



JOEL CHAPTER 3

Valley of Judgment

INTRODUCTION JOEL 3 (4 IN THE JEWISH BIBLES) THE VALLEY OF JUDGMENT

- **Trei Asar** - In this chapter, the prophet describes how the enemies of Israel will amass to attack Jerusalem, in the end of days, and will be annihilated. This is part of the wars of Gog and Magog, which are also foretold by the prophets Ezekiel (Chs. 32,38,39 and Zechariah ch 14)



THE PAST

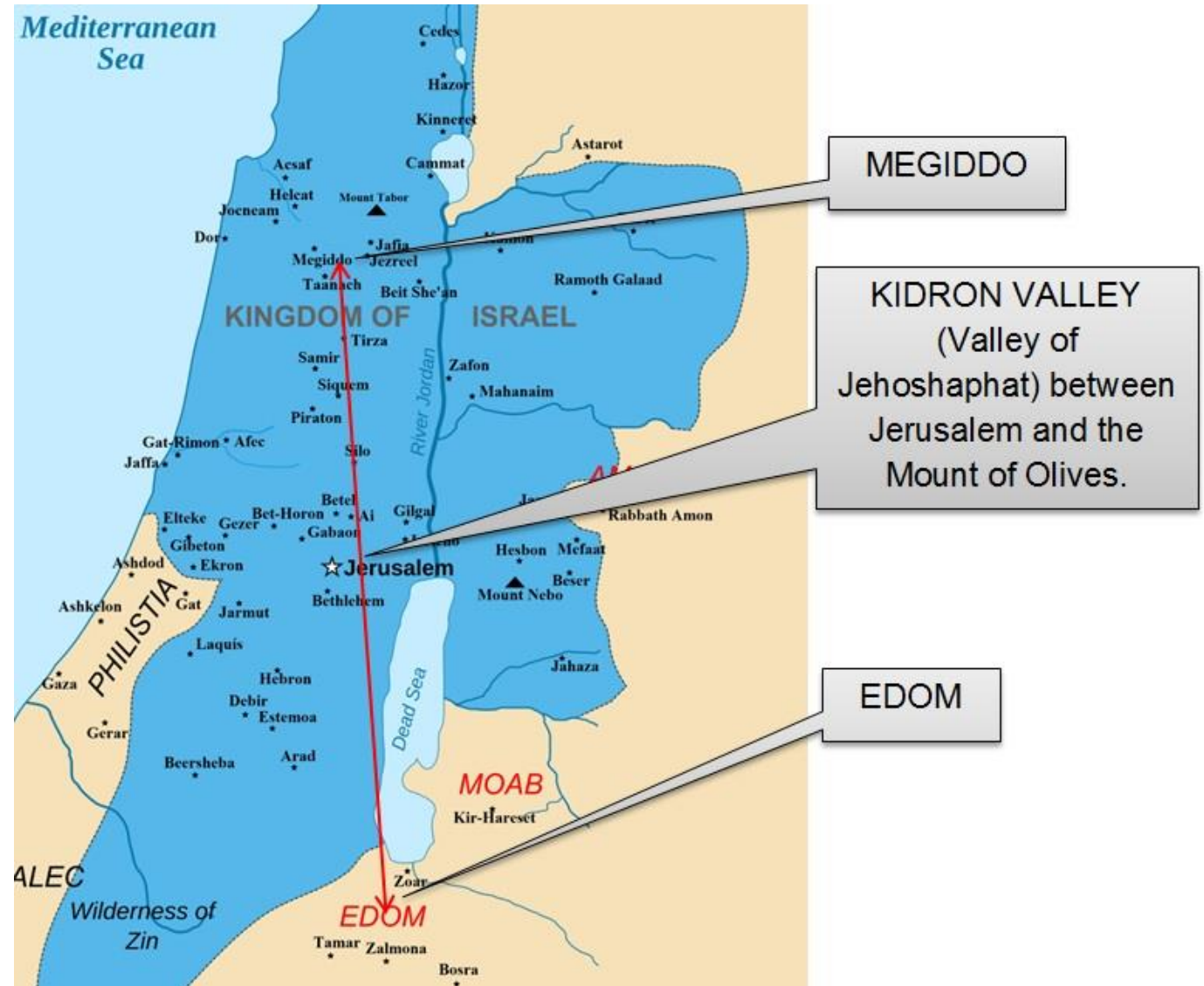
- TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT
- TO UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE
- Prophecies for The Era of Muslim Terror – A Torah Perspective on World Events. Rabbi Menachem Kohen – pg 12-13

IN THOSE DAYS

- **Joe 3:1** "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,
- **1:** Cf. Jer. 33:15; 50:4, 20. As is typical, the time period when this will transpire is not specified
- **Trei Asar** (That which is described in the following verses) will take place in the times of the Messiah, when I will redeem the captives of the Jewish nation and allow them to live in peace forever after (Radak)
- Although all of the twelve tribes of Israel will be redeemed in that time, the prophets singles out that of Judah, the tribe of the Messiah, and Jerusalem, which will be the site of the restored monarchy of Israel as well as of the battles described in vs. 2. (Radak) Alternatively, Since all of his other prophecies concern Judah and Jerusalem the prophet specifies them even when discussing that which applies to the entire Jewish nation (Abarbanel, Metzudas David)
- Berlin, A., Brettler, M. Z., & Fishbane, M. (Eds.). (2004). *The Jewish Study Bible* (p. 1173). New York: Oxford University Press.

I WILL GATHER ALL THE NATIONS

- **Joe 3:2** I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.



- **Note:** The teachings of Muhammad and Islam are integrated in Iran in the political as well as the spiritual arenas. □ In February 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini ejected the Shah from Iran, and assumed political and religious leadership. □ Khomeini demanded that Iran become a radical Islamic state. □ This revolutionary change is not a surprise to God. Prophets have foretold that even though nations rise, God will protect His people and complete His plan of blessing. □ Islam has boasted that they have taken land from the Jews, but God said He is bringing His people home (Ezekiel 36:1-28). □ God's picture of the nation of Israel coming back together and becoming strong again as His people is found in the vision of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

VALLEY OF JUDGMENT

- **Jewish Study Bible 2:** Cf. Isa. 66:18; Zech. 14:2. Here and in v. 12 there is wordplay on the name of the valley, based on whether the meaning of the Heb word is “contend” or “judge”.
- **ESV Study Bible 3:2 all the nations.** That is, all oppressors of God’s people (cf. Ps. 110:6; Isa. 66:18; Jer. 25:31; Ezek. 39:21; Mic. 4:11–12; Zeph. 3:8). **Valley of Jehoshaphat** (“Yahweh has judged”) refers to a place of final judgment rather than a known geographical location. **Scattered** refers to deportation associated with exile.

- Berlin, A., Brettler, M. Z., & Fishbane, M. (Eds.). (2004). [The Jewish Study Bible](#) (p. 1173). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 1652). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

TRIE ASAR COMMENTARY

- **Trei Asar** – I shall bring all of these nations together to a valley in Jerusalem (Radak) where they will stand for judgment (Targam; Rashi).
- Ibn Ezra (in accordance with the view of R'Moshe HaKohen cited above) explains this to refer to the Valley of Beracha, where the armies of Jehoshafat battled the combined might of Ammon, Moab, and Seir. (The Almighty commanded the Jewish army to refrain from battle, and He incited the attacking armies against each other, thereby causing their decimation (11 Chronicles 20)
- Particularly, I shall exact retribution from the nation of Rome, who, under the leadership of Titus, conquered the Land of Israel and scattered its inhabitants among the nations. (Radak)

TRIE ASAR COMMENTARY

- **Trei Asar** Some commentators interpret the war of Gog and Magog to refer to a war which will be fought between the armies of Edom – the Christian nations- and Yishmael – the Arab peoples. The Almighty will incite them to meet in battle in the vicinity of Jerusalem, where they wil both be decimated in punishment for their persecutions of the Jewish people (Abarbanel, Malbin)
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- **See Prophecies for the era of Muslim Terror by Rabbi Menachem Kohen pg. 160-165**

TREI ASAR COMMENTARY

- **Joe 3:3** "They have also cast lots for My people, Traded a boy for a harlot And sold a girl for wine that they may drink."
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- **Trei Asar** – The drew lots concerning the captives they took from My people to decide who would receive whom as a slave (Radak) The degradation of the Jewish prisoners was so great that a Jewish boy would serve merely as payment for the services of a prostitute, and a girl was offered in exchange for a cask of wine (Malbim)

TREI ASAR COMMENTARY

- **Joe 3:4** "Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head.
- **ESV Study Bible 3:4 Tyre** and **Sidon** were Phoenician cities along the Mediterranean coast. Relations between Israel and Phoenicia were occasionally good (cf. 1 Kings 5:1), but sometimes Phoenicia was a polluting influence (1 Kings 16:31). **Philistia**, on the other hand, was a longtime enemy of Israel (Jer. 47:4). **I will return your payment**. Restoration for God's people becomes God's recompense against the nations. Cf. "restore" in Joel 3:1—the same Hebrew verb as "return" in v. 4.
- Crossway Bibles. (2008). [*The ESV Study Bible*](#) (p. 1652). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

TREI ASAR COMMENTARY

- **Joe 3:5** "Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples,
- **Joe 3:6** and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory,
- **Joe 3:7** behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head.
- **3:6 sold ... to the Greeks.** The Hebrew, *hayyewanim* ("Javan"; see Gen. 10:2; 1 Chron. 1:7; Isa. 66:19), refers to Greek-speakers on both sides of the Aegean Sea. Both the Philistines and the Phoenicians are accused of selling slaves to the Edomites (Amos 1:6–9). Slave trade between Tyre and Javan is mentioned in Ezek. 27:13.

TREI ASAR COMMENTARY

- **Joe 3:8** "Also I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a distant nation," for the LORD has spoken.
- **Joe 3:9** Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up!
- **Trei Asar** – Vs. 9 The prophet now returns to the topic of the great gathering of armies which will take place in the Valley of Judgement (Jehoshafat) (Malbam)

PREPARE FOR WAR

- **Trei Asar** – Vs. 9 The prophet now returns to the topic of the great gathering of armies which will take place in the Valley of Judgement (Jehoshafat) (Malbam)
- **Jewish Study Bible 8:** The nations are punished measure for measure, a typical prophetic punishment. **10:** A reversal of the well-known image of Isa. 2:4 and Mic. 4:3.
- **ESV Study Bible 3:9 Consecrate.** (Cf. 1:14; 2:15.) Warriors were to seek the will of their deity prior to military engagement (e.g., Judg. 20:19–28). Some commentators view this as an ironic statement: the **nations** are told to consecrate themselves for **war**, unaware that the Lord of heaven and earth is their adversary (Isa. 8:9–10; Jer. 46:9–10).
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- Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 1652). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

- **Trei Asar** – (all of you hostile nations) gather together for battle and let us see whether you are capable of waging war against Me (Rashi). Unlike a mortal monarch, who seeks to limit the size of his opposing forces, the Almighty urges them to gather in force so that He can punish them together for their sins.



PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS

- **Joe 3:10** **Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."**
- **Jewish Study Bible 10:** A reversal of the well-known image of Isa. 2:4 and Mic. 4:3.
- **ESV Study Bible 3:10** **Beat your plowshares into swords.** This is the reverse of Isa. 2:4 and Mic. 4:3. The warfare preparation is so comprehensive that implements of agriculture must be transformed into weapons of warfare. **the weak.** The great need for soldiers means that even those unfit for battle must become warriors.
- **Trei Asar** – So great will be the scope of this battle that you will need to change your farming tools into weapons in order to supply for the needs of this great army (Radak, Abarbanel). However, once this battle is over the process will be reversed, as foretold by Isaiah 2:4.

- Berlin, A., Brettler, M. Z., & Fishbane, M. (Eds.). (2004). *The Jewish Study Bible* (p. 1173). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 1652). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.



NATIONS GATHERED

- **Joe 3:11** Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, And gather yourselves there. Bring down, O LORD, Your mighty ones.
- **Tri Asar** – Even those who are seemingly unable to come to the Valley of Judgment will be brought there by Divine decree.

TRIE ASAR COMMENTARY


- **Joe 3:12** Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.
- **Trei Asar** – All of the nations shall be aroused to come to the Valley of Judgment where this great battle shall take place, and there will be judged for their persecutions of the Jewish people (Metzudos David)

TRIE ASAR COMMENTARY

- Alshich cites the words of the Sages (Avodah Zarah 2b) that in the end of days when the Almighty will judge the nations for their actions against the Jewish people, He will first deal with Rome, then with Persia and finally with the others. Although the Persians will see that the Romans are judged harshly, they will nevertheless ascend to be judged and to argue their case, for the fact that they rebuilt the Temple, whereas the Romans destroyed it, will lead them to believe that they will be vindicated in judgement. Even after they too are sentenced, the other nations will present their case for the first two conquered and subjugated the Jewish nation where as the others did not. This is allotted to by the seemingly contradictory phrase “Shall go up” to the Valley of Judgment. They will present their case with the assumption that their judgment will be in their favor and will thus be an ascension for them. In reality, however, they will be descending into an abyss for the Almighty will find all guilty of persecuting the Jewish people.

- Note: **God gave Daniel a night vision of four animals representing four empires.**
- The lion with eagle wings—**Babylon** (Daniel 7:4). – The Babylonian Empire.
- The bear—**Persia** (Daniel 7:5).– The Persian Empire.
- The leopard—**Greece** (Daniel 7:6).– The Grecian Empire.
- The beast with iron teeth—**Rome** (Daniel 7:7). – The Roman Empire.



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- **Joe 3:13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.**
 - **Trei Asar** – The Almighty has a plan for history which includes a final date for His vengeance against His enemies and the redemption of His nations. Vs. 13 depicts that time as the harvesting of ripe grain and the collection of pressed wine, symbolizing that the nations will be ripe for punishment at that time due to the magnitude of their crimes (Abarbanel)
 - **Put in the sickle** – Stretch out your swords, those who go on My mission to destroy the enemies of the Almighty.

THE VALLEY OF DECISION

- **Joe 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.**
- **Trie Asar** – Many groups of people will gather in the Valley of Judgement, where their final judgment will be decided and carried out.
- **ESV Study Bible 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes** is a picture of all the people of the world standing before the Lord for judgment. **valley of decision.** This is the Valley of Jehoshaphat (vv. 2, 12), where the Lord will be the judge. Only the Lord makes decisions in this valley, and his decree is absolute. **the day of the LORD is near.** While the day was near for Israel (1:15; 2:1), the Lord's covenant love and the people's repentance halted his judgment.
- Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 1653). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

- **Joe 3:15** The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness.
- **Joe 3:16** The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.
- **Joe 3:17** Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will pass through it no more.
- **Joe 3:18** And in that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Shittim.
- **Joe 3:19** Egypt will become a waste, And Edom will become a desolate wilderness, Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, In whose land they have shed innocent blood.

- **ESV Study Bible 3:15** The light is darkened at the second coming as part of God's judgment (Matt. 24:29–31; Rev. 6:12; see Rev. 8:12). The darkening at the crucifixion also indicates judgment (Matt. 27:45).
- **3:16 roars ... utters his voice.** Cf. Amos 1:2. God thunders as he engages the battle (Jer. 25:30–31; Joel 2:11 and note). **refuge.** Cf. Ps. 73:28; 91:2, 9. **stronghold.** Cf. Ps. 27:1; 37:39; Isa. 25:4. Amid the cosmic and military confusion, the **people** of God are held secure and spared destruction.

RESTORATION

- **3:19** The restoration of God's people (v. 18) is contrasted with the judgment upon the nations (2:19–20; 3:1–3). **Egypt** and **Edom** were ancient adversaries representing all of those opposed to the people of God (cf. 1 Kings 14:25–26; 2 Kings 23:29–34; Isa. 34:5–17; Obad. 1–21).
 - **Desolation** was prophesied against Egypt (Ezek. 29:10, 12; 32:15) and Edom (Ezek. 35:3, 4, 7, 9, 14, 15). **shed**. The nations “poured out” (Hb. *shapak*) **blood** but the Lord will “pour out” (Hb. *shapak*) his Spirit (Joel 2:28–29).
- Crossway Bibles. (2008). [*The ESV Study Bible*](#) (pp. 1653–1654). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

RESTORATION

- **Joe 3:20** But Judah will be inhabited forever And Jerusalem for all generations.
- **Joe 3:21** And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the LORD dwells in Zion.
- **Jewish Study Bible 21:** The first section of this v. may be understood as (a) “I will avenge their blood, yet unavenged,” (b) “I will avenge their blood, and I will not clear the guilty,” or (c) “though I cleanse their blood(shed), I will not cleanse.” The final words of the book are a fitting conclusion given the centrality of Zion, which is mentioned seven times in this short book.
- Berlin, A., Brettler, M. Z., & Fishbane, M. (Eds.). (2004). [*The Jewish Study Bible*](#) (p. 1174). New York: Oxford University Press.