



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Joel 3:1-14

“The Gentiles’ Surprise in the Valley of Jehoshaphat”

TRANSCRIPTION

[Prayer] Father, we turn again to Thee with thanksgiving and praise for Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. We thank Thee for the Scriptures of the Old Testament which speak of him. And we thank Thee for the clarity of the revelation. We thank Thee too for the privilege of reading them in the light of the fulfillment in the New Testament. And again, Lord, we pray as we turn to the prophecy of Joel that the Holy Spirit may teach us things that are significant for us in the year in which we are living. And we pray, Lord, that the things that we learn may be helpful and profitable to us in our daily Christian life. Help us to remember some of the great principles that emerge from the section that we look at tonight. Give direction and guidance to each one of us. And we pray also, Lord, for the ministry of the word and the meetings that follow in the Believers Bible Institute. And these things we ask in Jesus’ name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we’re turning to Joel chapter 3 and looking at verses 1 through 12; a section which, for the sake of a title, I have called “The Gentiles’ Surprise in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.” There are some important biblical and theological lessons that are found in this section. One of the things that very quickly will emerge as you read through these verses is the emphasis upon the unique covenantal status of the nation

Israel before the Lord. For example, in Joel chapter 3 and verse two we read, “But 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.” You notice the stress on my people, my inheritance, Israel. In verse 3, “they have also cast lots for my people.”

So there is a stress through here on the relationship of the people of Israel and Judah to the Lord. It suggests to us one of the important things that is found in the Abrahamic Covenant back in Genesis chapter 12 when God first spoke to Abraham and gave him some details concerning the relationship that he would have to him. We read in Genesis chapter 12 and verse 1,

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father’s house to the land which I will show you, and I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great and so you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

Notice the opening statement of verse 3, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.” That, I think, is illustrated here, and that unique covenantal status that Israel had is reflected in the way in which God deals for them in their behalf in this chapter.

A number of years ago I read a little statement in *Encyclopedia Britannica* that says something that bears on this. In the thirteenth volume in one of the earlier editions it says that it is a noteworthy fact of history that great conquerors (Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon) have always treated the Jews well. On the other hand, lesser men endowed with narrower outlooks have failed to recognize the Jew and have sought to crush him. But such methods are contrary to nature and tyranny, whether towards Jew or towards

any other, and have never secured permanent results. The same policy of religious unification has characterized subsequent dynasties from the Assyrians to the Romanovs, and the same fate has overtaken them.

The Jew has survived their disappearance. The unique covenantal status of the nation Israel is reflected here. This past week I’ve been reading some documents having to do with John Hus, the Czech reformer who lived before the days of Luther. He was a follower of John Wycliffe, and if you remember your history, you’ll remember he was burned at the stake outside the little town of Constance in Southern Germany. John Hus was a man who believed in the sovereignty of God and, in fact, was a very strong believer in predestination. He got this doctrine from John Wycliffe, incidentally, and both of them spoke of the church as the universality of the predestinate. In other words, the people who are members of the church are the predestinated, and that’s the way they spoke of them.

So the church is the universality of the predestinate; that is all the predestinated people are members of the church of Jesus Christ, and there are no other members of the church of Jesus Christ except those who are the predestinated. Well, John Hus, as you remember, was persecuted by what he called the Roman Synagogue of Satan. And one of the ones who was responsible for his death, perhaps more than anyone else, was a former very close friend of his, Stepan Palec. And when he was burned at stake in 1415 in Constance, it would have seemed natural to think that John Hus would no longer be remembered, but others would be. But, of course, the way God providentially rules history means that those who belong to him and who have been, by the grace of God, given the privilege of being the kind of martyr for the Lord that Hus was, they’re the ones who are remembered, and the others who are responsible for their death are forgotten. No one knows anything about Stepan Palec, though he was a very well known member of the professing church at that time. Hus, incidentally, called him a slebnik, which means in Czech (so I understand; that’s not one of the languages that I’m fluent in)

[Laughter] a pointer dog who is always anxious to catch his prey, and so he called him that. But everybody remembers John Hus, but very few remember Stepan Palec. It is a principle of the word of God that those who curse the saints of God will be cursed; those who bless them will be blessed. It pertains not only to Israel, but it pertains to all of those who are the saved.

There’s another lesson that appears here in these verses which we’ll read in just a moment, and that is the relevance of recent Jewish history to biblical eschatology.

Now let me read the first three verses in which we have the arraignment of the Gentiles and I want to call your attention to just a word or two before we look at it in more detail.

“For behold, in those days and at that time when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, 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. They have also cast lots for my people, traded a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine that they may drink.” (Or, “and they drank”)

Now notice the reference in verse 2 to, “and they have divided up my land.” Now if, as seems likely, chapter 3 of the Book of Joel is a chapter that has to do primarily with the future, for in the immediate context it is related to the day of the Lord. Notice verse 31 of chapter 2, “the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.” And then chapter 3 begins, “For behold, in those days and at that time.”

So it would seem that the 3rd chapter is set in the context of the future and the statement is made here that “they have divided up my land.” That’s one of the things that was very prominent in the original establishment of the nation Israel and the land of

Palestine in 1948. If you have followed the history of Israel you may remember that in 1947 the United Nations formed a special committee called the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. And after doing a great deal of study and giving a great deal of time to the Palestinian question, they returned with a plan. And according to this plan, they would divide Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state, and a small, internationally administered zone, which included Jerusalem. Characteristic of that plan was that the nation Israel, Palestine, would be divided up. It was specifically stated that way.

The Jewish people who were not yet Israel at that time accepted that plan, but the Arabs did not; they boycotted the committee and the result was that they did not reach any agreement and then the next year, war broke out, and the result has been that Israel now has about fifty percent more territory than she had agreed to originally with this United Nations Committee on Palestine. But notice the expression, “They have divided up my land.” Whether that’s a reference to the last days and that specific act or not, we of course cannot know. But it certainly is in harmony with what we read in the word of God, and we know from other portions of the word that the nation Israel, that is in accordance with the Abrahamic promise, the amount of land that was promised to Israel by God, what we have is their land divided up among a number of nations who now think that that land belongs to them, but it really belongs to the Lord, and Israel is to have it in trust from him, for him.

Well there’s another lesson, I think, that is important here, and it is the justice of God in his dealings with the nations. This is especially prominent in the second section of this passage in which the Lord says twice that he is going to return your recompense on your head. He refers to Tyre and Sidon, and in verse 4 we read at the end of the verse, “Swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head,” and then in verse 7, “Behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them and return your recompense on your head.”

So the law of retaliation, what we have known as the *jus talionis* (and I’ll put that on the overhead projector so you can get the Latin expression), it’s *jus talionis*, or the law of recompense. The *jus talionis* is one of the expressions that is found in the Old Testament, in which “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” is one expression of it in the Book of Exodus. There is, I think, a rather interesting illustration of it in the case of Adonibezek. When Adonibezek was in the land of Palestine (I think he was one of the Perizzites) and the time came for the children of Israel to take the land in the first chapter of the Book of Judges, a brief description at the beginning of that book is given of some of the details that were taking place. And I think probably you’ll remember that after the death of Joshua, the Lord said that the sons of Israel inquired of the Lord saying, “Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?” And the Lord said “Judah shall go up.” And Judah said to Simeon his brother, “You come with me into the territory that’s allotted for me and fight with me and then I will fight with you in the territory that’s allotted for you.” And so Judah went up and the Lord gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into his hands. And then there are just a few verses about a king by the name of Adonibezek. Adonibezek had fought against them but the result was that he was defeated. He fled, they pursued him, they caught him, and they cut off his thumbs and his toes. And then he is reported to have said something like this, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to gather up scraps under my tables.” In other words, he had done that to seventy other kings. Well then he adds, “As I have done, so God has repaid me.” A beautiful illustration of the *jus talionis*.

So the lesson, young people, is don’t cut off anybody’s big toes or thumbs; [Laughter] you might get yours cut off someday. Now this principle of recompense or retaliation is found throughout this passage.

And one final lesson I think that we’ll see as we go through it is the sovereignty of God in the exercise of his justice. We have a very beautiful illustration of that right at the

end of the chapter, and we’ll save it for that time. We learn that God ultimately is the only deliverer of humanity.

Now let’s look at this section for just a moment. We’re going to look at verses 1 through 12 and I want you to notice first, that this passage is rather carefully written, because we have, right at the beginning, a reference to the restoration of the fortunes of Judah and the fact that God is going to enter into judgment with the nations. Notice right at the beginning of verse 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.”

Now notice verse 12, right at the conclusion. “Let the nations be aroused and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.” So you can see that built into this section, as a kind of literary device binding it together, is a reference to judgment right at the beginning, and then a reference to the judgment of the nations right at the end. So it’s a beautifully constructed paragraph. In addition, there are one or two other words that are repeated too, but we need not look at them.

The first three verses give us the arraignment of the Gentiles. The day of the Lord is in the immediate context and so we think that this probably is a reference to the future. Remember in the preceding chapters, Judah had been punished by a locust invasion. We have said that it was probably a local locust invasion. But it probably was typical of the future and the judgment of the great day of the Lord. And in the course of the judgment, Joel had said the reason for this judgment is the disobedience of Judah. And finally he had called upon them in the words of the Lord to repent and to have also a festival day in which they were to weep between the porch and the altar, and to cry out to God to spare them because of their disobedience. Then in our last study, we saw that it seems that from chapter 2, verse 18, that there had been repentance on the part of the people, and as a result of it God, through Joel, had been speaking of the promises that Israel had in the future.

Now the day of the Lord is then, the context, and so we’re probably to think, then, of Judah as having averted judgment by virtue of their repentance. But the day of the Lord is still coming. The day of the Lord, however, is no longer going to come on Israel and Judah for the disobedience of the nation, but rather, the day of the Lord is now seen to come in judgment upon the nations of the earth.

So there has been a turn, so far as Joel is concerned, because of the repentance of the nation Israel. So then, we look into the future, and we look at the judgment on the nations from the day of the Lord. A gathering of the gentiles is described in verse 1 and the first part of verse 2. As a result of Judah’s disobedience, the nations had been saying as a kind of byword, “Where is their God?” And so Israel had been suffering, Judah had been suffering; smirks were on the faces of the enemies of the Lord. They were looking at the people of God and seeing the terrible trials into which they had fallen, and they were saying, “Where is Jehovah, the God of Israel and the God of Judah?” It’s the same kind of thing that people think when they’re not Christians, when they know a person is a Christian and the Christian falls into trials and difficulties and troubles. One of the natural things for the old nature to say is, “Well, where is their God?” Well we see here that the smirks are going to be wiped off the faces of the gentiles.

“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,” (Or, “When I bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,” the original text says.) “I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.”

He says these nations are the nations among which Judah and Israel have been scattered. Now that’s an interesting thing, because we know from the Old Testament that God had set forth a series of disciplines that were to be meted out upon the nation Israel if they disobeyed. In Leviticus chapter 26 there are about six cycles of discipline that are

set forth. There were some of them that were relatively small and then finally, as the disobedience of the nation becomes deeper and stronger, finally Moses says that God is going to scatter Israel to the four corners of the earth. And they’re going to stay in the four corners of the earth until confess their iniquity. Now he says that when they confess their iniquity, then he will remember the covenant that he made with Abraham, and he will remember the land. Let me just read the verses that express that. In Leviticus chapter 26 and verse 40 through 42;

“If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers in their unfaithfulness which they committed against me and also in their acting with hostility against me, I also was acting with hostility against them to bring them into the land of their enemies. Or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled, so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.”

So we have a picture, then, of God saying that finally, if Israel persisted in their disobedience, he would scatter them to the four corners of the earth. Now that scattering took place in 70 A.D. and they are scattered at the present time. Oh, it is true; some have come back to the land of Palestine; several million, 2, 3 million now. But the great mass of the Jewish people are still scattered to the four corners of the earth, especially New York City [laughter] and Miami. But anyway, they are scattered and they still abide under the judgment of this sixth cycle of discipline.

Now, Moses said if they confess their iniquity. Incidentally, he also says the trespass which they have trespassed, and he uses the singular. Rather strange thing; you might expect him to say if they would confess their sins of their trespasses, but it’s singular because probably, it has reference to the ultimate trespass of Israel in the

rejection of the Messiah when he came. But the prophecies of the Old Testament then say that Israel is to be scattered to the four corners of the earth. Now that’s what we read here. We read, “on behalf of my people and my inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and they have divided up my land.”

So, the gathering of the gentiles then in the Valley of Jehoshaphat is related to the fact that Israel has been scattered to the four corners of the earth. In the second verse when he says, “And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them,” this is, of course, for punishment. The gathering is for punishment and judgment. When he says “The Valley of Jehoshaphat,” he probably does not mean a specific place. Jehoshaphat means “the Lord will judge,” and therefore we are probably to think of some valley near Jerusalem, perhaps the Kidron Valley, one of the other valleys, but it is not specifically stated. Evidently in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Later on, in our next study, we will see that it is called “Verdict Valley” or “The Valley of Decision.” Why, then, does this take place? Well, he says in verse 2, “On behalf of my people and my inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and they have divided up my land. They have also cast lots for my people, traded a boy for a harlot.”

Evidently this is a reference to something local that had happened which Joel knew about. It was obviously a terrible kind of a trade; a young boy as a slave, traded for the services of a harlot. And then he says “And sold a girl for wine that they may drink.” And the picture is of the selling of a girl as a slave, a Hebrew girl for a glass of wine which the person, when he trades the girl for the glass of wine, he drinks the wine right there. And so it’s a kind of picture of the incidental value of the life of a young man and a young woman in the minds of these enemies of the Lord. “And they have divided the land.” One cannot help but think of some of the things that have happened to the nation Israel through the years, and particularly of those things that have happened in our own lifetime. Many of us remember the days of Adolf Hitler and his crimes. Well, this is what we’re reading about. Here is God’s Nuremberg trials. Because he is going to settle issues

as they should be settled, justly. And he’s writing about it right here. You cannot escape the Lord in the exercise of his judgment.

Then in verses 4 through 8, he indicts Tyre and Sidon. And I think this is a local, present illustration of the Lord’s championship of oppressed people. And it’s typical of the future. Let me read verses 4 through 8,

“Moreover, what are you to me, or 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. Since you’ve taken my silver and my gold, brought my precious treasures to your temples, and sold the sons of Jacob and of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory; behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head. 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.”

Joel here gives us a scene in which Yahweh is the plaintiff in a lawsuit, and he’s firing a series of indignant questions at the defendants. And then, as the judge, he announces swift retribution in the end, and the exercise of the *jus talionis*. I think we live so far from some of the expressions of the retribution of God, that it’s very difficult for us to really believe that God is going to exercise his judgment in a just way. We just really have a difficult time in 1978, in really thinking that there is such a thing as a law of retaliation, and God is going to carry it out. When I was in California a few weeks ago for a week, I was reading the *Los Angeles Times*, and was rather amused one day because the International Flat Earth Research Society was also having meetings in Los Angeles at the time, and they had a review with Charles Johnson (who is no family connection, I don’t think), who was the president of the society. And some of the things that Mr.

Johnson said were rather interesting. He, of course, believes that the earth is flat and he said if the earth was really round that there would be humps in our lakes and seas, in fact, he said there would be a hump sixty-six feet high, I believe, in the Salton Sea, gave an illustration there.

He went on to say that the things that we’ve learned about the space age are nothing but hoaxes, and that the oldest continuous member of the Flat Earth Society was Adam. The Society is very old. He says that it’s a biblical thing because we all know that God created the water first, and obviously, the water had to be flat or else it would run off. And he had a number of other interesting points to his theory, and finally he concluded with something like, “Do we not measure altitude by sea level? We even use the term ‘sea level.’” The reporter that closed the article said something like, “Do you really believe all this?” He said, “Yes, I’m on the level.” [Laughter] Well I think that often, we really think that the idea that God executes judgment according to a law of justice and recompense that is absolutely just and righteous, that is as unlikely to happen as is the International Flat Earth Research Society to be right about the flatness of this globe on which we live. But the prophets of the Old Testament have quite a different picture of things.

Now let’s look at the summons of the gentiles to war in the last part of the section. This is a most amazing section, really. I must confess, in re-reading this and thinking through it, I came to a deeper appreciation of just exactly what Joel, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God has written. Because we give a picture here of God speaking through the prophet, and he is calling upon the nations to gather, to get ready for a war, and be sure to muster all of their strength for it. And it’s written in the same kind of language that you might expect a general to write about when he’s calling upon a nation to get ready for some enemies that he knows that the nation is going to have to meet. But the surprise of this call to war is the fact that all of the nations are called to war against God. And they’re called to war against one who is, of course, going to completely destroy

them. Listen to the words; you can almost imagine a general barking out his commands or orders,

“Proclaim this among the nations. Prepare a war. Rouse the mighty men. Let all the soldiers draw near. Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, ‘I am a mighty man.’ Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down, oh Lord, Thy mighty ones.” (And Joel evidently interjects that word of petition from himself.) “Let the nations be aroused and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.”

This section resumes the first three verses and rounds it off. So what we have here is an ironic call by God’s messengers, evidently angels are to be thought of (“Proclaim this among the nations.”), and these messengers are messengers to the nations to proclaim for a holy war. The 9th verse, where we read, “Proclaim this among the nations. Prepare a war.” Those words, “Prepare a war,” in the Hebrew text are literally, “Sanctify a war.” That is to set apart as holy, a war. So it is a call for a holy war. The words are derived from Israel’s wars under God’s command.

What we have here is somewhat reminiscent of Elijah’s ironic challenge to the prophets of Baal, in which he finally defeated them. “Rouse up,” he says, “the mighty men.” These are the mighty men of the nations. Get the best of the men that possibly can. Then he says in verse 10, “Beat your plowshares into swords.” And what he means by this is that you’re going to need all of the weapons that you possibly can get together. And so in a kind of parody of Isaiah where it is to beat your swords into plowshares, he says, “Beat your plowshares into swords.” You’re going to need all of the weapons that you can possibly get together because you have quite a struggle on your hands. It is a beautifully ironic picture. He says, “Let the weak say, ‘I’m a mighty man.’” You’re going

to need a little [unintelligible]. You’re going to have to say [unintelligible] and things like this, because this is a battle in which you’re going to need every possible amount of strength that you can muster for yourself. “Let the weak say, ‘I’m a mighty man.’” Now psychologists could do a great deal with that line, but since I’m not one I won’t say anything more about it. “Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations and gather yourselves there.” And then Joel, I say, interjects his prayer, “Bring down, oh Lord, Thy mighty ones. Let the nations be aroused and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Again, these words are probably a reference simply to a valley nearby.

One of the things that Adolf Hitler said was this, “I believe that I act today in unison with the Almighty Creator’s intention by fighting the Jews. I do battle for the Lord.” That was a kind of grim parody of the underlying concept that is found here. I remember in reading some things about the life of Hitler that much earlier in his life he came to a point of decision in which there was some question about him turning towards spiritual things, but finally, he said something like he was no longer going to be concerned about matters like that, he was putting them away from himself, and from that time on, he seemed to go in exactly the reverse type of way. Well here we have the nations that are gathered together. The Lord is calling them there, and these are the nations who have struggled against Israel and against Judah, and the reason for it is given in the last two lines. “For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.” These preceding lines are a kind of monumental introduction to this last statement, “For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.” So strong is he in providence that the very summons comes from the enemies of the Lord.

So here is rather a beautiful illustration of the way in which God controls the affairs of man. We talk a great deal about providence. But providence is one of the ways in which the sovereignty of God is manifested, and here in the last struggles of the gentiles on the earth is manifested the providence of God. And in the last of their human

history before the time of the kingdom, they shall, of course, struggle with the Lord and the Lord shall win the victory.

I want to ask to ask you, if you will, to turn with me to Acts chapter 4 and with this we’ll conclude our study tonight. Acts chapter 4, and I’d like to read a few verses beginning at verse 23,

“And when they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord and said, ‘Oh Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. Who by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father, David, Thy servant, didst say, “Why did the gentiles rage and the peoples devise futile things? The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.” For truly (Now notice these words), in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the gentiles and the peoples of Israel (And here we have the picture, of course, of the nations and the peoples being gathered together in their own responsibility before the God in the wickedness of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, ultimately. And then we read), to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.”

So here in this verse, we have the two things working together. We have the freedom of man in his own free agency, doing exactly what he wished to do; to fight against the Lord and against his anointed. But at the same time, God’s so controlling things that they did exactly what his hand and his purpose predestined to occur. It’s one of the most beautiful expressions of the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God in the accomplishment of his purposes. And so, when Joel speaks of gathering the nations to the Valley of Jehoshaphat for a final settlement of their enmity against God, and

a final struggle there, you can be sure that what is going to take place is going to be on the one hand, the free agency of the nations who are fighting against the Lord, but they’re going also to do the things that our great sovereign God determines to come to pass. And he even puts it in language to stress the fact that he is in control of all of the circumstances of life.

Well these things, of course, have to do with the nation Israel and Judah, and the relationship that these covenanted groups have to do with the gentile nations as a whole. It is going to be a great surprise for the gentile nations when, in the last great conflict with the Lord God in heaven, they think that there may be a possibility of them winning the victory, but to discover that the one that they’re really fighting against is the Lord Jehovah himself. A tremendous surprise for the Gentiles, and a tremendous surprise for individuals, too, who think that there is nothing to the Christian faith, really, and that they can get along very well without Jesus Christ and without his cross and without the atonement, but sadly, shall discover ultimately, if there is no turning to him, that the one against whom they wrestle is also our eternal Redeemer who loved us and gave himself for us. Let’s bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words from the Prophet Joel, which describe the fate of the nations in the future. And we pray, oh God, that the lessons of that sovereign power, the lesson the *jus talionis*, the law of recompense, the lesson of the providence of God, our great sovereign God who controls all of the affairs of life; we pray, Lord, that these lessons may impress themselves upon us. Enable us, Lord, to realize that when we deal with Thee, we do deal with a sovereign God. Thou art not a man such as we are. And we pray, Lord, that we may have a relationship to Thee that will bring honor and glory to Thy name. A relationship of obedience, a relationship of the obedience of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. If there are some here, Lord, who have not come to the trust in him who died for us that means eternal life, we ask, Lord, that

“The Gentile’s Surprise in the Valley of Jehosophat” by S. Lewis Johnson
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

Thou would give them no rest nor peace until they rest in Christ. And this we ask in
Jesus’ name. Amen.