

Joel 3:1-21**3-7-02***“Your arms are too short to box with God!”***1. Intro:**

- 1.1. **Story** – Farmer whose fields of grain caught on fire. Saw the charred body of a hen. He kicked it over, & out ran 5 little chicks from under it.
 - 1.1.1. The wrath of God is an **all consuming fire!**
 - 1.1.2. Nevertheless, it **need not touch** those who are **covered** by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is refuge in Him.
 - 1.1.3. **The full wrath of God is revealed at 2 points of history: at His final judgment**(described here); & **at the cross** of Jesus Christ, where it has already been poured out for those who trust in Jesus.
 - 1.1.4. **Your choice:** Wait the final judgment, face it alone, & be condemned by Christ. **Or**, take refuge in Christ who has already faced it for you, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**
- 1.2. **Jesus is coming again!**
 - 1.2.1. Not like last time to **die**, but this time to **bring his kingdom**.
 - 1.2.2. Judgments & Blessings! **Is.40:10,11** **“Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. - He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.”**

2. JUDGMENTS! (1-17)

- 2.1. (1-8) **COURT IS IN SESSION!**
 - 2.1.1. (1) God’s promise, the Jews will be back in the land.
 - 2.1.2. Here is God summoning the Gentile nations to court.
 - 2.1.3. They’ll be judged for the sins committed against His people Israel
 - 2.1.4. This has been long in coming, but it will come.
- 2.2. (2,3) **4 Reasons for Judgment:**
 - 2.2.1. They, [1] **Scattered** my people [2] **Divided** my people [3] **Sold** my people [4] **Robbed** my people.
 - 2.2.2. (3) Josephus tells us that in the roman wars the enemy chose out the Jews, **“the tallest & most beautiful, & reserved them for triumph; & as for the rest of the multitude that were above 17 years old, he put them into bonds; & sent them to the Egyptian mines...those that were under 17 yrs of age were sold for slaves.”**¹

¹ Josephus; **The Wars of the Jews**; Book VI, ch.9, par.2.. Also **Antiquities**, Book XII, chap.7, par.3.

- 2.3. (9-13) **REAPING THE FINAL HARVEST!**
- 2.3.1. (9-11) **Your Arms are too short to Box w/God!** [’75 musical/based on Mt]
- 2.3.1.1. **Read - Ps.2:1-4**
- 2.3.1.2. No man can hope to fight against God successfully.
- 2.3.1.3. **Q:** Have you ever tried to box with God? [Oh no?...Ever hope God would change his mind! - Ever sin against Him?...Isn’t that fighting against Him?]
- 2.3.2. (10) **Plowshares into swords** – This is a **complete reversal** of what God says elsewhere of the **Golden Age**.
- 2.3.2.1. **Is.2:4** “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.” [Also, Micah 4:3]
- 2.3.2.2. **Bronze Statue** given to the U.N. building in 1959 by the then Soviet union, of a man with a hammer, beating a sword into a plowshare.
- 2.3.2.3. Button for sale at Chicago's Peace Museum said, “**Beat your enemies into plowshares.**”
- 2.3.3. (12) **Valley of Jehoshaphat** – Valley of “God’s Judgment”.
- 2.3.3.1. **Show pictures & map.**
- 2.3.3.2. **Valley of Meggido** - Armageddon(city); Harmageddon(hill); plain of Esdraelon.
- 2.3.3.3. **Valley of Jehoshaphat** – Kidron valley.
- 2.3.3.4. **Edom** – **Is.63:1-6**; also **34**(esp.5-7)
- 2.3.3.5. **Q:** What’s the Valley of Jehoshaphat doing way down here?
- 2.3.3.6. **This campaign is pictured as extending from the plain of Meggido, down through Jerusalem, extending down to Edom** in the south. Which ultimately covers **the whole land** of Israel as Ezek said, “**You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land.** It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.”(38:16,9)
- 2.3.3.7. Also **See Rev.14:14-20.** (1600 furlongs/stadia=184 miles)
- 2.3.4. (13) **Winepress is full & vats overflowing** = their wickedness is great!
- 2.3.4.1. **Irony** – Normally the harvesting of grapes or grains was a time of a **joyous occasion.**

2.4. (14-17) **SHAKE OR SHELTER!**

- 2.4.1. “Valley of decision” – This has nothing to do with the **Gentiles** making a decision for the Lord. Instead it is **the Lord** making **His decision** for judgment!
- 2.4.1.1. **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!** – Ever hear this at an evangelistic crusade? (often miss quoted!)

3. **BLESSINGS! (18-21)**

3.1. MOUNTAINS & FOUNTAINS!

- 3.1.1. (18) This must have been **refreshing** for Joel’s listeners...The book opened with drought & famine(locust plague); but now closes with a description of a land flowing w/milk & honey.
- 3.1.2. This of course is speaking of **the Kingdom Age,...the Golden Age!**
- 3.1.2.1. We see Ravishing Restoration & Lush Refreshment!
- 3.1.2.2. Usually **mountains & hills** are the least productive of all soil.
- 3.1.2.3. **Read Dwight Pentecost**(Dallas Theo. Sem.) pg.489-490(Millennium Blessings).
- 3.1.3. Isaac watts wrote: “**the hill of Zion yields a 1000 sacred sweets.**”
- 3.1.3.1. **My dads Catering Company**,...“Pick anything!” (*buttermilk bar/choc milk*)
- 3.1.3.2. **Q:** Can you think of an instance in your life where spiritually life was dripping w/new wine?
- 3.1.4. (18b) **Acacias**(Shittim) arid wilderness just NE of dead Sea, will be well watered.
- 3.1.4.1. **Appl.** - Our lives also can personally become **dry & fruitless** if we are out of God’s will.
- 3.1.4.2. **If you were compared to a stream today would you be considered: a dry river bed, water just trickling, water moving swiftly, or your banks over flowing?**
- 3.1.5. (19) **Egypt & Edom** – representing all the nations that were enemies of Israel.

3.2. **Remember why the judgment?** [1] **Scattered** my people [2] **Divided** my people [3] **Sold** my people [4] **Robbed** my people.

- 3.2.1. They are no longer **scattered**, but now **gathered**(1,17);
No longer **divided**, but now **reunited**(20);
Though they were once **sold**, they are now **free**(21);
They were once **robbed**, but are now **wealthy**(18).

- 3.3. In a sense, we can tell people we can “read their future:
- 3.3.1. See, what the future holds for them depends on their relationship with the Lord.
 - 3.3.2. If you **never** trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior be guaranteed **your judgment is awaiting you.**
 - 3.3.3. If you **have** trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior be guaranteed **you will never be called into court.**
 - 3.3.3.1. **Jn.5:24** “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me **has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed** from death into life.”
 - 3.3.3.2. **Rom.8:1,2** “There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me **free from the law of sin and death.**”
- 3.4. (21a) **Acquit** – pardon, clear.
- 3.4.1. **Story** - King Frederick II, an eighteenth-century king of Prussia, was visiting a prison in Berlin, the inmates tried to prove to him how they had been **unjustly imprisoned. All except one.** That one sat quietly in a corner, while all the rest protested their innocence. Seeing him sitting there oblivious to the commotion, **the king asked him what he was there for.** "Armed robbery, Your Honor." The king asked, **"Were you guilty?"** "Yes, Sir," he answered. "I entirely deserve my punishment." The king then gave an order to the guard: **"Release this guilty man. I don't want him corrupting all these innocent people."**
- 3.5. (21b) Joel ends w/“And they lived happily ever after!”
- 3.5.1. “God’s in His heaven; All’s right with the world!”
 - 3.5.2. This ending reminds us of Ezekiel’s ending of his book, **“THE LORD Is THERE.”**
- 3.6. **What’s the Lord’s main message here?**
- 3.6.1. It is the same exact message He gives in 3 parables in the gospels!
 - 3.6.2. The **10 virgins; the talents; & the sheep & goat judgment**(Mt.25).
 - 3.6.2.1. In each there is a **sudden appearance of the master** that catches people involved **by surprise!**
 - 3.6.2.2. In each there is a **separation:** {5 wise/5 foolish; the one’s that used their masters talents wisely/the one’s that didn’t; **the sheep/the goats**}
 - 3.6.2.3. **Utter surprise** by those who received the punishment: {**5 foolish/** surprised why He wouldn’t admit them? – **The wicked steward/surprised His master isn’t satisfied w/his lack of performance?** – **The goats** asked Jesus/”Lord, when did we see hungry, thirsty, stranger, needing clothes, sick, or imprison?”}

3.6.2.4. I think of **many today** who are despising **the grace of God** & as Paul said in Rom.2:5, "...in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself **wrath** in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous **judgment** of God,"

3.6.2.5. They actually despise the very thing that was given to them to **lead them to repentance** (Rom.2:4) "Or do you despise the riches of **His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering**, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"

3.7. **Communion:**

3.7.1. Philip Yancey(in His Image)said, "No cell lies more than a hair's breath from a blood capillary..."

3.7.1.1. Therefore, **your blood** is quick to cleanse **any & every cell**.

3.7.1.2. **Christ's blood** is even quicker to cleanse & drive out **any & every sin**.