

## “Valleys of Mt. Zion” (Joel 3)

1. Valley of Jehoshaphat (Day of Destruction vv. 1-8)
  - a. Gathered & Scattered (1-2)
    - i. Parallels: The precedent of this valley’s meaning is found in the name and events of Jehoshaphat viz. “valley where the LORD judges” and the two recorded events →
      1. 1 Ki. 22 where king Ahaz and Jehoshaphat sat on thrones and the prophets proclaimed victory, yet God scattered Israel and killed Ahaz.
      2. 2 Chr. 20 where nations gathered against Jehoshaphat, he sought and trusted God, and they were scattered. Thereafter, Judah plundered valuables and worshiped in the valley of blessing i.e. “Berachah.”
    - ii. Pattern:
      1. Discipline **And** Salvation
        - a. First, Discipline: Jehoshaphat (and Ahaz more severely) was disciplined in his presumptuous war engagement backing Ahaz and ignoring Micaiah. Second, Salvation: After contrition, Jehoshaphat trusted God and Judah was spared.
        - b. First, Discipline: Joel recorded Israel’s devastating discipline via plague (be it via locusts and or war). Second, Joel promised salvation and restoration.
      2. Judgement **Or** Salvation: In the patterns of historical narrative and individual experience and decisions, there awaits a final verdict of either enduring the penalty for justice or enjoying the salvation of the Covenant LORD (CL).
  - b. An Arrow At Ahaz: Though the humbled Jehoshaphat was spared, the unrepentant Ahaz could not escape the Word of the CL.
  - c. Meted Measures (3-8) God’s justice is perfect, meting out the balanced measure of justice for each violation (cf. Mat. 7:1-2; 11:20-24; 23:29-32). What’s more is that He does so with the a reversal of sorts →
  - d. Righteous Reversal (6, 8) “As they have sold the sons of Judah into slavery, so they will experience the pain of witnessing their own sons being sold into slavery (3:6, 8). As the land-loving Israelites were sold to sea-peoples, so the sea-loving coastal people will be sold to Sabean desert-dwellers.”<sup>3 1</sup>
  - e. Progressive Prophecy: Joel preached of past, present, and future phases of the “Day of the LORD.” “First, the Day of the Lord came for Joel’s contemporaries with the plague of locusts. Then the Day of the Lord came with the gracious restoration of the years that the locust had eaten. Next the Day of the Lord came at Pentecost, when the Lord of the Sabbath day poured out his Spirit on all flesh. But now Joel speaks of the final Day of the Lord. It is the day on which all nations will assemble for judgement.”<sup>2</sup>
2. Valley of Decision (Day of Arbitration vv. 9-16c)
  - a. Awaken (9). Vv. 9-12 in essence are saying, “Gird up and take your stance.” Re: God’s command for His enemies to gird up see Jer. 46:3-6, 9-10.

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<sup>3</sup> Hubbard, *Joel*, p. 77.

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, O. P. (1995). [\*Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel\*](#) (p. 105). Evangelical Press.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, O. P. (1995). [\*Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel\*](#) (p. 98). Evangelical Press.

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- b. Avail (10) “there appears to be a deliberate reversal of the promise of peace in ~~Is. 2:4 and Mi. 4:3~~, where peace for the nations evidently follows the war to end all wars (*cf.* ~~Pss. 46:8–10; 76:3; Zep. 3:8–10~~).”<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Assemble (11) This verse includes an abrupt interjection for CL to call His mighty ones “down” to war. See Mat. 25:32 and Rev. 19:14-15 “The nations are urged to converge on an area in the distance to which the speaker points. The end of the summons is linked to the projected trial of v. 2. **Battle and trial are one**. In OT thinking the two ideas are closely connected, war being regarded as a medium of divine justice, the execution of God’s sentence.<sup>44</sup> The reason for the battle summons in v. 12b is an explanation of the name *Jehoshaphat*, reinforcing that given in v. 2b. To “judge” means not only to hear the evidence and deliver the verdict but also to carry out the verdict, which would be done in the final battle.”<sup>4</sup>
  - d. Ascend (12) Paradox of ascending a valley is indicative of foolhardy rebellion against God. They must arise to Him for their judgment for He is high and lifted up on Mount Zion v. 17).
  - e. Account (13-16c)
    - i. The grapes of wrath are ripe and ready for smashing (Rev. 14:14-20). Also see Rev. 19:14-15
    - ii. Valley of Verdict (14-16) The Day of Judgment for those opposed to the LORD. Mat. 12:36. “God will know when the season is ripe for the final judgement of all men and nations. The twofold image of a harvest being reaped and grapes being trampled is used one final time in Scripture. In the book of Revelation one like the son of man sits on a cloud with a sharp sickle in his hand. The word goes out: ‘Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe’ (Rev. 14:15). The sickle swings and the gathered grapes are thrown into ‘the great winepress of God’s wrath’ (Rev. 14:19). As God determined the time when the iniquity of the Canaanites was full, so he will decide when the mystery of iniquity must be for ever removed from the earth. On that day he will summon the living and the dead before his throne of judgement. Then every man will have to give account of the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil.”<sup>5</sup>
    - iii. Voice of Verdict (16b) Who is the LORD? Who is the voice of the LORD? Jn. 5:19, 22-24; 26-27; 12:49; **Mat. 24:35 cf. 2 Pet. 3:10 re: Day of the LORD!**
3. Valley of Acacias (Day of Salvation vv. 16d-21)
- a. Alternative (16d) Judgment for the guilty “But” shelter for the redeemed. Those who have been adopted into the family of God *cf.* 1 Jn. 3:1-3. “The Valley of Jehoshaphat is joined to the Valley of Berachah. The valley of judgement on the wicked becomes the valley of blessing for God’s people.”<sup>6</sup>
  - b. Abiding (17, 20)
    - i. V. 17. Communion with the CL and communion with those of all nations as there will be no strangers or illegitimate members of the household of God for all opposed (aliens) will be banished (v. 19). See Zep. 3:8-10.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, L. C. (1994). *Joel*. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 790). Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>44</sup> Cf., e.g., Deut. 32:41; Judg. 11:27; 2 Sam. 18:19.

<sup>4</sup> Allen, L. C. (1976). *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (pp. 115–116). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

<sup>5</sup> Robertson, O. P. (1995). *Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel* (pp. 109–110). Evangelical Press.

<sup>6</sup> Robertson, O. P. (1995). *Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel* (p. 111). Evangelical Press.

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- ii. LORD not Land: “The Israelites had wrongly attributed invincibility to the locale itself. But now that the person of the Covenant Lord will be there forever, the people can be assured that his city will never fall to foreigners.”<sup>7</sup>
- iii. V. 20. Communion forevermore!
- c. Abundance (18) “Valley of Acacias” The Acacia tree is one which can grow even in the driest parts of the wilderness. I think of Isa. 32:2 and 53:2 which precedes Jn. 7:37-38. Here the fountain flows from the house of the CL which carries the motif to Ezek. 47 & Rev. 22:1-2. The desert rose which grew forth from the dry ground became a Temple springing living water. Jesus is the Temple of living water and He came to construct the Temple Zech. 6:12-13 (here, the branch motif is morphed into the Temple motif). ~~See also Ps. 46:4; Zech. 14:8.~~ Acacia wood was used for the construction of the tabernacle as the dwelling-place of God (cf. Exod. 25:10; 26:15; 27:1; 30:1)<sup>8</sup>
- d. Avenged (19) Oh, what a glorious day when the oppressors will be banished and unable to hurt or harm God’s people!
- e. Absolution (21) Absolution (or acquittal) connotes a crime and charge but a release from the due penalty. God does not just unjustly pardon sin – He is pure and can have no fellowship with evil thus the Cross! Only by our Advocate can we be declared clean, innocent, free, and righteous! Only those washed by the blood of the Lamb can look forward to the “Day of the LORD”
- f. Appeal: The Day of the LORD is at hand and is now (2 Cor. 6:2). Though the wrath of God is being revealed (Ro. 1:18), God is patient giving time to repent (2 Pet. 3:9-10).

### PC (Independence Day)

Through the providence of God and with blood, sweat, and tears some two and a half centuries ago, the New World saw a new nation and with it a government by the people and for the people. After Independence was declared and a Constitution established, America (the union of States) was governed by an understanding of “natural law” and the responsibility to uphold it for a more perfect union. Our Founding Fathers knew that liberty, justice, peace, and prosperity are dependent upon the adherence to the virtuous Law of God. Hence, when said Law is ignored, shunned, or perverted liberty erodes. It is the Christian’s duty – no matter what his government does – to promote the virtues listed above in order to promote spiritual freedom. Israel was given freedom and they quickly fell into their fallen nature of taking it for granted, even to the point of gross perversions of child sacrifice at times. But the Covenant LORD disciplines and commissions His true children to repent and be holy. We as a nation have lost our commission to secure, demonstrate, and spread virtue and justice which enable true liberty. May the Bride of Christ reclaim Her commission to grasp and share these God-given gifts so that souls will find deliverance from the bondage of sin.

### PC

There are many valleys and mountains in life and how we view such reveals how we view the wisdom of God. God may send us through a valley (even the valley of the shadow of death) for our growth. We may find ourselves in a valley of complacency and dwell therein because of our decisions. We may be in a valley of depression for reasons unknown or because of our loved ones’ destructive choices. Some will end up in a valley of verdict where the great I Am assembles them for their just judgment. But for those who trust in Mount Zion i.e. the LORD himself, every valley will be abundant with blessing. In the last section of *Joel*, we see three mentioned valleys. The first implies a valley of decision, the

<sup>7</sup> Robertson, O. P. (1995). [\*Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel\*](#) (p. 112). Evangelical Press.

<sup>8</sup> Robertson, O. P. (1995). [\*Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel\*](#) (p. 114). Evangelical Press.

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second implies a valley of verdict, and the third a valley of abundance. The “Day of the LORD” encompasses all three valleys. Joel’s and Scripture’s message is an invitation to call on the name of the LORD before one finds himself in the valley of judgment. 2 Cor. 6:2 appeals to us to trust the LORD and not delay for today is the day of salvation (the Day of the LORD) now is the favorable time. May the valleys in our lives serve to make us look up to Mount Zion from Whom comes our salvation.

### PC #2

Isaiah poetically prophesied of the LORD leveling mountains and raising the valleys (Isa. 40:4). It referred to the coming LORD and specifically to His forerunner who would ‘pave the way’ so to speak. Peoples’ hearts were seen to be as soil which was either prepared for the good seed or not. The irony is that though the LORD will level rough places and make straight the paths in our lives (leading us in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake), He uses the rough places to prepare us. Both the valleys and mountains are used by Him to bring us to Himself and thus bless us. And as our text alludes, He will bring abundance even to the driest of valleys v. 18 “in that day.”