day that will be!

2. Now if you are still unsure about this judgment of God upon the Gentile nations who have turned against Him and His people, look at what we are told next here in Joel chapter 3.

VERSES 12-13

1. God is pouring out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world and He is about done. The battle is devastating as we are told of this winepress of God stamping down upon rebellious man in Revelation 14:14-20, which we have already read this evening. Man’s wickedness has fully ripened, in fact it is over-ripe and it is now time for God’s judgment to be poured out and the rebellion destroyed. Then, after this great battle the Lord will judge the nations to see who will enter into the Kingdom Age and who will not!

VERSES 14-15

1. All those who have made it through the Tribulation Period will now come before the Lord and He will judge them according to their relationship with Him, with Jesus. He is either Lord and Savior of their life or He isn't! Those that believe will enter into the Kingdom Age with Him. Those that have rejected the King will be separated from Him for eternity. You see, at this point it is too late to change your mind. Your position is final and God will judge accordingly!

I realize that it says "**the valley of decision**" but man's decision has already been made and now God will decide if they enter into the Kingdom Age or not based on them accepting Jesus or rejecting Jesus.

And as we have seen, it is based on how they treated the Jewish people during this time, not a salvation by works but when that does work, it is the fruit that is born in their lives. You see, our salvation is in Christ and works are the fruit that is born out of that relationship.

Paul makes that point very clear in Ephesians chapter 2 when he says, "**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**" Ephesians 2:4-10.

2. Now verse 15 is just recapping what will be taking place prior to the Lord's return and we can read of this in Revelation 6:12-17 where we are told, **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”**

3. Now as we read on we will see the restoration of the nation of Israel, the Jewish people as God watches over them, protects them and brings them into the Kingdom Age fulfilling the promise He made to them regarding the Messiah ruling and reigning from the throne of David!

VERSES 16-17

1. Let me start out by showing you the contrast between two groups of people. First of all the Lord comes roaring as a Lion from the tribe of Judah to shake the heavens and the earth in judgment. It is the wrath of God being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world. That is speaking of those who don't know the Lord!

But, for those who come to the Lord He is a shelter to them, He is their protection, their safety. It is as Psalm 36:7 says, **“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.”**

Also, in Psalm 57:1 we read, **“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.”**

And lastly, in Psalm 91:1-6 we read, **“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.’ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; his truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.”**

That should be of great comfort to each of us, knowing that God desires to shelter us, protect us. The question is, *“Are you seeking Him and running into His arms of protection?”* If not, why not?

2. Now keep in mind that the focus here is the Jewish people and their restoration. Ever since the time of the Babylonian captivity the Jews have been persecuted by Gentiles. It is a period of time that is called **“the times of the Gentiles.”**

I think here in Joel chapter 3 we see that these times of the Gentiles have come to an end and we can also read of this in Luke 21:20-24 where we are told, **“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”**

Jesus will be ruling and reigning from Jerusalem, righteousness will fill this land, the Jews will be restored and they will no longer be persecuted by Gentiles!

3. That really is what verse 17 is all about here in Joel chapter 3, the Millennial Reign of Christ where He will rule and reign from Jerusalem and righteousness will fill the land. We are told, **“So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”** Joel 3:17.

Jesus is on the throne and the times of the Gentiles are over!

VERSES 18-21

1. I love the restoration that God brings, it is complete! Here we see the land being restored and it will be fruitful once again. The deserts shall blossom and bring forth life. Also, a river will flow from the house of the Lord, half towards the eastern sea or the Dead Sea and the other half towards the western sea or the Mediterranean Sea.

We can read of this is Zechariah 14:8 where we are told, **“And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur.”**

Today, the Dead Sea is just that, dead! There is no life in it because of the extremely high mineral content. The Jordan River flows down into the Dead Sea but there is no outlet, and thus, all these minerals are just sitting there, doing nothing but destroying life.

But, in the Kingdom Age we are told in Ezekiel 47:8-9, **“Then he said to me: ‘This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.’”**

This river that flows from the throne of God will heal the Dead Sea. It will be filled with life once again!

Now how does that apply to us today, the Dead Sea that is? Many Christians are like the Dead Sea. They come to church, they get fed and they are soaking up the things of God. You see, they have a great reservoir of minerals or wealth in them, but their life is barren, there is no fruit, there is no life because they are not using what God has given to them, they have no outlet!

As Christians we need to receive the things of God, but not become a reservoir to contain God but a channel from which God can flow through and touch the lives of others. If you are missing that ask God to show you how He wants to use you for His glory!

2. Now why do we see this judgment upon Egypt and Edom here? Because the Jews had suffered violent treatment at the hands of both these nations, Egypt and Edom. Even to the extent of unnecessary loss of life. Edom rejoiced when the Jews were taken captive instead of mourning over what was taking place! They were family.

The Egyptians, through Pharaoh Necho's killing of Josiah and the imprisonment of Jehoahaz, have also brought judgment upon themselves. In II Kings 23:29-34 we read, "**In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place. Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there.**"

This reign of terror brought about an abrupt end to a reign that had been marked by religious reformation and territorial gains by Josiah, King of the Southern Kingdom Judah. But again, God would repay them for their actions against His people.

3. Now as this chapter closes verse 21 is better translated, “*And shall I leave their bloodshed unpunished? I will not, as surely as YAHWEH has His throne in Zion.*” You see, God will hear the cries of His people just as He heard their cries down in Egypt. And God will respond and pay back the penalty due those nations that have come against His people.

4. Keep in mind that God is not done with Israel, as some like to say. The church has not become spiritual Israel. For God is speaking here of their restoration, and if you still doubt that, listen carefully to what Paul has to say in Romans 11:25-27, “**For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’**”

You see, as the Tribulation Period comes to an end the nation of Israel, as a whole, will turn to Jesus as their Messiah. Their sins will be forgiven and they will enter into the Kingdom Age with Him. And just as God had promised, the Savior will dwell in Zion! And yes, there will be Jews saved throughout the Tribulation Period, but the nation will turn to Jesus at the end of the Tribulation Period!

5. The book of Joel is a powerfully packed 3 chapter book that has taken us on a journey from the Day of the Lord, as God's judgment is poured out upon a Christ rejecting world, to the setting up of His Kingdom in Jerusalem with the restoration of His people, the Jews.

Thus, as we conclude this book we do so with Christ reigning on the throne of David, the place He should be in our lives today, reigning as King. You see, today the Lord dwells in us, His Kingdom is internal and spiritual, but one day He will reign from Jerusalem, it will be external and physical!

Let me close our study this evening by reading through Psalm 2, which is speaking of this Day of the Lord. We are told, **“Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.’ ‘I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.”** Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. **Serve the Lord with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry ,And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**” Psalm 2:1-12.

That day is getting closer and closer. That should bring us great joy as well as sadness for those who have rejected the Lord. If you have not bowed down to the King, you need to do so, receive His grace and mercy into your life or you will receive His wrath!