

### 3. Joel 3:1-21 (MT - Joel 4)

#### The Judgment of the Nations and the Salvation of God's People

##### Verse 1.

##### In those days and at that time.

The time designation here has reference to the following phrase, "when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem," rather than to what immediately precedes. The phrase introduces the third passage describing the coming day of the Lord.

##### Verse 2.

##### the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Where is this valley? It is not easy to identify with certainty. Some suggest it is the valley of Beracah (2 Chron 20:26) where Jehoshaphat defeated the Moabites and Ammonites, which occasioned the giving of the place a new name. But that name was Beracah not the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There is no evidence to identify the two valleys.

The name Jehoshaphat means "the Lord has judged." Since the valley is the location of a judgment of the Lord (cf. vs. 12), it is possible to take the name as symbolic of the judgment rather than as a geographical place name (cf. the "valley of decision" in vs. 14). If this is so then nothing is said about the geographical location of the valley.

Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions link the place of final judgment with the valley of Kidron between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives (see Zech. 14:1-5). A Graeco-Roman tomb on the eastern slope of the Kidron Valley has mistakenly been called the tomb of King Jehoshaphat.

##### Verse 2.

##### all the nations . . . enter into judgment against them.

What is this judgment and who is it that is to be judged?

It seems likely to me that the judgment is the victory which will be won by the Lord at his appearance in power and glory when the enemies of returned Israel are drawn up for battle prior to the establishment of the millennial kingdom (cf. Zech 14:2; Rev. 19) and their armies are destroyed by the Lord and his hosts.

Allen (115) points out that the "end of the summons [vss.9-12] is linked to the 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. . . . 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."

The word "judgment" (vs.2) may apply to a more specific judgment than simply that of Christ's victory in this great battle if one links this passage with the judgment of "the nations" described in Matt 25:31 ff., and interprets it as a special judgment chronologically prior to the establishment of the millennial period and distinct from the great white throne judgment at the end of the millennial period (Rev. 20:11ff). That these two judgments should be separated is not altogether clear in Scripture, but is a possibility. In this case it would seem that only believers will enter the millennial kingdom period and the "nations" would seem to have reference to the individual separation between the sheep and goats prior to the establishment of the millennial kingdom. Yet, there are other indications in Scripture that not all who enter the millennial period will be believers. Christ will rule with a rod of iron. Interpretation of the Matt 25 passage is difficult. See Buswell's cosmic view (Systematic Theology, Vol. 2, p. 417,418).

Verse 10.

A reversal of the well known verse Isaiah 2:4.