

## 4. The vengeance of God and the Millennium

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I don't know about you, but thinking of what the Lord is going to do to this unbelieving world and satan after the rapture is rather exciting. As we all studied the rapture would be followed by the seven year tribulation. During this period, God is going to make His vengeance known to all the nations who did much harm to Israel.

Once the Tribulation is over by a decisive victory of the Lord Jesus at the Valley of Megiddo where the Battle of Armageddon will be fought, we will enter into one thousand years of perfect peaceful paradise on earth under the reign of our God.

During this one thousand years, a.k.a. the Millennium, those who survive through the Tribulation will populate the earth with new lives. But they have not had any chance to choose good or bad while they are in the earthly paradise, God allows satan to be released for the one last time. He will deceive many millions people and try to revolt against God, but God will stop them and send them to the Lake of Fire once and for all after the Great White Throne Judgement by Jesus.

The last chapter of the Book of Joel is going to show us a different aspect of the Tribulation and Millennium.

### A. A WARNING TO THE NATIONS

*Joel 3:1-8 "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather all nations, And 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 may 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? But if you retaliate against Me, Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; 5 Because you 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."*

God will deal justly with the nations of the world during the "Day of the Lord" for the way they have treated His people Israel. Currently, the Arab nations and other Muslim countries cannot wait to destroy Israel. That is what we see in physical realm. But in the behind scene, there are the demonic forces which want to destroy Israel just to throw mud on God's face.

It's worth noting that God refers to the Jews as "My people" and to the land as "My land." The wealth is "My silver and My gold." Even though the Jews have not obeyed the covenant or sought to please the Lord, He has not abandoned them. Even when they rejected their Messiah, God was merciful to them.

When God says, *"But if you retaliate against Me, Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head,"* it is not very good thing for these nations. God is not the One they want to come across. It is not a healthy thing to do.

There is no place in Israel known as the Valley of Jehosphaphat in Israel. The name Jehoshaphat means, *"The Lord Judges."* It describes God's place of judgment against all the nation which stand against Israel.

In the judgment of the nations Jesus described in Matthew 25:31-33, 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.

It is bad enough for man to regard any human life as cheap. It is worse to regard the people of God as cheap. God remembers and will repay.

*Matthew 25:31-33 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."*

We need to remember that judgment is plainly logical from God's plan for human. The grace, mercy, love and salvation of God are not logical. We don't deserve them, yet God gives them to us. Yet God in His mercy withheld His judgment for those who put their trust in His Son Jesus.

## **B. NATIONS, PREPARE FOR WAR**

*Joel 3:9-13 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 you 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."*

God challenges the nations to prepare for war against Him. They will do this exact thing according to Revelation 16:12-16 which is known as the Battle of Armageddon. But God will simply laugh at the puny and futile preparations by the nations.

Come to think of it, we can see why God is laughing at them. Jesus is the One who is going to fight against them. He could walk through the wall and He can hold the entire universe in the palm of His hand. It is worse than a strength fight between a single ant against NFL linebacker.

If someone is going to go into battle against God, he should have every weapon available. But where is he going to aim at? God is spirit and invisible.

Psalm 2 clearly expresses the stupidity of the nations and the triumph of the Lord:

*Psalm 2:1-6 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, against*

*the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."*

God knows what the nations have done to the Jews, and He will one day settle accounts. Meanwhile, we must pray for the peace of Jerusalem and lovingly witness to the Jews in word and deed that Jesus is indeed their Messiah and Lord.

### **C. THE VALLEY OF DECISION**

*Joel 3:14-17 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. 16 The Lord also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will 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."*

The idea of the "Valley of Decision" has been 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. Rather it is a valley of judgment. People should decide for Jesus right now so they should not stand in this valley of decision.

When Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of the Lord came down and filled the building according to 1 Kings 8. Mount Zion, on which Jerusalem was built and the temple stood, was a very special place to the Jews because it was the place God chose for His own dwelling. When the Babylonians destroyed the temple, the Jews prayed for the time when their temple would be restored and God's glory would return.

Today, the Jewish people have no temple on Mount Zion. Instead, a Muslim mosque stands there. But God promises that He will restore Zion and dwell there in all His glory. This is the very reason why the Jewish people will readily embrace the antichrist since he is going to build a temple on that Temple Mount during the first half of Tribulation time.

### **D. GOD'S BLESSINGS TO HIS PEOPLE**

So far, we have looked into the battle of Armageddon in this chapter. Now we are going to see the Millennium period.

*Joel 3:18-21 And it will 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 water; 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 had not acquitted; For the Lord dwells in Zion."*

In the first chapter of Joel's prophecy, the people were wailing because they had no food, but that will not happen when God restores His people and their land.

Jerusalem is the only ancient capital that wasn't built near a great river. Rome had the Tiber; Nineveh was built near the Tigris and Babylon on the Euphrates; and the great Egyptian cities were built near the Nile. But in the kingdom during the Millennium period, Jerusalem will have a river that proceeds from the temple of God.

*Zechariah 14:8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea (The Dead Sea) And half of them toward the western sea (The Mediterranean Sea); In both summer and winter it shall occur.*

What a wonderful way to close a book!

## **E. APPLICATIONS**

**1) Weed to remember that without our sincere deep repentance, God can not and will not forgive us and send His blessings again.**

Certainly God does send natural calamities when nations refuse to obey Him. Wars, poor crops, epidemics, earthquakes, storms – all of these can be used of God to bring people to their knees. God can even use little insects or viruses to do His will if men and women will not obey Him. Our lives personally can become dry and fruitless if we are out of God's will.

**2) We need to remember that judgment is plainly logical from God's plan for human.**

The grace, mercy, love and salvation of God are not plainly logical. We don't deserve them, yet God gives them to us. Yet God in His mercy withheld His judgment for those who put their trust in His Son Jesus.