

Friends, don't get me wrong. By no means do I count myself as an expert in all of this, but I've got my eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

Philippians 3:13-14 MESSAGE BIBLE

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First Love Ministries, Inc.

Prayer Study #226

THE BOOK OF JOEL: CHAPTER THREE

Judgment on the Gentiles

1. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,
2. I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations. They have also divided up My land.
3. They have cast lots for my people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.
4. Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? And if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head.
5. Because ye have taken My silver and My gold, and have carried into your temples my prized possessions.
6. Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem you have sold to the Greeks, that you may remove them far from their borders.
7. "Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retaliation upon your own head.
8. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord has spoken."
9. Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near. Let them come up.
10. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"
11. Assemble and come, all ye nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.

12. **“Let the nations be wakened, 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 the moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness.**
16. **The LORD also shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and the earth shall 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.**

In this passage, the Lord speaks of a future time when He will bring back the captives of Israel and will gather the nations for judgment. These nations will be judged because of the way they have treated Israel and how they have divided up the land of Israel. The nations have treated the lives of Jews, and by extension the life of Christians, with contempt. The value the nations put on God’s people is very little, giving *a boy as payment for a harlot* and selling *a girl for wine*. This is reminiscent of the Holocaust. I think it foretells an even worse time when God’s people will be treated shamefully.

In the midst of God’s remarks about judgment for the nations, He specifically points out Tyre and Sidon and Philistia. These were coastal towns. Philistia is where the present day Palestinians came from. Sidon was a town note for philosophical learning tied to the Greeks. Tyre was only 12 miles from the border of Israel. Sidon was 20 miles north of Tyre. Both of these cities were in Lebanon, and they were Canaanite cities.

The main theme in these verses centers on the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was one of the most righteous and best kings of Judah. His name means *the Lord judges*. No one knows where this valley is, although tradition says that it is in the Kidron Valley, which is east of Jerusalem. This is between the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem. There are strong parallels in scripture between the Valley of Jehoshaphat and Armageddon.

The Lord is calling the nations to the *valley of judgment* for judgment and justice because of how they have treated His chosen people, but they think they are being called to wage war. There is some irony in these verses. Verse 10 tells the people to beat their plowshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears. Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 tell the people just the opposite, i.e. to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. In other words, a day of peace is coming. The nations must be judged first, and they will actually bring to the place of judgment evidence, the swords and spears, of their history of violence against God's chosen people. Only repentance and laying aside these weapons of warfare will lead us away from the "Valley of Judgment."

According to the *Christian Life New Testament's Master Outlines*, there are five judgments in the Bible. Three are for believers. One is for the nations, as spoken of here in Joel. And the final one is for the unsaved. **1. The Judgment of the Believer's Sin:** It is a glorious thought as the song writer wrote, "*our sin, not in part, but the whole, was nailed to the cross.*" Because of our sin, the righteous judge sent His Son to pay the penalty. "*He paid a debt He did not owe. I owed a debt I could not pay!*" John 5:24-*Verily, verily I saw unto you, He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* Jesus paid the penalty and separated us from our sin forever by His substitutionary death (Psalm 103:12). He not only blotted out our sins but said He would remember them no more (Isaiah 43:25). **2. The Judgment of Believer's Self:** 1st Corinthians 12:31-*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* Each believer must practice judging himself, confessing his sin (1st John 1:9) and forsaking it (Isaiah 55:7). To judge self is to forsake the self-life and adopt the Christ-life, to consider ourselves dead to self but alive to Christ. *It is no longer I that liveth, but Christ liveth in me!* **3. The Judgment of the Believer's Works:** 2nd Corinthians 5:10-*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Only believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and they will be judged only on their works, not their sins. This is a very serious thing. Some will be ashamed (John 2:28) and suffer loss of rewards but not salvation (1st Corinthians 3:11-15). **4. The Judgment of the Nations:** This is not the Great White Throne of Judgment where the dead individual

nonbelievers will be judged. This judgment takes place at the Second Coming of Christ. Here three groups are judged: sheep (the saved believers-Revelation 7:9-17), goats (the nonbelievers-2nd Thessalonians 1:7-10), and brethren (the elect of Israel -Revelation 7:1-8). Matthew 25:31-46-*When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed thee? Or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in? or naked and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick or in prison and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand. Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered or athirst or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* **5. The Judgment of the Unsaved:** Revelation 21:11-15-*And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in*

them, and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. This takes place after the thousand-year reign of Christ. This is the final judgment and only for the unsaved. According to Revelation 20:5, the believers have already, a thousand years before, been judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The wicked are shown that God provided space in the Book of Life, for them to repent and be saved, but they refused and so are without excuse. There is a hell (Luke 16:19-31), and in hell there is no love, no hope, no second chance, and hell is eternal.

Final Restoration and Full Kingdom Blessing

- 18. And it shall 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 waters; 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 have not acquitted; for the LORD dwells in Zion.**

Joel concludes by describing the restoration of the fruitfulness of the land of Israel when the Lord's Kingdom comes on earth and all the enemies of God and His people are destroyed. He contrasts Judah with the desolation of those nations who have come against God's people. Egypt symbolizes the world and Edom symbolizes pride. Judah symbolizes praise, Jerusalem righteousness and peace, and Zion symbolizes the dwelling place of the Lord's presence on earth.

Fill My Cup
Richard Blanchard

*Like the woman at the well I was seeking
For things that could not satisfy;
And then I heard my Savior speaking:
"Draw from my well that never shall run dry."*

*There are millions in this world who are craving
The pleasures earthly things afford,
But none can match the wondrous treasure
That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord.*

*So, my brother, if the things this world gave you
Leave hungers that won't pass away.
My blessed Lord will come and save you,
If you kneel to Him and humbly pray.*

CHORUS

*Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up, Lord!
Come and quench this thirsting of my soul,
Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more-
Fill my cup, fill it up, and make me whole!*