



Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision

The prophecy of Joel

Study 8

(Chapter 3:1-16)

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.”

A day is coming when the armies of the nations will come against the city of Jerusalem. This invasion will not be one that is controlled by man but one that God has engineered. It will be “the final straw” to break the back of Israel’s pride and trust in their own strength.

Jeremiah describes this time and says that even the strongest of men in Israel will put his hands on his stomach like a woman in labour and that every face will turn pale. The situation will be so bad that every Israeli living in Israel and Jerusalem at that time will be terrified by the situation.

Previous to this situation Israel will have been living in a time of false peace. At that time there will be a peace treaty with the surrounding nations that has caused them to believe that things will go well for their nation. In reality this covenant of peace will be a false covenant. Instead of a covenant of life for Israel it will prove to be a covenant of death.

In their spiritual blindness Israel will have been lulled into a sense of false security. Isaiah the prophet foretold the betrayal of this covenant by those who have made it

with Israel. “Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by you will be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning by morning, by day and by night it will sweep through.” The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror” (Isaiah 28:18-19).

Ezekiel the prophet describes this situation when the nations under “Gog from the land of Magog” will send their armies against Israel. “In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. You all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land. ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. You will say, “I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates or bars. I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the centre of the land” (Ezekiel 39:8-12)

Today Israel is certainly not a land restored from war or a land with unwalled villages so this prophecy is still to be fulfilled. However, after many attempts to formulate peace in the Middle East there will be a peace established that will allow Israel to settle down and recover from the war it has had with its surrounding neighbours. This 'peace' will be unique in that it will achieve a so-called "peace" never before established. When this happens the whole world will breathe a sigh of relief! Many will say "peace and safety in our time" and think that the future will be brighter for the world. However, for the discerning Bible believing Christian they will know what is really going on.

The apostle Paul put it this way when he said, "Now, brothers, about time and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4)

When Israel lies at 'peace' and things generally seem to get better in the world true Bible believing Christians who understand Bible prophecy will know what is really going on. Peter in one of his letters said that, "Prophecy is a light shining in a dark place." To those who have an understanding of Biblical prophecy it will give them light in the midst of a dark situation indeed.

To the unbelievers in the world and to multitudes of professing Christians who have ignored Bible prophecy or a just plain ignorant concerning it will be deceived into thinking that this will be something good for mankind generally. During this time of the so-called global peace, ecumenism and Interfaith and secular humanism will flourish. Like those on the Titanic, they will not see the Iceberg of disaster looming on the horizon.

So with these things in mind we come to the portion of Joel's prophecy dealing with

the time when the armies of the nations will invade Israel, "the land restored from war."

(Vs 1) "In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem."

In 1948 Israel became a nation again and God's prophetic clock for the close of this present age began ticking again. It is clear that Joel was prophesying for our own time. We are now well into the time that Joel saw in the Spirit. While Israel as a nation is still a land torn by war and strife there will come about a false peace that will work for a time but it will not last.

God Himself has restored them to the land in our time but initially His purpose in doing this was to bring Israel to a state of true repentance and trust in Him alone for their salvation and security. Because of Israel's hardness of heart and unbelief in the Messiah God will use the great tribulation to purify Israel to be a people Holy to the Lord. Ultimately God's plan is to restore Israel spiritually and nationally under the rule of the Messiah in the Millennium.

However, this peace will be destroyed by the Antichrist and his armies who will descend upon Israel like a swarm of locusts covering the land like a cloud. At that time Israel and the whole world will be plunged into their worst nightmare imaginable. Indeed the time of Jacob's Trouble will have begun. Not only will it be a time of trouble and tribulation for Israel but for the nations of the world.

(Vs 2-3) "I will gather all nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgement against them concerning My inheritance, My people Israel,"

The name for the Valley of Jehoshaphat itself means, "Yahweh has judged" and this is the final place where God will judge the armies of the nations that have invaded Israel and attacked Jerusalem. Many believe it is the Kidron Valley that lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

"For they scattered My people among the

nations and divided up My land. They cast lots for My people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink."

God has never forgotten His ancient people and although He has allowed nations to punish them and to scatter them to the four corners of the earth because of their sins He will once again restore and revive them and call them His people. As Hosea the prophet said, "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hosea 6:1-3)

Those nations that have treated the Jewish people badly will be severely judged no matter who they are, especially those who have sought to divide up the land. Today the Quartet of nations consisting the US, the UN, Russia and the EU will soon fall under this judgement of God as they seek to push for their 'two state' solution from the pits of hell itself.

The administration of President Obama will not escape this judgement if he persists in pushing for this two state solution. We know that Russia will be one of the countries from the North whose army will be annihilated on the mountains of Israel in days to come. But lets continue.

(Vs 4-7)"Now what have you against Me, O Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying Me for something I have done? If you are paying Me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. For you took My silver and My gold and carried off My finest treasures to your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland. See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the

Sabeans, a nation far away. The LORD has spoken."

God Himself will recompense Sidon and Philistia for plundering and enslaving God's people. The people in those cities would in turn be sold as slaves-a fitting punishment for their crime.

In the final war to come the Jewish people under the command of their Messiah will defeat their enemies on Jewish soil. "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:6-9)

Today Israel may look like a small nation surrounded by powerful enemies whose armies cannot be numbered. These nations have military might and a nuclear arsenal yet they will be defeated when Israel and Judah go out to fight them.

We have already seen what Israel can do. In 1948 they defeated around 40 million Arabs bent on their destruction. Then in 1967 in the six-day war they defeated their enemies and regained the Old City of Jerusalem including the Temple Mount at that time. Then in 1973 they defeated the Egypt and the Arab nations again in the Yom Kipper War. Even though terrifying times and great devastation lies ahead for Israel they will be victorious when the Messiah comes to save them out of the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

The situation in the Middle East today is fulfilling Bible Prophecy as God prepares the nations for the coming judgment. God is

stirring up the nations today.

(Vs 7-11) "Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, "I am strong!" Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD!

The Lord is preparing the whole world for an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah of Israel. Indeed this aggression by the nations against Israel is aggression against the Lord Himself even though those repressing Israel do not see this. These nations that challenge Israel's right to exist are in reality challenging the Lord Himself who has put His name in Jerusalem forever!

Satan wants to destroy Israel today because he knows that the promises of Jesus return depends on God's promises to restore Israel and to lead them as a nation to find their Messiah. This is another reason why Satan is pushing replacement theology in the Church. Satan will ultimately take charge of the situation in the Middle East personally when he incarnates himself into the man called the son of perdition, the man of sin namely the Antichrist.

(Vs 12) "Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side."

It is in this valley that the armies of the Antichrist will be driven back and destroyed. It would seem that they will be driven back as far as Bozra where the armies will be totally annihilated by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Rider on the White horse who smites down the nations with the sword of His mouth.

(Vs 13) "Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow— so great is their wickedness!"

Isaiah the prophet tells us that the

Messiah will actually be seen doing battle at Bozrah that lies in the ancient area of Edom, which today is known as Jordan. Israeli commanders will tell you that this is probably the most vulnerable position that Israel faces today and that an attack from that direction would be formidable to say the least.

The language Isaiah uses to describe the same scene that Joel describes also depicts this great end-time battle between the forces of the Messiah of Israel and the forces of the Antichrist.

(Isaiah 63:1-7) "Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendour, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."

In the book of Revelation we see the same battle depicted.

(Revelation 19:11-21) "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the

nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great." Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh."

On that day generals, commanders and soldiers will be annihilated. The prophet Zechariah tells us what will happen to these armies.

(Zechariah 14:12-15) "This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected—great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps."

Ezekiel also describes the same event

(Ezekiel 38:21-23) "I will summon a

sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulphur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

(Ezekiel 39: 1-6) "Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of] Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel. Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand. On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the LORD.'"

Joel tells us that the reason for this judgement is not only because of what they have done to Israel but because their wickedness is so great. In the end you have a godless hostile world at war with the Lord Jesus Christ and He wins the war! Indeed it will be a time of decision for the nations of the world!

If you have not yet decided to place your whole life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord then you have already decided for the Antichrist. No one will be left in a vacuum on that day when Jesus comes back to judge the nations. As the scripture says, "Today is the day of Salvation, today if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts." You may be reading this article and you know in your heart that you have not come by faith to the salvation provided for you in Jesus Christ and have

not put yourself under the protection of the blood of the lamb (Jesus Christ) by which you can be saved from the wrath to come.

Then flee from the wrath to come. Flee from the "Babylon" of this world! If you are at ease in this world then rise up from your couch of complacency and indifference to Jesus and seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near! Indeed let the wicked man forsake his ways and the evil man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and to our God for He will have mercy upon him and He will abundantly pardon! Avail yourself of the precious blood of Christ the sacrificial lamb without spot or blemish! If you refuse Him who speaks from heaven then prepare yourself for the Valley of decision. Multitudes will be there on that day. Even on the coastlands that rest securely will fire from heaven be poured out and they will not escape!

(Vs 14) "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision."

At this time even the powers of the heavens will be shaken and the constellations will not give their light.

(Vs 15) "The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine."

The whole world will be at the crossroads. At this time, "there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth nations will be in perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea (the nations) Men will faint from terror. Apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27) People will be so terrified that they will not know the way out because they followed the beasts agenda for the world and have come into the place of judgment!

As the nations surround Jerusalem and as the constellations are not giving their light, as the powers of the heavens are shaken and as the stars begin to fall from the sky the res-

cue of the faithful Church will occur as Jesus gathers His saints around Him to meet Him in the air. After that the wrath will be poured out on the kingdoms of this world and upon the armies of the Antichrist. In His discourse concerning the Last Days the Lord Jesus clearly told us in Matthew twenty-four that the rapture of the faithful Church would occur at this time.

(Matthew 14:29-31) "Immediately after the distress of those days " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." (Mark says from one end of the earth to the other)

The rapture and the resurrection will be the same event.

(1 Thessalonians 4:14-17) "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

(1 Corinthians 15:51-52) "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

Remember that the day Lot was rescued

out of Sodom that very same day fire fell from heaven and consumed the cities of the plain! Remember that the very hour the walls of Jericho collapsed Rahab was rescued!

Indeed the scripture says that those who are really saved are not appointed to wrath but to obtain Salvation (deliverance) through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the day of His wrath God will rescue and protect His faithful people from that wrath. The prophet Zephaniah said, "Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger" (Zephaniah 2:3).

(Vs 16) "The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for

his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel."

When the Day of the Lord comes there will be no place for anyone to hide. When the Messiah's feet once again walk upon the Mount of Olives the whole world will know.

In that day the Lord will indeed be a refuge for His people and from that time on no one will harm them, oppress them or make them afraid for the Lord their Messiah will be their shield and buckler and His righteous laws shall go forth into the nations and they will beat their swords into ploughs, they will learn war no more and the Glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. In that day there will no longer be a 'Canaanite' in the house of the Lord!

"The Lord dwells in Zion!"

BLOW THE TRUMPET IN ZION

**" For no one can lay any foundation other than the one
already laid, which is Jesus Christ "**



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