

Joel 3:1-4

As we saw last week, the third blessing, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, now leads into the second blessing.

- I. We see God will bring Judea and Jerusalem back – Joel 3:1
 - a. When we see the phrase in those days and at that time, we need to realize that it is in the timing that God decides first and foremost.
 - b. Others also say that it will be during the time of the Revelation (remember all the connections we looked at last week)
 - c. It is in that time, that God will bring Judea and Jerusalem back!
 - i. At this time, many believe that Israel was not in captivity yet.
 - ii. If this is indeed the first signs of judgment for their sins (which leads to the events of Lamentations) then this is the first mention of captivity toward them!
 - iii. God is saying that He will bring back the people
 1. This will be a common theme to the People as God fulfills His promises
 - a. They will return to Him – Isaiah 10:21¹
 - b. They will return to the land – Jeremiah 30:3
 2. This is the picture that we find in Ezekiel dealing with the dry bones – Ezekiel 37:1-14
 - iv. We can see a partial returning of this land in fulfillment to the promises of God – Ezekiel 39:28
 1. In the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, etc
 2. We even saw a bit of this during the 1940-50's! Israel was given a national identity.
 3. Today, there are ministries geared for the express purpose of returning the Jews to their homeland – *On Wings of Eagles* is one such ministry.
- II. God will also do something else – Joel 3:2
 - a. The nations will be brought to a specific place
 - i. the place mentioned here is the Valley of Jehoshaphat
 - ii. In Israel's history, this was the valley where King Jehoshaphat, with God's help, defeated a union of three or more armies. – 2 Chronicles 20:1-27
 - iii. What is this valley?
 1. There is a valley (between Jerusalem and Mount of Olives) that are part of the Kedron valley. It is called the valley of Jehosaphat. – Zechariah 14:2-4²

¹ Isaiah 10:21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God.

² Zechariah 14:2-4 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. 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.

2. However, there is also, it seems, in **Joel 3:14** where the valley is actually a figurative place of decision (God's decision and not theirs) and not a literal valley. Therefore we are not sure which way to look at this for certain.
 3. Significant however is the name Jehosaphat. It means that God is judge
- b. They will go into judgment
- i. Time and again, God has said that he would judge the nations of the earth
 1. **Ezekiel 38-39** (very detailed and gruesome [7 months just to bury the dead])
 2. In fact, we can read, **Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Amos, Obadiah, Zechariah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Matthew, Revelation, etc** and see God's judgment on the nations.
 - ii. God said that they would come to one location
 1. Is it interesting that they would come to one location just for their destruction
 2. Of course we can understand that they are led by the beast and the goal is to destroy Jerusalem and set the beast (satan) up as the ruler
 3. We also need to realize though that God put it in their hearts to come to this point because it would fulfill all of the prophecies against the nations around Israel – **Proverbs 21:1**
 4. They are coming to this place of decision (valley of Jehosaphat). There, they will be judged, not on man's standards but on God's
 - a. Mankind has always wanted to think they would be judged on the way that mankind is judged.
 - b. But God does not judge that way. He has told them how He will judge but mankind refuses to listen to that.
- c. They are judged also by how they dealt with:
- i. God's people which are God's heritage
 1. The Jews have been very persecuted in history
 - a. We can read about this in the History books
 - b. We can read about this in our own Scriptures
 2. The Jews today are still targeted
 - a. Just this last week, there were 11 phone threats to eleven Jewish community centers around our nation!
 - b. The UN is NOT very Israeli friendly. (**over 100 resolutions against**)
 3. This is the people that God chose to set up His name and His earthly rule! – **Deuteronomy 7:7-9**
 4. We can read again, about God setting up His kingdom in such places as **Zechariah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, Joel, etc.**

5. The fact that this was a heritage, means that this is a permanent thing. Not just a thing passed from generation to generation as we see in our own lives.
 - ii. How they scattered them
 1. Again, speaking of how the nation of Israel was scattered.
 2. God is going to gather His people back to His land from the four corners of the earth.
 - d. Lesson for us: When we get to Heaven, do we know how will we be judged?
 - i. Do we realize that we will be judged – **1 Corinthians 3:11-15**
 - ii. How will God judge our foundation?
 1. Will He do it based upon our own thoughts, feelings, pursuits, desires? –
 - a. If so, then we can live how we want...it is what God wants us to do!
 - b. (There are false beliefs that teach this)
 2. Will He do it based on His standard? –
 - a. Did we do what we were supposed to with our family, our friends, our personal lives
 - b. If we were to stand before God now, and He asks us to give an account for how we spent our time...what will it show? If we don't know then we really need to pray for mercy!
- III. Now we see the other reasons they are being judged – **Joel 3:3**
- a. They cast lots for God's people
 - i. This was how they planned on dividing up the people.
 - ii. Unlike how God divided up the nations (**Genesis 10:5, 20, 31**) it was done according to their language – He didn't divide families
 - iii. This divide didn't matter. They just wanted to plunder
 - b. They sold a boy for a whore
 - i. some of the most defenseless was now used to gain their own lusts
 - ii. Today, this happens in our nation with the modern movement of sexual revolution and sexual freedoms
 1. the children are left with one parent or another as they pursue their own sexual fantasies about other women or even now about homosexual choices
 2. In the Christian home, the outlook is not much better. Parents charge headlong after desires and pleasures and the pursuits include every sexual deviancy that the world chases after and the kids are passed over or passed out to who or whatever to watch for them.
 - c. They sold a girl for wine
 - i. Remember, wine speaks of affluence, power, wealth, prosperity. These people, to get just one more dollar, will sell a girl (a young girl or a child) in order to get ahead!
 - ii. Sadly, some believers also do this

1. If a child stands in the way of making a little money...send the kid to daycare or to someone else to care for them
 2. If the child takes too much time and energy, just give them something to keep them out of the hair
 3. Christians many times are very guilty of passing their kids on just to make or gain a little in this life...Kids notice this. They feel this. There will be resentment and strife.
- d. What is being shown here is how they treat the defenseless
- i. God is very big on defending the defenseless
 - ii. We find several times where God gives strict warning about these two groups
 1. To Israel themselves – Exodus 22:22-24
 2. He talks about not withholding justice to them – Deuteronomy 24:17 (Cf. Deuteronomy 27:19)
 3. A statement given in Psalm 68:5-6; Psalm 146:9³
 4. Even in the time of judgment, notice what God says – Jeremiah 49:11
 - iii. It is to their own, and indeed, to any one's destruction on how they treat the defenseless.
 1. Today, there is a lack of care and concern for those who seem to be the most helpless
 2. Those who seem to be the outcast and the downtrodden are seemed to be the ones who are looked down on and cared less for.
 - iv. We can see how this comes into being even with the children of the womb...even the most defenseless of the defenseless...God will judge the murderers of this wicked practice of abortion.
- e. Lesson for us: How do we treat our families?
- i. Are we going to be part of the group of Christians that are judged because we neglected our families for personal pursuits and pleasures?
 - ii. Are we going to be found faithful to 1 Timothy 5:8⁴?
 1. This means we have to put ourselves on hold
 2. We have to sacrifice our desires
 3. We have to provide for our families first and foremost.
 4. What does this providing mean then
 - a. It means that we of course provide financially
 - b. It means that we provide security
 - c. It means we provide physically
 - d. It means that we provide emotionally

³ Psalms 146:9 The LORD watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.

⁴ 1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.