

Week 18 | Joel 3:7-13 “God, The Righteous Judge of The Nations”

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In recent weeks, we encountered the God who does relent from doing harm (**Joel 2:13**), that hears the cry of His people (**Joel 2:15-17**) and works to pour out water and transformation not only upon the land (**Joel 2:18-27**) but also upon all flesh (**Joel 2:29-32**).
- B. And last week, Samuel Whitefield shared with us that God is going to judge the ungodly nations, in large part, based on how they have treated His people, Israel (**Joel 3:1-6; Matthew 24-25**). It was in those verses that we experienced not just the God of vindication, but the God who rightly judges all things.
- C. Today, we are going to spend time looking at Jesus in His judgements as He gathers all nations before Himself for a fixed fight that will end this age, and transition the earth into the age to come, the eternal age. Jesus is going to lead all the nations into a valley, under a strong delusion poured out through Satan himself, and it's there, that He will be seated high above all things, as He executes judgment.
- D. *“There’s a story told of a young man who went to hear George Whitefield (1714-1770) preach. After the young man fell ill, his father was attending to him as he lay dying. The young man told his father that he wasn’t afraid to die. When his father asked why not, the young man replied, I want to go to Mr. Whitefield’s big God.”* -Joel Beeke
- E. *“Only when preaching rightly extols God, and gives folks a vision for the grandeur, beauty, and majesty of God, is the human heart put in its rightful place; below God and over lesser creation. Without a Biblical vision of God and man, we think too little of God and too much of man.”* -Joel Beeke
- F. Jesus is much like a multifaceted diamond, and the Holy Spirit’s work among the nations, and Jesus followers, is to exalt Jesus in such a way, that the diamond is regularly spun, showing and declaring His many, not singular facets. If we were not careful, we can end up loving parts of Jesus to the neglect of His entirety. Today, we are going to encounter a lesser known facet of Jesus; Jesus the Righteous Judge!

II. THE GOD WHO FEELS AND ACTS (JOEL 3:7-8)

- 1. **Joel 3:7-8** *“Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them and will return your retaliation upon your own head. I will sell your sons and daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord has spoken.”*
- B. Here, God is leading the charge as He rouses all nations (**Joel 3:2, 9,11,12**) to give an account for what they have done to His people (**Joel 3:2**). God is here pictured as a jealous Father, serving up to the nations, what they have given to Him. Because they have sold His people, He will now sell their people into the hand of Judah.
- C. The actions of the nations will ricochet back upon them, with much swifter speeds, led by God Himself and the reason is because people, matter more than things. In the previous verses God dealt with the restoration of the land, which He cares about, but how much more so, does God care about the people, the people they’ve mistreated?

- D. Jesus' zeal is going to be stirred up at the end of this age in unique and unusual ways, as He once and for all expresses how He feels about the mistreatment of His global family, both Jew and Gentile (**Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 9:1-9; Revelation 6:9-11**).
1. **Isaiah 42:13** "The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up his zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against his enemies."
 2. **Psalms 45:3** "Gird your sword upon Your thigh, O mighty one, with Your glory and Your Majesty. And in Your Majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness..."

III. JESUS THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE (JOEL 3:9-13)

1. **Joel 3:9-13** "Proclaim this among the nations; prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord."
- B. It's not clear who these proclaimers are, either angelic, or earthly, but what is clear, is that they are speaking out on behalf of God Almighty, who is summing all nations to come before Him. God is provoking the nations to come to the Great Battle, the final battle in this age.
- C. God, in effect, says, *"I accept your challenge and call you to rally your best, brightest and strongest. Tell your soldiers to re-enlist, even the weak ones, and come, gather before Me for the Great Battle."*
- D. This is a false invitation, because the assumption for the ungodly nations, and a sea of humanity behind them, is that they can actually win in this fight against God. They are being called to a battle that doesn't exist. God's gathering them under the guise of a fight, but He's simply going to sit among, and execute a judgment. There's no doubt about the outcome. The fight is futile;
1. **Psalms 2:1-5, 10-12** "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath and distress them in His deep displeasure; yet I have set My King, on My holy hill of Zion (Jerusalem)...Now, therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little..."
- E. The first call was to awaken the mighty men, or the heroes of the country, "...wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up..." But the second call, which is among the most misquoted Bible verses, is a call for rank and file of the nation to also take up arms against the Lord, "...Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord."
- F. The idea of the weak here, speaks of the prostrate, or the disabled among them. It's literally a call for anyone and everyone, even those who were initially turned away/rejected from serving in their nation's military. It could also read like, *"let the gentle person, become a fighter."*
1. **Joel 3:12-13** "Let the nations be wakened and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great."

- G. Just as Joel mentions several times in this chapter about all the kings, all the nations, so also does the Revelation concur with God’s plan to gather all nations to this valley (**Revelation 13:3-4, 8, 12, 14, 16**).
- H. Joel seems to be speaking about the valley of Megiddo, or what we refer to as the Armageddon Campaign, which is primarily a staging ground for the nations, prior to this battle;
1. **Revelation 16:12-16** *“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the Great River Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the Kings from the East might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false Prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the Kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty...And they gathered them (the nations) together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”*
- I. For the first time in human history, the nations of the earth will be gathered together in one geographic place, under a strong delusion, poured out through Satan himself, as they’ve taken the mark of the beast, pledged their allegiance to the antichrist and his false prophet, believing they can fight against God, and His Christ;
1. **2nd Thessalonians 2:9-12** *“The coming of the lawless one (the antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perished, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”*
- J. The ESV reads, *“Let the nations stir themselves up”* and I think this is a better reading. It’s literally going to take a demonically fueled lie, poured out through strong deception to convince the nations that they can fight against God the Father, and His Chosen Son! This is the insidious nature of sin, and darkness, how it blinds us to the truth.
- K. Well it’s clear, at the end of this age, the Church will be fully mature, going beyond what happened in **Acts 2**, as it will now include a remnant from every tribe, tongue, nation and people. But what will also be true, is that sin will equally become fully ripe alongside this globally, unified and mature Church (**Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43**).
- L. Joel and the Apostle John mention the intercession of angels, who cry out, *“put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.”* Joel gives us some information, but John gives us even more, letting us know that there will be two harvests at the end of this age, one of righteousness and truth, and one of unrighteousness and deception;
1. **Revelation 14:14-16; 17-19**
- M. The vine is ripe, and ready for sentence. His sickle is thrust into the vine and it’s reaped. The patience of God is present during the ripening process, hoping for repentance, but the longer He allows sin to continue, the stronger and more separated from Him it becomes. And when His patience is exhausted, He will answer speedily, and swiftly.
- N. The idea is that though His judgments on sin have been delayed, it’s not been discontinued. Delayed judgment isn’t the absence of judgment. The results of man’s sin will surely appear (**2nd Peter 2:3; Galatians 6:6-10; Revelation 1:15-16; 2:19-20**). The harvest at the end of this age, will make clear what every person has sown.
1. Are you sowing to the Spirit, or sowing to the flesh?

- O. The wine vats will overflow as Jesus tramples wickedness, not in a back corner, or in a hidden obscure location, but publicly, on a global stage. He uses the graphic metaphor of treading upon grapes to portray the blood of the nations that will flow far and wide! The winepress will overflow in *blood* as God comes to judge the nations (**Isa. 63:1-6; Zech. 14:3-4**).
1. **Revelation 19:11-21**
- P. The blood of Jesus' enemies will be flowing for nearly 200 miles (**Revelation 14:20**; *Today a furlong is about 660 feet, so 1,600 furlongs, is around 200 miles; which is the distance from Megiddo in the north, to Jordan (Edom) in the South*).
1. **Isaiah 63:1-6**
- Q. In Jesus' day they were looking for the **Isaiah 63** Conquering King, but instead got the **Isaiah 53** Suffering Servant of Calvary. But in our day, the Church seems to looking for the **Isaiah 53** Suffering Servant, but we will be receiving the **Isaiah 63** Conquering King.
- R. Beloved, have you spun the diamond, have you inquired about the less known facets of Jesus?

IV. WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

- A. Joel Beeke, in his book *Reformed Preaching*, rightly says that, "*often times attributes like this, looking at Jesus as the Judge is painful, because it exposes our lack of understanding, our emptiness and corruption, so to some degree, it's preferable to stay away from it, and swim in waters that are known.*" This is true, but if we are going to love Jesus, we have to love Him in His entirety.
- B. I think there's 3 primary things that should happen in light of seeing Jesus the Judge;
1. We need to grow in our love for Jesus as a Righteous judge;
 - a. **Psalm 19:9; 89:14; Revelation 16:3-7; 19:1-6**
 2. We need to become a deception free people;
 - a. **Psalm 119:11; 2nd Thessalonians 2:10-12**
 3. Comfort My people;
 - a. How? By telling them of My grandeur, My beauty, My majesty; **Isaiah 40:1,15, 28**
- C. If we cultivate a vision for Jesus as a righteous Judge today, tomorrow we will see that when nations prosper with what looks like freedom, we will know its actually bondage. What seems like prosperity, is actually poverty. And when it seems like the nations are getting away with sin, we will know that they are actually being stacked up like cordwood, for the Day of God's fire (**Malachi 4:1**).