

CONCISE BIBLE NOTES

JOEL

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell

CONCISE BIBLE NOTES
WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS
OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET
JOEL

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Old City of Jerusalem from Mount Scopus
This view is looking southwest across the Kidron Valley

JOEL 1

A Plague of Locust

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

1:1. Joel. His name means “*Jehovah*” or “*Yahweh is God*”. Joel was a native of Judah who ministered to the nation prior to the Babylonian exile. His ministry and message is to be associated with the pre-exilic prophets in the Minor Prophets, Hosea and Amos.

1:1. Pethuel. His name means, “*persuaded of the Lord*”.

Three Great Truths Communicated to Joel Dr. S. Lewis Johnson

- There is the truth of “The Day of the Lord”. The Day of the Lord is the day of the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the sovereign and Gracious Lord (Joel 1:15).
- There is the truth of the Doctrine of Repentance (Joel 2:12-17).
- There is the truth of the gift of outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:38-32).

2 Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

3 Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation.

4 That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

Four Locusts

- The gnawing or shearing locust
- The swarming locust
- The creeping or lapper locust
- The stripping or finishing locust

First Address To the Drunkards Joel 1:5-7

5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

6 For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast *it* away; the branches thereof are made white.

**Second Address
To the City of Jerusalem
Joel 1:8-10**

8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

1:8. It was common in Jewish literature and language to refer to Jerusalem or Zion as a virgin, likened to a woman (2 Kings 19:21; Isaiah 23:12 etc.).

9 The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.

10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

**Third Address
To the Famers of the Land
Joel 1:11, 12**

11 Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.

12 The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, *even* all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

**The Fourth Address
An Appeal to the Priests of Israel
Joel 1:13-18**

13 Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

1:14. a solemn assembly (feast). Israel had many feasts of Jehovah, but this was a call for a special session. Everything should immediately be halted in order to reflect and repent.

**The First Great Truth
The Day of the Lord**

15 Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Fives Expressions of the Day of the Lord

- Joel 1:15
- Joel 2:1
- Joel 2:11
- Joel 2:31
- Joel 3:14

Special Note.

The Day of the Lord has an immediate reference to the events at hand, but the expression also has a prophetically far reaching understanding as when Peter quotes Joel 2:38 on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21).

16 Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

17 The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.

The Testimony of Nature

18 How do the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; *yea*, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

1:18. the beasts. "There's an old story. It was told by a man named W. T. P. Wolston. It was a man who had a family that were Christians and they had been after him for a long time to come to the Lord, but he was not interested. On Sunday morning when the time came for everybody to go to hear the ministry of the Word he just wandered around the house, or would wander around in the neighborhood, and one day Mr. Wolston said that he wandered out of the house and was walking down a path and there was a field and there was some cattle in the field. And he was just reflecting kind of unhappy because everybody was gone and he was by himself, and he went over and he leaned up against the fence, and I think it was his own field. And one of the cows came up and was there and just nudged his hand and he remembered a text of Scripture,

“The ox knows its owner and the ass its master’s crib, but Israel does not know my people do not understand.” He said, *“Why this animal knows it’s owner, but I don’t know the Lord.”* And as a result of that experience he was converted. A man converted by a cow. Imagine!” (S. Lewis Johnson).

19 O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

20 The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

**The Practical and Spiritual
Lessons of Joel 1**

1. God is responsible for the catastrophes of life for He rules in the affairs of men (Joel 1:1-4).
2. God not only rules but He abhors sin and because He hates sin He will execute judgment, not only in eternity, but also in time.
3. While not all misery is related to sin’s judgment, the sensitive soul should inquire of the Lord whether or not personal calamity is related to Divine discipline.
4. Every form of catastrophe demands a spiritual response to the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
5. By appealing to the drunkards, the citizens of Jerusalem, the famers, and the priest, the prophets call upon all the world to repent so that God might bless.

JOEL 2**The Prophet of Repentance of Men****The Day of the Lord****Joel 2:1-11**

1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;

2:1. Blow ye the trumpet. Blow a trumpet of alarm for the enemies of Judah are upon them.

A Common Pattern

- Disobedience
- An appeal to Repentance
- Prophecies of Judgment

2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning [dawn is] spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

2:2. The language of verse 2 is borrowed from Exodus 10:14, 15 when a plague smote Egypt in the Divine judgment.

3 A fire devoureth [consumes] before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

2:3. A fire devoureth. This is the language suited for the Lord which goes before and behind. Joel wants the people to know there is an eschatological aspect to this judgment.

4 The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

2:4. Locust have a very close resemblance to a horse, not in size but in appearance. The German word for locust is the word which means, "*a hay horse*".

2:5. Locust are like an army. They march as in a line and naturally organized. Stress is placed on the locust as an invincible army to destroy.

5 Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

2:6. People. Heb. *ammi*, peoples, in the plural suggesting the ultimate Day of the Lord at the Second Advent.

7 They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:

8 Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

9 They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.

2:9. they shall run upon the wall. Many cities in the East had walls that were wide enough to walk on or even to drive a chariot on.

10 The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

A Question Asked

11 And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very great: for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

2:11. The day of the Lord. This expression was viewed as the day when God would visit judgment upon the Gentiles. Here, Joel uses the term as judgment upon Judah.

2:12. and who can abide? who can live safely through it. Even in modern times there are plagues of locust. "The locusts were so many that they attached themselves to our clothes. They went into the houses. When we closed the doors and windows they still found their way in just like a Texas dust storm." (S. R. Driver).

The Second Great Truth
Doctrine of Repentance
Joel 2:12-17

12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

2:12. turn. Better, return to me. The word is that of repentance. The word speaks of a prior relationship, the covenant relationship for one does not return to a person unless there is a prior relationship. God had a covenant relationship with Judah and so they are to return to him.

2:12. with all your heart. There is an emotional facet to repentance. There is a deep feeling of contrition. It is more than a mere rational recitation of sin. Plead with God to take away a heart of stone and ask for a heart of flesh that feels the offense of a wounded God.

2:12. fasting. Paul speaks of fasts in the plural which means that fasting is a New Testament concept as well as an Old Testament practice (2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27).

The Prophet of the Repentance of God
A Question Answered

13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful [covenant mercies], slow to anger, and of great [loving] kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

2:13. for. Here are gracious incentives to repent. These thoughts are found in Exodus 34 in connection with the renewal of the covenant on Mount Sinai.

The Attributes of God

- God is gracious
- God is merciful
- God is slow to anger
- God is great
- God is love

2:13. repenteth. This word speaks anthropomorphically of God as He speaks to a man. It is His manner of treating men (Jeremiah 18:7-18). If you look at a thermometer you might say a thermometer is a very changeable thing for the mercury goes up and down on the thermometer in accordance with the heat. But, strictly speaking, the thermometer is unchangeable. It operates according to an unchangeable principle. So God is unchangeable in essence. If a person will repent, God will be gracious.

14 Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

2:14. The question of v. 11 is answered in v. 13. Those who have repented shall abide the day of the Lord. “Men, it is necessary to keep short accounts with God” (Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer).

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

2:16. gather the children. The children are not to be separated from worship for they are included in the covenant relationship.

2:16. bridegroom...bride. The importance of the solemn assembly is found in part by where people are called from, even the honeymoon suite.

The Prayer of the Priests

17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where *is* their God?

2:12. The repentance the prophet pleads for is accompanied by the promise of God’s gracious forgiveness. The same concept was offered by God before to another generation as per 2 Chronicles 7:14.

2:17. and let them say. As God leads His people to repentance so the Lord leads them in repentance telling them the very words to say. The Lord will teach His people to pray in prosperity (Psalm 35:27), in repentance (Joel 2:17), and in daily devotions (Matthew 5: 6-9).

The Promise of Impending Blessings Joel 2:18-27

18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

2:18. Then will the LORD. Better, Heb. “Then was the LORD jealous”. It is the past tense which is in view. The Lord was jealous for His people and had pity on them because they did call the solemn assembly and because they did successfully repent.

2:18. His land....His people. God has a covenant people to whom He is faithful, but the basis of blessing is always gospel obedience. This was true even of Abraham (Genesis 22:18).

19 Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:

20 But I will remove far off from you the northern *army* [i.e., one], and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

2:20. the northern one. Normally, locust came into the land of Palestine from the southeast. But since this was an unusual judgment, it is not inconceivable the Lord sent a horde of locust from all directions or from an unusual direction to magnify the plague from God. The movement of the locusts is primarily dictated by the direction and the force of winds in the region. Modern locust plagues in Israel of biblical proportions took place in 1915, 1959, and 2004. The insects, which normally live between two and six months, eat their weight—about 0.07 ounces—in crops every day.

A Song of Encouragement
Joel 2:21-23

21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

2:21. great things. In v. 20 the locust did “great things” and in v. 21 the LORD will do “great things”. What the locust destroyed, God will restore.

22 Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former [early] rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former [early] rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.

2:23. former rain moderately. Matthew Henry notes that *the Lord has given* and will give His people *the former rain and the latter rain*. If the Lord gives *the former rain and the latter rain* in mercy, He will give them in moderation so that the rain shall not turn into a judgment. The Lord will give His gifts of grace in due season, the *latter rain in the first month*, when it was wanted and expected. The early rains would make the weather comfortable and allow the people to see the gifts of God as coming from the hand of God, and ordered by His wisdom, for then the heart is assured to be well ordered.

He has given you a teacher of righteousness, (so the margin reads it, for the same word that signifies the rain signifies a teacher. and that which is translated moderately can be rendered, according to righteousness). This teacher of righteousness, says one of the rabbin, is Messiah the King, for he is a teacher come from God, and He shows us the way of righteousness. But others understand the reference to refer to any prophet that instructs unto righteousness. Some rabbis believe the reference is to Hezekiah in particular, others of Isaiah”

The Closing Promises are Renewed
Joel 2:24-27

24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

2:25. my great army. God takes ultimate and full responsibility for the army of locust. The experiences of life are ultimately to be traced back to God that we may be blessed or bowed before them. The events in life are designed for our edification, for our instruction in righteousness, for our spiritual understanding. The providence of God works all things together for good according to the counsel of His own will.

26 And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

27 And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Seven Gifts of God for the People of God

- There is the gift of agricultural abundance. “*And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied*”.
- There is the gift of worship in order to “*praise the name of the LORD your God*”.
- There is the gift of mercy for God “*hath dealt wondrously with you.*”
- There is the gift of security whereby God’s people “*shall never be ashamed*”.
- There is the gift of abiding fellowship whereby the people know that God is “*in the midst of Israel*”.
- There is the gift of jealous love for Israel doeth know the LORD is God and none else.
- There is the gift of holy purity for the LORD has promised saying, “*my people shall never be ashamed*”.

**The Third Great Promise
The Gift of Outpouring of the Holy Spirit**

Joel 2:28-32 * Acts 2:21

28 And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

2:28. afterward. In context, Joel says that the Spirit will be poured out after the people repent and the gifts of God are given. However, in Acts 2:17 Peter, under Divine inspiration, has interpreted the word “afterward” (or lit. “after this”) as a reference to “in the last days”.

Acts 2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

The beginning of the “*last days*” was inaugurated by the birth of Christ. *Hebrews 1:2 [God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 1 Peter 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,*

It is safe to say that the church has been “in the last days” since the Advent of Christ and especially since the Day of Pentecost.

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

32 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

The Practical and Spiritual Lesson of Joel 2

- By way of personal application, it should be observed that Joel calls upon individuals to repent of any sin which will disturb and disrupt fellowship with the Lord.
- It is easy to allow something that harms the believer's relationship with the Lord. But then, judgment must fall.
- Yet, based upon gospel repentance there is always the hope that if things are made right with God, then the blessing of the Lord will return.

JOEL 3**In the Valley of Jehoshaphat
Joel 3:1-14**

1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,

3:1. in those days. The reference was prophetic when the prophecy was given and may still have reference to the future.

**The Principle of *Jus Talionis* (Law of Retaliation) Established
A Gathering for Judgment**

2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted [divided] my land.

3:2. scattered. Leviticus 26:40-42 foretold this form of Divine discipline. The Jews were scattered in 721 BC, 586 BC, and AD 70. Restoration was based upon repentance.

3:2. valley of Jehoshaphat. This is an unknown reference. A valley near Jerusalem, perhaps.

3:2. my people. God has a special people among all the peoples of the earth. For many years Israel had a unique covenantal status with God as per Genesis 12:1-3. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says something that bears on this truth. In the thirteenth volume, in one of the earlier editions it says that it is a noteworthy fact of history that great conquerors (Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon) have always treated the Jews well. On the other hand, lesser men endowed with narrower outlooks have failed to recognize the Jew and have sought to crush him. But such methods are contrary to nature and tyranny, whether towards Jew or towards any other, and have never secured permanent results. The same policy of religious unification has characterized subsequent dynasties from the Assyrians to the Romanovs, and the same fate has overtaken them. The Jew has survived their disappearance (S. Lewis Johnson).

3:2. parted. In 1948, the modern state of Israel was divided into a Jewish state, a Palestinian state, and a small international section in Jerusalem. The Jews accepted the plan, the Palestinians did not. Today, Israel has more territory than originally agreed to.

3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

3:2. Here are terrible crimes against humanity. Here is God's Nuremberg Trial.

Indignant Questions

4 Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? Will ye render me a recompence? And if ye recompense me, swiftly *and* speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

5 Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:

6 The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.

The Lord Becomes a Champion for the Oppressed People

7 Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:

8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

The Summons of the Gentiles to War Against God It will be a War of Defeat for those Who Oppose Jehovah

9 Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

3:9. prepare a war. Heb. "Sanctify a war". This to be as a holy war. Get the best of the men that you can. Find as many weapons as possible (v. 10).

10 Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong.

11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.

12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

3:12. valley of Jehoshaphat. Lit. *the Lord will judge*. Another rendering is the valley of verdict.

3:12. come down, O LORD. Here is a prophetic prayer in the midst of impending doom.

In the Valley of Decision
Joel 3:13-21

The Second Summons to Battle

The Conditions Before the Day of the Lord
Joel 3:13-14

13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe [ready to be harvested]: come, get you down; for the press [winepress] is full, the fats [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.

3:13. multitudes, multitudes. A great crowd has gathered in the Valley of Decision or Verdict Valley to fight the Lord but it is God's army that shall be victorious.

Special Note.

Read Revelation 14 which finds its background in the book of Joel.

The Events During the Day of the Lord
Joel 3:15-17

15 The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

3:15 darkened. Here is the moment of truth for the nations of the earth.

God's Covenantal Promise

16 The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

3:16 roar out of Zion. The Divine judgment is traced to Jerusalem itself. It is a terrible carnage for the earth and the heavens are convulsed at the voice of the Lord, and mere mortals have nowhere to flee.

3:16 but the LORD. Herein is hope for the people of God. He is the hope and the strength of His people proven time and again by the Exodus, at Mt. Sinai, through Abraham, and through the promises made to Israel.

17 So shall ye know that I *am* the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

3:17. no stranger. Many today embrace the doctrine of universalism. It would be nice but the Bible does not teach it. There is an old saying, “*Nobody is quite a Universalist in moments of indignation.*” Joel does speak of divine judgment and covenantal grace as other prophets spoke of God’s faithfulness. *Isaiah 49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* But it is God’s people that is the object of the Divine distinction. There will be no strangers in the future to the grace of God.

The Events After the Day of the Lord
Joel 3:18-21

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

3:18. valley of Shittim. Normally a place of desolation shall blossom.

19 Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence *against* the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.

3:19. Edom. Those who embrace a futuristic and premillennial understanding of this passage must see the resurrection of Edom once more, to be literal according to their hermeneutics. Egypt and Edom were the ancient foes of Israel.

20 But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

21 For I will cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

3:21. dwelleth in Zion. Herein is the Doctrine of Distinguishing Grace which is offered to all who will flee to Calvary and the Christ who died for sinners.

The Practical and Spiritual Lesson of Joel 3

1. God's judgment falls upon those who are morally depraved, "*for their wickedness is great*" (v. 13).
2. Those who blessed Abraham were to be blessed and, by extension, those who bless the Israelites will be blessed. *Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*
3. By way of application, because the church consists of those who are the children of Abraham by faith, those who bless the church will be blessed and those who hurt the church will be cursed. *Galatians 3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* God will avenge His own. *Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*
4. God will deal with the nations of the earth in a just and righteous manner.
5. The principle of *jus talionis* is established in Joel 3. The story of Adonibezek in Judges illustrates the principle of the law of retaliation.
6. The providence of God in human history is clearly set forth (Acts 4:23-28).
7. The refuge for the Christian is God through the work of Christ at the cross. He himself is our hope and strength. He has given to us His promises in the New Covenant.
8. The refuge that is the hope of His people is a personal refuge based on a right relationship with the LORD. It is not enough to have a mere profession of faith in Christ, there must be a possession of faith.
9. There will come a time when the tares shall be removed and Jerusalem will be holy. There will be no strangers in heaven and the world to come.

Doctrine of the Valley of Jehoshaphat
Joel 3:2

“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted [divided] my land”.

A Historical Fulfilment of this Prophecy

1. It is possible the prophet’s utterance finds historical fulfillment in the scene of the Lord’s judgment on the Gentiles in that valley where, in the presence of Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah (c. 873-848 BC; 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37), He annihilated the coalition of Moab, Ammon and Edom.

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

1 It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi.

3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court,

6 And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever?

8 And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

9 If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

11 Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

13 And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

14 Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation;

15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

16 Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.

19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

20 And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.

22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

26 And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.

27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

28 And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord.

29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.

2. Those who reject a historical fulfilment of this prophecy contend the prophet meant to designate an ideal, indeterminate valley – the valley of judgment, and nothing more – for "Jehoshaphat" signifies "Yahweh judges".
3. It is argued that the prophet had in mind an indeterminate valley is suggested by the fact that the name “valley of destruction” in Joel 3:13 or, as in the AV, the "valley of decision", could also be rendered the “valley of verdict”.

A Prophecy Unfilled

4. There are many Christians who have been taught to believe that the Last Judgment will be held in the Valley of Jehoshaphat at the Second Advent of Christ, based upon a pre-millennial Dispensational interpretation of the words of the prophet Joel.
 - *Joel 3:2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*

5. If this prophecy is to be literally fulfilled in the future, then Edom will have to be brought back into existence to be judged. Edom and Egypt were the traditional enemies of Israel. And, in the judgment, an extended period of time must be given in order to fulfill what is being prophesied for, *“Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land”* (Joel 3:19).