

# Valley of Jehoshaphat

Joel 3:1-10

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## God Judges the Nations, Joel 3:1-10

*“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. <sup>3</sup>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.*

<sup>4</sup> *“Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head;*

<sup>5</sup> *Because you have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples My prized possessions.*

<sup>6</sup> *Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem You have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders. <sup>7</sup>“Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retaliation upon your own head. <sup>8</sup>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.”*

<sup>9</sup> *Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake 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 strong.’ ”*

## v1 – What time-frame is spoken of here?

The context here is the time of the Tribulation per Joel 2:30-31 when there will be wonders in heaven and on the earth with the sun and moon darkened before the “*terrible day of the Lord.*” And the reference to the “day of the Lord” in Joel 2:31.

## Why couldn't this be referring to after the Babylonian captivity since it refers to the captives of Judah and Jerusalem?

In context it refers to Israel having been *scattered among the nations...* note the plural tense... it is not the one

nation of Babylon but the many nations which was the case after 70 AD.

## Why then the reference to just Judah and Jerusalem... why not Israel?

Israel is implied, Jerusalem is the heart of Israel. And the land of Judah became synonymous with all Israel.

## Does this reference to just Judah and Jerusalem reinforce the idea that the 10 northern tribes of Israel were lost?

- No... many of the Jews who remained in the land after the Assyrian conquest re-united with Judah (2 Chronicles 34:6-9)
- Babylon conquered Assyria so the northern tribes became part of Babylon then Persia after Medo-Persia conquered Babylon... Israelites from all 12 tribes were involved in rebuilding the temple (Ezra 1).
- Prophetess Anna was of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36)
- Zechariah, Elizabeth and John the Baptist were of the tribe of Levi (Luke 1:5)
- James wrote, “to all the twelve tribes scattered among the nations” (James 1:1)

## When will God bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem?

This could be supernatural at the end of the Tribulation or it could be what has been going on naturally since World War II with the end of the Diaspora (or both).

## v2 – What also happens at the end of the Tribulation?

God will gather representatives from all nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

## Where is the Valley of Jehoshaphat?

- Since the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. this term has been associated with the Kidron Valley running North-to-South between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives which is to the East of Jerusalem. The 20-mile long stretch of the valley runs East-Southeast descending 4,000 feet and tapering off into the Dead Sea

- In this valley, the 4<sup>th</sup> king of the separate kingdom of Judah, Jehoshaphat, overthrew the united enemies of Israel when it was called Valley of Beracah (2 Chronicles 20:26).

**The context of v14-17 indicates that this is during the Tribulation and the nations are being called to war... What does that tell us about the Valley of Jehoshaphat?**

This term may be symbolic since there was no place named the Valley of Jehoshaphat when it was written.

“Jehoshaphat” means “Jehovah judged” so this refers to the place of God’s judgment when He returns to the earth.

- We know the culmination of God’s judgment during the Tribulation is at Armageddon (which is North of Jerusalem).
- There is another judgment of the nations described in Matthew 25 (Sheep & Goat Judgment) which will probably be in a location other than the Armageddon battlefield for the non-warriors.

**What happens at the Valley of Jehoshaphat?**

All the nations will be judged there for how they have treated Israel. It sounds a lot like what happens at the Sheep & Goat Judgment. And, for that matter, what also happens at Armageddon.

**Concerning Armageddon, Revelation 16:12-16 says it is unclean spirits that gather the nations, why does it say in Joel that God gathers the nations?**

God is in control and he uses even unbelievers to do His work. He allows the unclean spirits to do what He would have done.

**If the Sheep and Goat judgment occurs in the Kidron Valley, how does the population of the earth get there?**

This gathering may be supernatural. The ones taken to the valley may only be the “goats” but this is where Jesus is when He pronounces judgment...

Matthew 24:38-42 – <sup>38</sup>For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>40</sup>Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup>Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>42</sup>Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

**Is it good or bad to be among those taken in Matthew 24:40-41?**

It is not good; this is not the rapture of the church...

- The general context of Matthew 24 is that this is a message to Israel during the time of the Tribulation.
- The immediate context is referring to the days of Noah where being taken is taken in judgment.
- The time-frame of being taken is the coming of the Son of Man... a term for the Messiah coming to deliver Israel, not the church.
- A parallel passage in Luke adds where the people are taken to:  
Luke 17:37 – *He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”*

**Doesn’t the being taken here depict normal times which will not be the case at the end of the Tribulation?**

This is a parable which is included in the midst of a series of parables. Parables only have one central idea which in this case is that people will be going about their lives, trying to get by in the world with no thought to their eternal destiny. Don’t read any more into it than that. This was also the case in the days of Noah.

**But what about this context:**

Matthew 24:36 – *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*

**People will certainly know when the Lord will return for Israel because it will be exactly 7 years from when the Antichrist confirms a 7-year peace covenant for Israel and 3.5 years after he commits the abomination of desolation in the temple. So why isn’t this the rapture?**

- At the time Matthew 24:36 was written, only the Father knew the time... and no mortal human knows this even today. But this will be known by followers of Christ during the Tribulation.
- This statement is given from the perspective of unbelievers... they don’t have the spiritual discernment to believe or even know Scripture. If they did, they would be believers.

**Back to Joel... v2-3 – What case does God have against the nations for how they treated Israel?**

- *they have scattered among the nations* – This began at 70 AD when Rome sacked Jerusalem but has been the situation until the end of WWII.
- *They have also divided up My land* – This characterizes the peace process being imposed on Israel for basically as long as they have existed... trading land for peace.
- *They have cast lots for My people* – the nations have enslaved the Jews trading them to serve their own interests.

### **Why have the nations treated the Jews so poorly?**

Spiritual warfare... Satan hates the people God chose to reveal Himself through and bring our salvation. If Satan can destroy God's covenant people the Jews then he can thwart God's plans.

### **v4-8 – What is the significance of the nations mentioned here?**

God's judgment of Tyre and Sidon, prophesized by Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, have all been literally fulfilled

- Sidon was neither an enemy nor friend of Israel, but Tyre had been a close ally of Israel in David's and Solomon's time
- When the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon profited from the trade in treasures and Israelite slaves

God punished both cities in the same manner as Joel prophesied (Joel 3:4-8)

- The citizens of Tyre were killed or enslaved by Alexander in 332 BC. He killed 8,000 people when he took the city, 2,000 more later, and enslaved 30,000
- The citizens of Sidon were later enslaved by the Seleucid King Antiochus III in 203 B.C.

### **To what does this reference to selling off the children of Israel's oppressors to the Sabeans refer?**

This is as the text says, to a people far off. Some think this had its fulfillment in the victories obtained by the Maccabees over the enemies of the Jews; others think it looks as far forward as the last day, when *the upright shall have dominion* (Psalm 49:14).

### **v9 – What are the nations called to do?**

Prepare for war; scramble their warriors

### **When is this call made to the nations?**

It has to be at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel... The context here is the gathering at the Valley of Jehoshaphat which we have already established is a euphemism for Armageddon.

### **v10 – What does it mean to beat plowshares into swords and spears into pruning hooks?**

This refers to taking tools intended for peaceful uses and transforming them into weapons.

### **Do any examples come to mind for when this has happened?**

One example is when a crew of Islamic terrorists used box cutters to commandeer passenger airliners transforming them into guided missiles to kill as many people as possible.

### **Where else have we heard this beat-your-plowshares-into-swords language?**

Isaiah 2:4 – *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.*

This refers to the aftermath of Armageddon when the Lord establishes the Millennial Kingdom. The opposite happens where tools of war are transformed into tools of peace.

- My dad told me how farmers used Army Jeeps to plow fields after WWII because there weren't enough tractors to meet demand.
- It's interesting to note that this verse is quoted on the UN building in NYC. The nations long for the peace of the Millennial Kingdom but it will only happen when Jesus returns, not through human effort.

### **Why does the weak say “I am strong?”**

This reveals the depth of the deception during the Tribulation. Who could possibly think they could fight and win against the Creator-God of the universe? They have been duped by Satan who in his pride convinced himself that he *“will be like the Most High”* (Isaiah 14:14).

### **What kind of deception might it take for Tribulation unbelievers to think they could win a fight against God?**

It probably builds on the *“strong delusion”* of 2 Thessalonians 2:11 which will be the official worldly narrative used to explain away the rapture of the church.

Revelation 16:13-14 – *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.*

If “alien technology” is the explanation for the rapture, it is not a stretch to think that fallen angels masquerading as friendly aliens convince the earth-dwellers that they can help them fight the “unfriendly aliens” invading earth who are really Jesus and the armies in heaven (Rev 19:14).

### **What applications for our day and time come to mind for our discussion about the Valley of Jehoshaphat?**

- There is a Great Reset coming, we just need to be patient and trust in the Lord.
- God is in control even when it doesn't look like it.
- God wins in the end; it is a good thing to be on the right side of His-story!