

Valley of Decision

Joel 3:11-21

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1/3/2021

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God Judges the Nations, Joel 3:11-17

¹¹ Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. ¹² “Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. ¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow— For their wickedness is great.”

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.

¹⁶ The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

¹⁷ “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.”

v11-12 – Who are the “mighty ones” called to go down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat?

The Lord Jesus Himself will lead the armies in heaven down to earth and end the battle of Armageddon. The armies in heaven are the holy angels and us in our resurrected bodies, the Bride of Christ.

- We know the holy angels will be there from:
Matthew 25:31 – *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.*
- But we also know that the resurrected saints will be there as well from:
Zechariah 14:5 – *Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You.*
- The term “saints” is never used to refer to angels, only redeemed people. And there is also this:
Jude 1:14-15 – *Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment*
- Per Revelation 19:14, the armies in heaven are clothed in “fine linen, white and clean” which was given to the Bride of Christ in Revelation 19:8.

- This is certainly consistent with the promise Jesus gave us when He returns:

John 14:3 – *if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*

v12 – Why will the nations be awakened?

So that they may gather at the Valley of Jehoshaphat where they will be judged by God.

v13 – What does this language about harvesting for the winepress remind us?

The grapes of wrath introducing the bowl judgments...

Revelation 14:19-20 – *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.*

God has had enough of the godless human governments and the time has come for His Great Reset.

Why is the harvest often used to symbolize the Day of the Lord?

It is the culmination of the season where the fruit is gathered into the barn and the weeds are discarded.

- It is the perfect picture of the dispensational transition from the Age of Grace to the Millennial Kingdom.

v14 – What is the valley of decision?

Valleys are symbolic of a low point in one’s life...

Psalms 23:4 – *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*

This term *valley of decision* connects the place of judgment, Valley of Jehoshaphat, or Armageddon, with the time of judgment, the Tribulation.

- The Valley of Decision is the Tribulation when everyone on earth will need to make a decision whether to follow the Antichrist or Jesus Christ, to take the Mark of the Beast or not.

Could the valley of decision be so named from God's perspective?

It could also be that the valley of decision is the place of God judging the nations as Jesus described in the Matthew 25 Sheep and Goat Judgment. Thus, this will probably take place in the Kidron Valley... the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

- But from God's perspective, the decisions have already been made, they are just revealed at the Sheep and Goat judgment.

How is it that the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision?

The day the Lord returns to the earth is no more than 7 years away when the valley of decision, or the Tribulation begins. In most cases even much sooner because fate-sealing decisions will be made earlier:

- Follow the Antichrist thus rejecting Jesus Christ to keep from being killed or profess Jesus Christ to have eternal life but be killed.
- Take the Mark of the Beast to buy groceries or don't take it and have to forage for food as a fugitive enemy of the state.

v15 – What does the sun, moon, and stars growing dark tell us?

This just reinforces the idea that the valley of decision happens during the Tribulation which culminates in the day of the Lord, when He is revealed to the world...

Joel 2:31 – *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 as we discussed, this is also the description of the 6th seal judgment by the Apostle John...

Revelation 6:12-13 – *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.*

v16 – What else happens in the day of the Lord?

He will speak to the world from Jerusalem causing the heavens and the earth to shake. And He will protect those believers who survive the Tribulation along with being the deliverer of Israel.

v17 – Who will know the Lord?

Israel will know that Jesus is the Lord their God because He will be the one to deliver them then dwell in Jerusalem.

How will Jerusalem be made holy?

The Lord Jesus will dwell there and rule the world from there.

How is it that no aliens will ever pass through Jerusalem again?

This may be a reference to the New Jerusalem of the Eternal State when:

Revelation 21:27 – *there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

The Jerusalem of the Millennial Kingdom will certainly foreshadow the New Jerusalem of the Eternal State so maybe only believers will be allowed there.

- Certainly, the nations will send representatives to Jerusalem every year for the Feast of Tabernacles during the Millennial Kingdom...

Zechariah 14:16 – *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*

God Blesses His People, Joel 3:18-21

¹⁸ *And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Acacias.*

¹⁹ *"Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land.*

²⁰ *But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.*

²¹ *For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; For the Lord dwells in Zion."*

v18 – What day will God bless Judah with new wine, milk and water?

After the valley of decision (Tribulation) is over.

What is this water that shall flow from the house of the Lord?

I take it that this describes a river that will begin at the Millennial Kingdom Temple...

Ezekiel 47:1 – *Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east*

This river is also mentioned in the Psalms...

Psalms 46:4 – *There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.*

And the Prophet Zechariah gives more details.

Zechariah 14:8-9 – *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. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth.*

This river foreshadows the Eternal State's River of Life:

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

Where is the Valley of Acacias?

The Hebrew word translated Acacias is Shittim which was used for the place of Israel's encampment between the conquest of the Transjordan region and crossing the Jordan into Canaan... it was west of Jerusalem.

What does this tell us about the location of the Millennial Kingdom temple?

That this temple will be somewhere West of Jerusalem, between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea.

v19 – What is the fate of Egypt & Edom at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom?

They will be a place of desolation... Edom is just South of the Dead Sea and North of Petra in Jordan.

- Ezekiel 29:11 provides more details about Egypt: *“No foot of man or animals will pass through it; no one will live there for forty years.”*
- Isaiah 19:16-23 describes the restoration of Egypt and that it will be subject to Israel during Christ's Kingdom reign

Egyptians will fear the Lord (v 16); Five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan (Hebrew) and swear allegiance to the Lord (v 18); There will be an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt (v 21)

v20 – How is it that Judah shall abide forever?

The Jews who enter the Millennial Kingdom are all saved and they will have descendants during the Millennial Kingdom who will be saved and they will spend eternity with the Lord in the New Jerusalem.

v21- What does it mean that God will acquit Israel of their blood guilt?

God will vindicate His people, who have suffered innocently in being persecuted because they are God's chosen people. He will avenge His slaughtered people by punishing their foes, and He will *“cleanse the Jew's blood”* – All Israel will be saved! (Romans 11:26)

What blessing to Israel ends the book of Joel?

“The LORD dwells in Zion”

The book ends with a note of the ultimate blessing, the Lord's eternal presence with His people in Jerusalem

Rev 21:3-4 – *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

How is this blessing foreshadowed in the current Age of Grace?

For Christians, a partial fulfillment of this blessing has already taken place, because:

John 14:23 – *Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”*

What applications do you see in the here and now from this discussion about the valley of decision?

- It will be much better to be with Jesus during the time of the valley of decision than to be on earth during that time. The Age of Grace is a blessing!
- God will bless Israel and work through them again so we too should bless them or find ourselves on the wrong side of God.
- Jesus will dwell with mankind during the Millennial Kingdom but we don't have to wait for that during the Age of Grace!