

9th Sunday after Pentecost

August 2, 2020

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“In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, 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. ‘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. 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!’ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. 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.” (Joel 3:1-3; 12-16-NIV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, grant me the spirit to think and do what is right in Your sight, that I, who cannot do anything that is good without You, may by Your power be enabled to live according to Your will; through Your Son Jesus Christ my Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. AMEN

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Order of Worship – The Common Service Without L.S. – pg. 15

- Invocation (Liturgy pg. 15)

Opening Hymn **C.W. 230 / TLH 3**

- Confession of Sins

- Absolution

- Prayer and Praise (pg. 16)

- Prayer of The Day (pg. 17)

First Lesson – Joel 3:1-3; 12-16 The Valley of Decision

PSALM OF THE DAY Psalm 18 (Liturgy pg. 69; Sung by Monica McInnis)

Second Lesson – Romans 8:26-27 The H.S. Intercedes for us.

Gospel Lesson – Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 Parable of the Weeds

The Apostle’s Creed – (Pg. 19)

Sermon Hymn: **C.W. 208 / TLH 604**

Sermon Text: Joel 3:1-3; 12-16

Sermon Theme: The Valley of Jehoshaphat.

"Create in Me" – (pg. 20)

Offering

Offering Prayer

Prayer of The Church

Lord’s Prayer (Traditional Version)

Hymn **C.W. 256 / TLH 636**

Collect / Prayer (pg. 25)

Benediction

Hymn **C.W. 268 vs. 1 / TLH 146**

As You Leave The Church Building You are Entering the Mission Field.

SERMON TEXT: Joel 3:1-3; 12-16

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

Vs. 2 – I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.

Vs. 3 – They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.

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.

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!

Vs. 14 – Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the Valley of Decision.

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

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.

GREETING: Jesus says: “Behold, I AM coming soon! My Reward is with ME, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.” (Rev. 22:12)

We are living in the Last Days!

This is something that someone said to me after seeing all the things that are happening and reported on the News broadcasts.

As believers in Christ and students of the Word of our Lord as given the Holy Scriptures – The Bible – we know this. We know this because the Lord Jesus has told us.

In the Gospel of Matthew 24:25, While the Lord Jesus was instructing His disciples and us concerning the Signs of the End Times, Jesus clearly tells His disciples and He tells us, “See, I have told you ahead of time.” (Matt. 24:25)

And so as we see and hear on News reports, we see that things in the world definitely line up with the signs of the end times which our Lord Jesus gave while He was carrying out His earthly work of Salvation for us.

As a reminder of what the Lord Jesus taught during His earthly ministry allow me to read (Matthew 24:1-35; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-36) some of the signs of the End Times and the Last Judgment as listed by Jesus include:

- Watch out that no one deceives you. – You will hear of wars and rumors of wars – nation will rise against nation & kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines & earthquakes. - Believers will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and believers will be hated by all nations because of Jesus. Many will turn away from the faith and betray and hate each other. The love of most will grow cold - and The Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to ALL nations, and then the end will come. There will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again. If those days

had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ... See, I have told you ahead of time.”

As believers in Christ, all we can do is nod our heads in agreement and say: **Yes Lord - that is so true.**

We of course do not know the day or the hour of Judgment Day (Matthew 24:36) when the Lord Jesus will come to take us and all believers to our heavenly home, but we do know He is coming, and so as Jesus said: “Watch out, that no one deceives you.”

Today as we look at these words of our Lord recorded by the prophet Joel, we see that the Lord is warning His people of the upcoming calamity of the Locust Plague (Joel 1:1ff), as well as the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32), the Lord then gives a picture Judgment Day when all the nations, all people will be judged, and God’s people will be pardoned (Joel 3:21).

Even though Joel has intertwined in his message, the Last Judgment, Martin Luther (1483-1546) pointed out: “Joel was a kindly and gentle man. He does not denounce, and rebuke as do the other prophets, but pleads and laments; he tried with kind and friendly words to make the people righteous and to protect them from harm and misfortune. But it happened to him as to the other prophets: the people did not believe his words and held him to be a fool.”

Have you ever tried to talk to someone about the Salvation which Jesus won for us and the reality of death, heaven and hell, and the Last Judgment, and that individual or individuals you were speaking with labeled you a fool?

Joel was called by the Lord. (Joel = Jehovah is God)

Joel 1:1 – “The Word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel”

Based upon **verse Joel 2:32-3:1** – we know that Joel was called by The Lord to proclaim the Word of the Lord to the people of Jerusalem and the area of Judah.

Yet even as Joel uses the specific names of – Judah – Jerusalem – and Mt. Zion, we also know that these Words of God through the prophet Joel are all encompassing of ALL believers of All Time, since through faith in Christ we are children of Abraham, and part of “All Israel” That is All Believers.

We do not know the exact date when Joel lived. There is no clear indication as to the time of the writing or the occurrence of the mentioned events. Other Biblical Scholars guess that perhaps Joel lived between 900 B.C. – 400 B.C.

This section for today the Lord through Joel focuses upon the judgment of the nations. Nations that had abused the people of Israel and used the boys and girls of Israel as money.
Vs. 2 – **I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.**
Vs. 3 – **They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine that they might drink.**

The picture language that Joel uses for the Judgment of God against these other nations the fact that The Lord will gather the other nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

In order to get a clear picture of the judgment that the Lord brings upon the enemies of Israel and the deliverance that the Lord brings for His people it important to know about Jehoshaphat, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat / The Valley of Decision.

To learn about this account, we turn to **II Chronicles 20:1-30**.

Jehoshaphat is one of the Kings of Judah who reigned from 872 B.C – 848 B.C. (I Kings 22:41-42)

It happened that during the reign of Jehoshaphat, that three nations joined together to make war against Judah. Those three nations were the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Meunites (A tribe related to the Ammonites).

As these three nations came to do battle against the army of Judah under leadership of Jehoshaphat, we are not told how large the enemy force is other than it is described as a VAST army. (II Chronicles 20:12)

But Jehoshaphat went to the Lord in prayer and ended that prayer with these words: **II Chronicles 20:11b** – “For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon YOU.”

To this prayer of Jehoshaphat, the Lord said:

II Chronicles 20:15ff – “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow march down against them. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah, and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow and the Lord will be with you.”

And so, the army of Judah marched out to do battle.

We are told that the size of the army of Judah numbers 1,160,000 men. (II Chronicles 17:14-19)

This gives us some insight into the size of the VAST army of the Moabites – Ammonites and Meunites.

Since Judah had such a large army, yet Jehoshaphat was terrified. One cannot even imagine the size of the enemy force.

As the army of Judah was marching out to do battle what did the Lord do?

II Chronicles 20:22ff – The Lord set ambushes for the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites. The armies of Moab and Ammon and the Meunites turned on each other.

When the army of Judah came to the place that overlooked where the enemy army was encamped what did they see? “They only saw dead bodies lying on the ground.” (II Chronicles 20:24)

Even though the Scriptures do not tell us how VAST the enemy army was, we get some idea when we are told that it took the army of Judah, which numbered 1,160,000 men, that it took them three days to collect the plunder. (II Chronicles 17:14-19)

God delivered His people and brought judgment upon their enemies.

Have you ever felt overwhelmed by a VAST army? That is something occurred or is occurring in your life and you feel so terrified?

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do not abandon the Lord.

However, keep in mind that sometimes the Lord does not always deliver us from our earthly troubles.

Sometimes he lets us suffer and even die.

But we know that we have heaven because God is our Refuge and strength, an ever-present help in Trouble.

We know that God will cause all things to be for our benefit and our eternal blessing and all those VAST armies that stand before us in this life, will face God on the Last Day.

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.

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!

Vs. 14 – Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the Valley of Decision.

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

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.

The Lord who rescued the army of Jehoshaphat is the same Lord who has defeated a greater and more VAST enemy than that of the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Meunites.

The Lord has defeated death and Satan, and HE won that victory for us in Christ Jesus on the Cross of Calvary.

The Lord, in Christ Jesus made full payment for sin, by the innocent suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ Who demonstrated His victory of sin – death and the devil when He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.

The VAST Army has been destroyed.

ALL is Well, the Lord Jesus is in His Heavens.

And the Lord Jesus will come again with all His holy ones on the Last Day to take you and I,
and all believers to our heavenly home. AMEN.

THEME: The Valley of Decision – God’s Decision of Righteous Judgment Upon ALL The Earth!

02742. Uwrx charuwts, khaw-roots'

or charuts {khaw-roots'}; properly, incised or (active) incisive; hence (as noun masculine or feminine) a trench (as dug), gold (as mined), a **threshing-sledge** (having sharp teeth); (figuratively) determination; also eager:--**decision**, diligent, (fine) gold, pointed things, sharp, threshing instrument, wall.