***“Studying the Southern Kingdom Prophets”—Joel 3, Judgment in the Valley of Decision***

**Joel 3:1-17 Judgment of the Nations**

 **1-8 Judgment of the Gentiles**

 **9-13 Beginning and end of Armageddon**

**Joel 3:18-21 Full Kingdom Blessing**

1. **Review key passages from last chapter: Zechariah 12-14, Matthew 25:31-46.**
2. **Review also the difference between the Judgment of the Sheep and Goats, pre-millennial, and the Great White Throne Judgment, post-millennial in Revelation 20.**
3. **Read Psalm 2:1-6.** . Psalm 2 beautifully expresses the folly of the nations and the triumph of the Lord: *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.* ([Psalm 2:1-6](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Psalm+2:1-6&t1=en_nas))
4. **Review that the regathering of Israel is a prerequisite of the end times. See Jeremiah 23:1-8 and Ezekiel 37:15-22.**
	1. **Examine Zechariah 13:8 where 2/3 of Israel’s population is killed.**
	2. **Also see Zechariah 14:2 where ½ of Jerusalem will be taken captive.**
5. **How do verses 1-3 portray a “a warning to the nations?”**
	1. **Talk about this: Joel is showing, for the Gentiles, God pouring out His wrath, and for Israel, God restoring glory and blessing.**
	2. **What does “Diaspora Jew” mean?** This is the dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel, taken away from their original homeland. Israel was warned of what would happen to disobedience in Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 4:25-31, 28:15-68
		1. **Spain’s inquisition.** tortures
		2. **Poverty in Europe.**
		3. **Russian pogroms.** A ‘pogrom’ is a violent riot aimed at massacre or persecution of an ethnic or religious group, especially they Jews. This describes the 19th-20th century attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire.
		4. **Nazi annihilation tactics.**
		5. **Was Israel warned about this persecution? See Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 4:25-31, 28:15-68, and Jeremiah 30:7.**
		6. **Discuss “Jacob’s Trouble” in Jeremiah 30:7 and Zechariah 14:2.**
6. **Discuss the “promise to bring back scattered and mistreated Israel.”**
7. **Review Joel 2:28. Is this the period of the “last days?”** In those days and at that time: Joel’s prophecy still concerns the time period connected with *it shall come to pass afterward* mentioned in [Joel 2:28](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Joel+2:28&t1=en_nas). This is the broad period of the Last Days, initiated by the Ascension of Jesus and the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost.
8. **Discuss the concept “the last days may begin at Pentecost and end at the Millennium.”** Many have the wrong idea of the last days, thinking only in terms of the final years or months immediately before the return of Jesus in glory to this earth, or the rapture of the Church. Scripturally, we can think of the last days as an *era*, one that began with the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. Since that time, the Church has not been rushing towards a distant edge that represents the consummation of all things. Instead, at the Day of Pentecost the Church came to the edge - and has run parallel to the brink for some 2,000 years.
	1. **Review Acts 2, and discuss the Pentecost, using Paul’s words and Joel’s.**
	2. **Alluded to by Peter in Acts 2, just the beginning.**
9. **When does God bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem? See Matthew 23:39 and Romans 16:12-16.**  **When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem**: In a lesser, immediate sense this was fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian exile. In the greater, ultimate sense it will be fulfilled in the end-times regathering of Israel, to the point where an expectant Israel welcomes Jesus saying, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord ([Matthew 23:39](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+23:39&t1=en_nas)) and salvation comes to Israel as a whole ([Romans 11:26-27](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Romans+11:26-27&t1=en_nas)).
10. **Where is the Valley of Jehoshaphat? Refer to Revelation 16:12-16, Ezekiel 38:39, Daniel 11:45, Zechariah 9:14, 12:1.** This is the only mention in the scripture of this term, meaning “Yahweh Judges.”
	1. **This judgment of the nations includes Matthew 25:31-46. Examine.**
	2. **Could this be the Beracah Valley**? W of Tekoak, E of Hebron, where God defeated the Ammorites, the Moabites, and the Edomites, helpingJehoshaphat, **King of Judah. See 2 Chronicles 20.**
	3. **Might this be the Kidron Valley? Tradition from the 4th century A.D., believes this was between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives.**
	4. **Reference Mt. Carmel’s possibility in Amos 1:2.**
	5. **See also Zechariah 14:4, where the Lord’s feet touch the Mount of Olives. This might be the most defendable view here.**
	6. **Is this the Battle of Armageddon?** **I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat**: Joel here describes the final gather of the nations in rebellion against God at the Battle of Armageddon ([Revelation 16:12-16](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+16:12-16&t1=en_nas)). There is no place in Israel known as the **Valley of Jehoshaphat** but the name **Jehoshaphat** means, The Lord Judges. It describes Gods place of judgment. 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*. (Clarke)
	7. **Discuss the section being “a judgment of all nations.”**This is a judgment of **all nations**. Joel was written at a time when a terrible plague of locusts brought the judgment of God upon the people of God. At a time like that, it is easy to think God, You are dealing harshly with us, but what about the ungodly nations? We may be bad, but they are worse. Don’t you care about them? God uses Joel 3 to assure Israel that the **nations** will be dealt with.
		1. **Who is the judgment against?**  **I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people**: Gods complaint against the nations is that they have mistreated His **people**. Primarily, this has in view the way the nations treat Israel, but also extends to how the nations treat the Church. When Gods people are mistreated, God takes it personally and will avenge it.
		2. **See Matthew 25:31-46.** In the judgment of the nations Jesus described in [Matthew 25:31-46](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+25:31-46&t1=en_nas), the criteria is not faith in Jesus Christ but how the nations have treated the people of Israel - the *brethren* of Jesus. Held on the earth after His return in glory, this judgment determines who is allowed to enter into the Millennial Earth, and who goes straight to judgment.
	8. **Why is God judging the nations**? (Sheep and Goat Judgment) how they treated Israel and the Jewish people
		1. **Scattering Israel and the Jewish people among the nations**
		2. **Dividing up the land of Israel—“My land”**
		3. **Selling the Jewish people into slavery**
		4. **Engaging in Sex Trafficking**
		5. **Murdering Jews, shedding Jewish blood**
		6. **Violence done to the sons of Judah**
11. **Where are Tyre and Zidon, verse 4?** Lebanon today, controlled by Hezbollah, enemy of Israel.
	1. **Where is Palestine?** Gaza Strip, controlled by Hamas, enemy of Israel, root word Philistia, Philistines
	2. **See Joshua 13:1-7 where the lands of Phoenician and Philistine were given to Israel as an inheritance.**
		1. **Discuss Israel’s disobedience about not driving these peoples from the land and how it affects them today. Refer to Judges 1:21-36.** Israel’s failure to this day still haunts them.
12. **Consider that God warns the nations that He will retaliate against those who have mistreated His people. How does that apply to today?** Will you retaliate against Me? God virtually challenges the nations to come against Him or His people. He vows to return your retaliation upon your own head to those who come against Him or His people. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah: The nations treated Gods people with contempt, and had no sense of their worth. Therefore, God will repay them with the contempt they put upon His people, vowing to return your retaliation upon your own head.
	1. **Re-visit some historical disasters that happened to ten Emporers of the Roman Empire who persecuted Christians (according to Trapp):**
		1. **Nero lost 30,000 of his subjects by pestilence, had his armies utterly defeated in Britain, suffered a revolution in Armenia, and was so hated by the senators of Rome that they forced him to kill himself**
		2. **Domitian was butchered by his own soldiers**
		3. **Trajan died of a foul disease**
		4. **Severus died miserably on a military campaign in Britain**
		5. **Maximus was cut in pieces, together with his own son**
		6. **Decius died as an exile in a far country**
		7. **Valerian was whipped to death by the King of Persia who captured him**
		8. **Aurelian was killed by his own soldiers**
		9. **Diocletian poisoned himself**
		10. **Maximum hanged himself**
13. **In verse 5, discuss the use of “my” three times by God.**
	1. **See also Hosea 2:8 and Haggai 2:8.**
	2. **Compare this passage with the treasure taken to Babylon in 2 Kings 25:13-15.** The Persians gave them back, **BUT THEY ARE PRESENTLY IN THE VATICAN AT ROME!**
14. **Verse 6 refers to the Grecians. Highlight Ezekiel 27:13, which highlights the trade relations between Phoenicia and Greece (Javan), Meshech and Tubal. Greece was known for its slave trade.**
15. **In verse 8, who are the Sabeans? Trading merchants who lived in Arabia. Sheba, SW Arabia near Yemen, Bedouans came from Abraham’s marriage to Keturah. See Jeremiah 6:20, Ezekiel 27:22, 38:13, I Kings 10, and Jeremiah 6:20.**
16. **Do Philistia and Phoenicia represent all of enemies collected together?** Phoenicia stands for Lebanon and Syria, and Philistia stands for Palestine
17. **Verses 4-8 are often called a “peak episode.” Explain**. Characterized by rhetorical underlining and heightened vividness. SEEMS LIKE A COURT ROOM ATMOSPHERE.
18. **Discuss the notion of “vengeance” through this section**. Reference Psalm 137:7-9, Revelation 6:9-10, Romans 12:19, Deuteronomy 32:35.
19. **Who is “the apple of God’s eye**?” See Zechariah 2:8.
20. **What does “Prepare for war” mean?** This actually says, “sanctify a war” or “declare a Holy War” God challenges the nations to prepare for war against Him. They will do this exact thing. This is a call to arms. The destruction of the locust led to a general call to come for prayer. THIS ARMAGGEDON WAR IS A WAR TO THE FINISH!
	1. **Refer to** [**Revelation 16:12-16**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+16:12-16&t1=en_nas)**,** but God will simply laugh at the puny and futile preparations by the nations, **and Psalm 2.**
	2. **See also Obadiah 1, Haggai 2:21.**
21. **Verse 10 uses a phrase in an “opposite” concept, an inverse….”beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.” Why?**
	1. **Contrast with Isaiah 2;4 and Micah 4:3, “swords into plowshares.”**
	2. **See also Hosea 2:18. Hosea is after God’s Kingdom is set up and Joel is before, the tribulation.** **Beat your plowshares into swords**: If you are going to go into battle against God, you should have every weapon available! You should also practice your best positive thinking: **let the weak say, I am strong.** Nevertheless, the most positive attitude can’t work when man sets himself against His Maker. There was a Broadway play titled Your Arms are Too Short to Box with God. This is what the nations don’t know, but will learn the hard way.
22. **The call to war (Armageddon Battle) in verse 11, mentions “mighty ones.” Who are these?**
	1. **Are these angels, Gibborim/warriors or nephilim? See Psalm 103:20 and Zechariah 14:5.** Angelic warriors
23. **Can “The Valley of Jehoshaphat,” verse 12, be equated with Megiddo in Revelation 16:16?** Megiddo is a real place, which sits on a tel/hill. SW end of the Carmel mountain range, bordering the Jezreel Valley, stretching 22 miles long and 16 miles wide.
24. **Discuss verse 13, how the idioms change to “harvest.” Compare with Revelation 14:14-20. Wickedness is great, judgment is due. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full**: [Revelation 14:14-20](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+14:14-20&t1=en_nas) also uses this image of the winepress of the wrath of God to describe Jesus judgment on the nations at Armageddon.
	1. **Review Zechariah 14:12, which seems to point to a neutron bomb.**
	2. **Does reaping refer to salvation? See Revelation 14:14-16.** Thus the reaping results in the salvation of the “sheep” Gentiles.
	3. **Is “treading” pointing to the destruction of the anti-Semites? Use Revelation 14:17-20.**
	4. **Matthew 25:31-46 also looks at the “Sheep and Goat” Judgment. Discuss.**
25. **Verse 14 can compare to Revelation 16:13-14.** **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!** Joel looks out upon the Valley of Jehoshaphat at the Battle of Armageddon, and sees **multitudes** facing their eternal fate - truly, it is a **valley of decision**, and those who fight against the Lord and His Messiah are in the wrong place in the **valley of decision**, ultimately fulfilled at the Battle of Armageddon.
26. **What is the Valley of Decision?** This location is the same as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And, it has been MISTAKENLY used in countless evangelistic meetings to show people that *they* stand in the Valley of Decision, and must decide for or against Jesus. Joel’s context is exactly the opposite. Man does indeed stand in the **valley of decision**, but it is God who does the deciding, not man. It is a valley of judgment - and we should decide for Jesus right now so we never stand in this **valley of decision**. THIS IS THE LORD’S TIME TO MAKE THE FINAL DECISION, NOT MAN’S.
27. **Verse 15 displays cosmic signs. Compare with Matthew 24:29-30, Mark 13:24-25, and Revelation 6:12-13.** The same signs with the locusts in chapter 1 are now global.
	1. **Joel goes back to the descriptions of cosmic cataclysm that were mentioned in** [**Joel 2:30-31**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Joel+2:30-31&t1=en_nas)**. Discuss.** In the midst of it all, the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel, and He will restore both His people and His city to glory.
28. **Compare verse 16, “The Lord also shall roar out of Zion,” with Amos 1:2 (the Lion of the Tribe of Judah), Revelation 5:5 and Zechariah 14:4-5.**
29. **Explain how verse 17 echoes Zechariah 12:10, “no strangers/ALIENS shall pass through Israel anymore.”** Zion, my holy mountain…this will be the earthly location of God’s Millennial Temple. God has promised a future time when His glory in Judah will not be eclipsed. This is a time of ultimate peace, prosperity and will come after Christ conquers the world and sets up His Millennial Kingdom on earth. See Matthew 24, 25, and Revelation 19.
	1. **Discuss the use of the word, “aliens?”**
	2. **What is the difference from foreigners and strangers?** Stranger is what the Israelites were in Egypt. See Leviticus 19:34, but “aliens/foreigners” are those who wanted to take away the land; an antagonist.
	3. **Reference Hosea 5:7 where sinful Israelites became “aliens,” (zarim) within their own nation by following pagan cults.**
30. **Re-visit the Messianic Kingdom described in Joel 3:18-21. What are its attributes?**
	1. **The land will be well-water, verse 18a**
	2. **There will be a Special Millennial River, Zechariah 14:8, and Ezekiel 47:1-12.**
	3. **There will be a desolation of Edom and Egypt, Ezekiel 29:8-14.**
	4. **Israel will live in security, verse 20.**
	5. **Israel will experience a national security, verse 21.**
31. **Where is the Valley of Shittim?** On the east side of the Jordan River, Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Zechariah 14:8.
32. **Discuss this Millennial Temple, the fourth temple.**
33. **When is “in that day?” See Verse 18.** The mountains shall drip with new wine . . . all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water: After Gods final victory, there is lasting abundance and the days of drought are just a distant memory. Instead, Egypt shall be a desolation, along with the other enemies of the Lord and His people.
34. **Compare the bounty described in verses 18-19 to Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14:8. A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord**: Ezekiel 47 describes waters flowing **from the house of the Lord** in the time after Jesus triumphant return, in the Millennium. [Zechariah 14:8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Zechariah+14:8&t1=en_nas) also speaks of a great flow of water from Jerusalem, emptying both into the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.
35. **Where is the Valley of Acacias?** The Valley of Acacias (Valley of Shittim) was a place associated with both failure and victory. It is located on the eastern side of the Jordan River, to the north of the Dead Sea.
	1. **Refer to Numbers 24:1-3 and Joshua 2:1 and 3:1.** It was where the King of Moab sent his young women to the men of Israel to seduce them into idolatry and sexual immorality ([Numbers 25:1-3](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Numbers+25:1-3&t1=en_nas)). It was also the launching place for the armies of Israel when they set out against Jericho and Canaan in the days of Joshua ([Joshua 2:1](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Joshua+2:1&t1=en_nas) and 3:1).When water **from the house of the Lord** flows down to **the valley of Acacias**, then God’s grace and provision covers the past.
	2. **Discuss what happens to Egypt? See Isaiah 19.**
	3. **Why is Egypt called “my people?” And Assyria, “The work of my hands?” Refer to Isaiah 19:22-23. Compare with verse 19.**
36. **Why does Edom have an everlasting hatred for Israel? All through history, Edomites are adversaries of Israel.**
	1. **Discuss how this hatred started in the womb…..**this is mentioned more than any other foreign nation. Edom is a name derived from Esau, “red.” It is the land occupied by Esau’s descendants, formerly of Seir. Stretched from Wadi Zered to the Gulf of Aqabah, on both sides of the Arbah, connecting the Dead Sea to the Red Sea.
	2. **When did Edom refuse passage to Israel by the King’s Highway? See Numbers 20:14-21, 21:4 and Judges 11:17-18.** Israel had to detour rather than wage war.
	3. **In 586 B.**C., **at the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonian armies, describe who are “urging the Romans on?” See Psalm 137:7.** Edomites.
	4. **Read Genesis 25:19-34. Why did the twins struggle within Rebekeh?**
		1. **What are Paul’s comments on this story in Romans 9:11-13?**
		2. **Why did Esau sell his birthright for food?** Esau despised his birthright
37. **Who are the Nabateans?** From Arabia, drove the Edomites westward. The Edomites then moved into south of Jerusalem, south or Hebron, Idumea. Hebron was their capital, 19 miles south of Jerusalem. A period between Old Testament and New Testament, period of Hasmoneans. In 126 B.C., Jew John Hyrcanus recaptured this area. He forces the Edomites to flee, die, or convert to Judaism. EDOMITES WERE FORCED INTO JUDAISM.
38. **What is Idumea?** It is the region between the Arabah and the Mediterranean Sea, with Hebron its capital.
	1. **In 47 B.C. Julius Caesar promoted Idumean Antipater as procurator over Judea.** He was an Edomite.
	2. **Herod, son of Antipater, became King over Israel; 37 B.C. named as King over Israel.** his mother was Nabatean.
	3. **The Herods of the New Testament were Edomites. How did they treat the Jews?**
		1. **One of the Herods killed the Jewish babies in Matthew 2:16-18.**
		2. **Herod Antipas murdered John the Baptist. Examine Matthew 14:6-12.**
		3. **King Herod Agrippa killed James, the brother of John in Acts 12:1-2.**.



1. **Re-state the promise of verse 20-21. How does it apply to Israel today?** **But Judah shall abide forever . . . for the Lord dwells in Zion**: God will show mercy to His people, and grant them forgiveness. This prophecy of Joel, which began with the desperate plague of locusts, ends with a promise of restoration and redemption. This is the last promise, but not the least.
	1. **See also Ezekiel 48**:**35. Compare Joel’s ending promise with Ezekiel’s.**  This prophet, who has many things similar to Ezekiel, ends his prophecy in nearly the
2. **Re-visit Ezekiel’s “judgment of the nations” section, Ezekiel 25-32, where he deals with God’s judgments against Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt.** All seven nations mentioned are now MUSLIMS.
	1. **Discuss why the Bible speaks most about the judgment on Edom.** The judgment against Edom is mentioned in more Old Testament books than it is against any other foreign nation.
		1. **See Isaiah 11:14, 34:5-17, 63:1-6, Jeremiah 9:25-26, Ezekiel 25:12-14, 35:15, Obadiah 1:1-21 \*the whole book is focused against Edom, Malachi 1:4, and Joel 3:19.**
		2. **Review Lamentations 4:21-22, Amos 1:11-12, 9:11-12.**
3. **Remember God’s promise for Judah, verse 20.**
	1. **Examine also Zechariah 12:10, Romans 11:26, and Daniel 7:27.**
	2. **How is God’s promise to David for an everlasting dynasty fulfilled in Jesus? Psalm 2:6, 2 Samuel 7:13, 16, Isaiah 9:7, Revelation 20:4, and Luke 1:32-33.**
4. **Discuss verse 21’s, “acquit them of the guild of bloodshed.” Use Genesis 24:8, 41, Psalm 132:13-14, and Zechariah 8:20-23 as reference.** The Lord will wipe away the blood-guilt of the nations in their persecutions of God’s people. Everything will be fulfilled.
	1. **Review Revelation 21.**
5. **Why does God keep His promise to Israel? Ezekiel 36:** 22“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: **“I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake,** which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the Lord,” says the Lord God, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.”
6. **Discuss the description of the Millennium in Joel 3.**
7. **What is our reaction to Joel 3? See Luke 19:11-27 and I Corinthian 4:2….occupy until I come.**

**And, here are the promises:**

**Ezekiel 36:26-29, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them.* 28Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.”**

**Psalm 9:11-12, “Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people.12When He avenges blood, He remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the humble.”**