

Joel 3

The final judgment of God on all the earth

Joel 3.1-8

-This seems to refer to the return from exile in Babylon, about 536 BC

V1 – God would restore Judah and Jerusalem

V2 – The Jews had been dispersed to all the nations because of the Babylonian captivity (and Assyrian captivity)

-**Where would this take place?** The valley of Jehoshaphat (Heb.: "Jehovah judges")

-The valley of Jehoshaphat was the valley of Kidron on the eastern side of Jerusalem

-But it refers to divine judgment, rather than to a specific geographical location

V3 – **How had the Jews been treated in captivity?** Sold and gambled to others

V4 – The nations who had gloated over the downfall of Israel would be punished

-**What Old Testament prophet addressed this specific prophecy?** Obadiah (the Edomites)

V5-8 - All those who took advantage of the fall of the Twelve Tribes would be repaid by God for their evil

-**Who had taken advantage of the Jews at the time of the captivity?**

-V 4 – Tyre, Sidon, the Philistines

-V 6 – the Greeks

-V 8 – Sabeans (Edomites – book of *Obadiah*)

-**How would they be punished?** Their sons and daughters would be sold into slavery.

Joel 3.9-17

V9 – **What were the nations to get ready for?** War

V10 – **How were they to prepare for war?** – To beat their plowshares into swords, their pruning hooks into spears

-**What were the weaklings (wimps) to say?** I am a mighty man

V11-12 – All the nations were to meet for battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat

-**But who would they be fighting?** God

V13 – The nations were full of wickedness

V14 – A very famous verse

-**Meaning?** The people would have to decide whether they wanted to repent or face punishment from God

-**What is the application of v 14 to the world today?** Everyone has to make a decision about God and his word

-**What about those who do not make a decision?** That in itself is a decision to reject God

V 15 – Apocalyptic language

V 16 – God was about to appear

V 17 – God was going to protect his people from strangers

-We say to our children today: "Stranger danger"

Joel 3.18-21

-not easy to understand

Possibilities:

1. Referring to the return of the Jews from Babylonia exile in 536 BC
2. Referring to the New Testament church in apocalyptic language
3. *Revelation 21.2* calls heaven the New Jerusalem

V 18 – **Characteristics of the new land?** Lush, sweet wine, milk, flowing water, a spring to water the valley – God will rescue his people and take care of them

V 19 – **Characteristics of the enemies of God?**

-"taken care of" or punished

-**What will happen to Egypt?** Will become a waste (a 3rd world nation today)

-**What will happen to Edom?** Will be desolate (book of *Obadiah*) – *Indiana Jones* movies

V 20 – Jerusalem to be inhabited once again

-Perhaps literal, but appears to be the kingdom of God, the Church of Christ (*Beacon Bible Commentary*, 104, footnote 5)

V 21 – The vengeance of God would be carried out on his enemies

-In heaven, we will have total and permanent security from our enemies

Themes of this section:

1. *V 18* – the overabundant blessings of God in nature
2. *V 21* – the balancing of the scales of justice
3. *V 20* – the final promise of security from generation to generation

Great lessons from the book of Joel:

1. We need both positive and negative preaching (we see both in *Joel*) – like the two posts on a car battery

-Marshall Keeble: "*Cut deep and apply the salve.*"

2. Incredible design of the Bible (*Joel* and *Acts*, *Romans*)

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