

Joel 3 – Promise of Redemption

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1 FOR, behold, in those days, and at that time, when I will remove the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

Through this verse it is clear that Israel is under the weight of the Lord, and that only at the time determined by God (at that time) will they be a free people.

Only “in those days” will the captivity of the people of Israel be removed, which suggests that they are bound by their sins.

2 I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and there I will enter into judgment with them, for the sake of my people, and of my inheritance, Israel, whom they scattered among the nations and divided my land.

The prophet Joel speaks of the judgment of the nations as

Jesus announced to the disciples: "All nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats" (Mt 25:32). It is Christ who will gather, gather and gather the nations to judge them at the end of the great tribulation, beginning of the millennium.

At the end of the millennium Satan will go out to deceive the nations and gather the kingdoms of the world to fight against the Lord's Anointed (Ps 2:2-3), different from the gathering of peoples that will be carried out by Christ in order to make the judgment of the nations (Zec 12:2-3).

At the judgment the nations will be in the dock because of their treatment of the people of Israel. The 'little brothers' that Jesus refers to in Matthew 25, verse 40 (Mt 25:40), refers to the people of Israel: their people and inheritance, who were scattered among the nations in the period of great tribulation.

In Matthew 25, verse 40 the 'little brethren' does not refer to the church of Christ, which is designated as the wife of the Lamb.

Valley of Jehoshaphat refers to the plain of Amargeddon, meaning "Jehovah has judged", and only Joel uses this name to describe the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12).

3 And they cast lots for my people, and gave a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, to drink.

This verse describes the affliction that will befall the people of Israel in that day, as Jesus foretold: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be" (Mt 24:21).

4 And what also have ye with me, Tire and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Is this the payment you give me? For if you pay me thus, I will soon make you pay your wages on your head.

The surrounding nations, whom God used as a rod of correction against Israel, repay what the Lord has given them, therefore, they would be punished as well.

5 Because you have taken my silver and my gold, and my desirable and beautiful things you have placed in your temples. 6 And ye sold the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem to the children of the Greeks, to drive them away from their borders. 7 Behold, I will raise them up from the place where you sold them, and I will make your payment on your own head. 8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far away, for the LORD has spoken.

The rod that God used to punish his people would not pass unscathed, as happened with the Chaldeans (Hab 2:8). Everything they did to the children of Israel would happen to them.

9 Proclaim this among the Gentiles; prepare for war, stir up the strong; come, all men of war come up. 10 Beat your hoes into swords, and your sickles into spears; say the weak: I am strong.

The message that will be announced to the nations that will be judged by the Lamb of God is one of encouragement to come to the judgment.

Among the peoples it must be announced that there will be war,

and that the strong must be summoned. All fit to fight let them go up. Let them prepare for battle, and let those who have no strength say: I am strong! Whatever you have in your hand for battle, let it be used by those summoned by the Lord.

11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all you Gentiles round about, and assemble yourselves. O LORD, bring down your strongholds there; 12 Let the Gentiles be aroused, and go up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the Gentiles round about.

The gathering of peoples will be immense and they will be gathered in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Before this Valley Christ will sit to separate the sheep from the goats, that is, he will establish the judgment of the nations before reigning over the peoples of the earth (Mt 25:32).

The valiant among the peoples will descend to the Valley of Decision.

13 Throw in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, come down, for the winepress is full, and the vessels of the winepresses overflow, because their malice is great. 14 Crowds, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

When the sickle is thrown into the harvest, it is to gather the bundles. Throwing the sickle is equivalent to gathering peoples together.

When all the nations are gathered (full press), the Lord will establish his judgment. The prophet Isaiah aptly describes this event (Is 63:1-6).

15 The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars will withdraw their brightness.

The picture described by the prophet Joel regarding the heavenly bodies was also prophesied by Christ: “And immediately after the affliction of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Mt 24:29).

The affliction described in verse 3 precedes the appearance of the Messiah: “Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mt 24:30).

16 And the LORD will roar out of Zion, and he will make his voice heard from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth will tremble, but the LORD will be the refuge of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

After the events of verse 15, Christ will appear in glory, and his voice will be heard from Jerusalem.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah will reign, and his roar will be heard from Zion.

The prophet Joel announces the reign of the Messiah over all the peoples of the earth. While the nations will tremble at the roar of the Lord, the Lord Jesus will be a refuge for his people, a strength for the children of Israel.

Note that the prophet Joel gives a description of the millennial kingdom, when Christ will sit on the throne of David and rule the nations with a rod of iron, according to the Father’s promise recorded in the Psalms (Ps 2:6 and Ps 2:8).

17 And ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, that dwell
in Zion, my holy mountain; and Jerusalem shall be holy;
strangers will no longer pass through it.

When the Lord Jesus dwells in Zion as king and priest, Mount Zion will be holy and the city will be holy. The city will be holy (set apart) because God will dwell with his people.

In that day all in Israel will know that the Christ they crucified is the Lord God of Israel, the Lord who hid his face from the house of Jacob (Isa 8:17; Ps 110:1).

After Christ is enthroned in Zion, no more "strangers" will invade or occupy the holy city.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drip with new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall be full of water; and a spring shall come out of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

In that day the smaller nations (mountains) will rejoice (wort) and the larger nations (hills) will produce food in abundance (milk).

Hills and Mountains are biblical figures to refer to nations, with mountains referring to small kingdoms, and hills to great nations. Israel is compared to a mountain and the great civilizations of antiquity to hills. Ex: Babylon, Egypt, etc.

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To say that 'the rivers of Judah will be full of water' is another figure, i.e. the prophet uses the figure of the river to speak of the streets of Judah, and the water represents the

inhabitants (Rev 17:15; Isa 42:15) .

A special feature of the house of the Lord will be a fountain of water that will water the deep valley where the Dead Sea is located.

19 Egypt will be a desolation, and Edom a desolate waste, because of the violence they did to the children of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood.

A detailed description of the Lord's burden on Egypt and Edom is found in the Book of Obadiah.

20 But Judah will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

God promises that after those days the tribe of Judah will have an eternal dwelling, and that the city of Jerusalem will be occupied from generation to generation.

21 And I will cleanse the blood of those whom I had not cleansed; for the LORD will dwell in Zion.

Purification of the blood takes place through divine sonship. Only those who are generated anew by God are purified. While those begotten according to the flesh are unclean, those begotten according to the Spirit are pure, just like the heavenly Father.

In order to inhabit Jerusalem, the city of the great King, a man must necessarily be pure in heart and in spirit. Only those purified by God will be able to inhabit the city where the Lord of hosts will reside.

How does purification take place? God creates a new heart and

a new spirit (Ps 51:10). After giving life to the heart and spirit of man, God takes up residence in him, which is essential for dwelling in Zion.

“For thus says the High and the Sublime, who dwells in eternity, whose name is Holy: In a high and holy place I dwell; and with the contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Is 57:15).

Even in those days the cleansing of the blood will only take place through the new birth (John 3:3).