

Week 50

Joel 2 Lifestyle



*God's sovereignty through
His dealing with all the
nations*




***...O Tyre and Sidon, and all the
coasts of Philistia?***

***Will you
retaliate
against
Me?***

***But if you retaliate against
Me, swiftly and speedily I will
return your retaliation upon
your own head.***

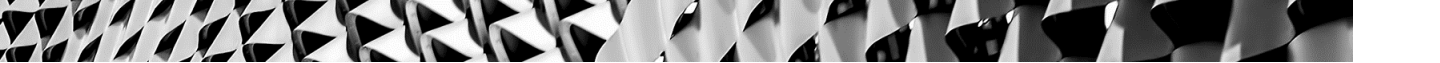
Joel 3:4

Joel 3:4-8 records a dialogue where God clearly challenges the obstinate nations who resist Him and His people.



Although the exact words of the nations were not recorded, God's response to them revealed their position before Him. They were intensely provoked by God's claim that He was going to judge them for their treatment of Israel and out of their mouths came offensive declarations towards God (Joel 3:4).

God is addressing Tyre, Sidon and all of the coasts of Philistia. Historically, these nations rebelled against God but this passage also speaks of what happens at the End of the Age. Tyre and Sidon are modern-day Lebanon, the country north of the nation of Israel and Philistia is the modern-day state of Palestine.



In this passage in Joel, the LORD speaks to Lebanon and Palestine, using their ancestral names, because He knew they would be in the thick of the trouble at the centre of the resistance against Israel during the End-Times.

The nations were retaliating against God. They were resisting God and actively going against Him. When Joel uses the phrase “Will you retaliate against Me?”, it sounds as though these nations think that God has done something wrong to them and that they were paying God back for “what He did wrong”. Can you imagine the audacity of their thoughts and actions?

The nations are retaliating against the covenant God had made with Abraham to give the Jewish people dominion in the land. This covenant is sure and steadfast and it will not be broken. Israel will have dominion not only in their land, but across the whole earth.

God will answer this stubborn resistance of the nations by exposing their real issue with Israel. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord tells us just why the nations actually despise Israel (Ezek. 35:11).

God tells the hostile nations that the reason they despise Israel is not really about some issue of justice but because of bitterness, anger, greed and envy.

He exposes their motivations as having everything to do with the God of justice and His unassailable covenant with Israel.

The nations are angry because they want what God has given Israel.



God's sovereignty through His dealing with all the nations

The LORD continues with *His plan of judgment upon these nations in Joel 3:7–8*. As a warning to the nations, the LORD declares in detail what He will do to judge them. *This divine retaliation had an actual fulfillment in history.*

It is not only a history lesson but a declaration of what is to come. This precise judgment happened in history as *a pattern of what will happen once again to these nations in the End-Times.*

These nations will enter into the same conflict with God and He will bring the same manifestation of judgment upon them. Joel 3:2 tells us the LORD is going to gather all nations together for judgment and not just the nations Joel specifically mentioned in Joel 3:4.

God's sovereignty is the basic premise behind everything and is foundational to the whole of human history.

God has the right to decide who He chooses. He had to choose a people group through whom He will establish His kingdom, and He chose the Jewish people.

He has the right to choose where. He chose the city of Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

He has the right to choose what. He chose Israel to be the governmental centre of the entire earth for a thousand years (the Millennium Kingdom). All of the nations of the earth will be ruled under this government.

He has the right to choose when. He chose the Millennium period. When the apostles asked Him when it would be that He would restore the Kingdom to Israel, He told them that it was not for them to know, but that the Father has chosen the time (Acts 1:7).

This is what God has chosen. He is God and in His perfect wisdom, He chooses who, when, what and where. He is going to rule the earth from Israel.

God chose Israel for His own glory.

God orchestrates history and brings about its culmination in a way that will reveal His sovereignty and His name to the nations.

Often times, the Jewish people get into the very same error as the Gentiles by thinking that God's plans are centred around them. Similarly, in their confusion and frustration, the Gentiles wrongly feel that it is about Israel being God's favorite (Ezek. 36:22).

It is not that actual people are unimportant to Him; He cares intensely about people, whether they are Jewish or Gentiles. Yet God has based His covenants upon geographic areas and bloodlines and these covenants are so important to Him.

This is about the Father's promise to His Son to rule the nations.

The covenant God made is not about Israel but is about His sovereignty. It is about Jesus displaying His splendor to all of the earth.



**These are the covenants that
have made a way for us to know
Him.**

**Once we encounter the revelation
of His sovereignty, it no longer
matters which city or nation God
has chosen, but simply that He
has chosen it.**

**It is about Jesus and His choice
to plunge Himself into human soil,
becoming our Brother and
presenting to the Father a
Kingdom of priests.**

God's sovereign choice of Israel began with the covenant God made with Abraham in Gen. 12:3.

Abraham was a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldeans, an Iraqi, whom God had brought into covenant with Himself. Out of that covenant, He made Abraham the father of many nations, one of whom would bring forth the Messiah.

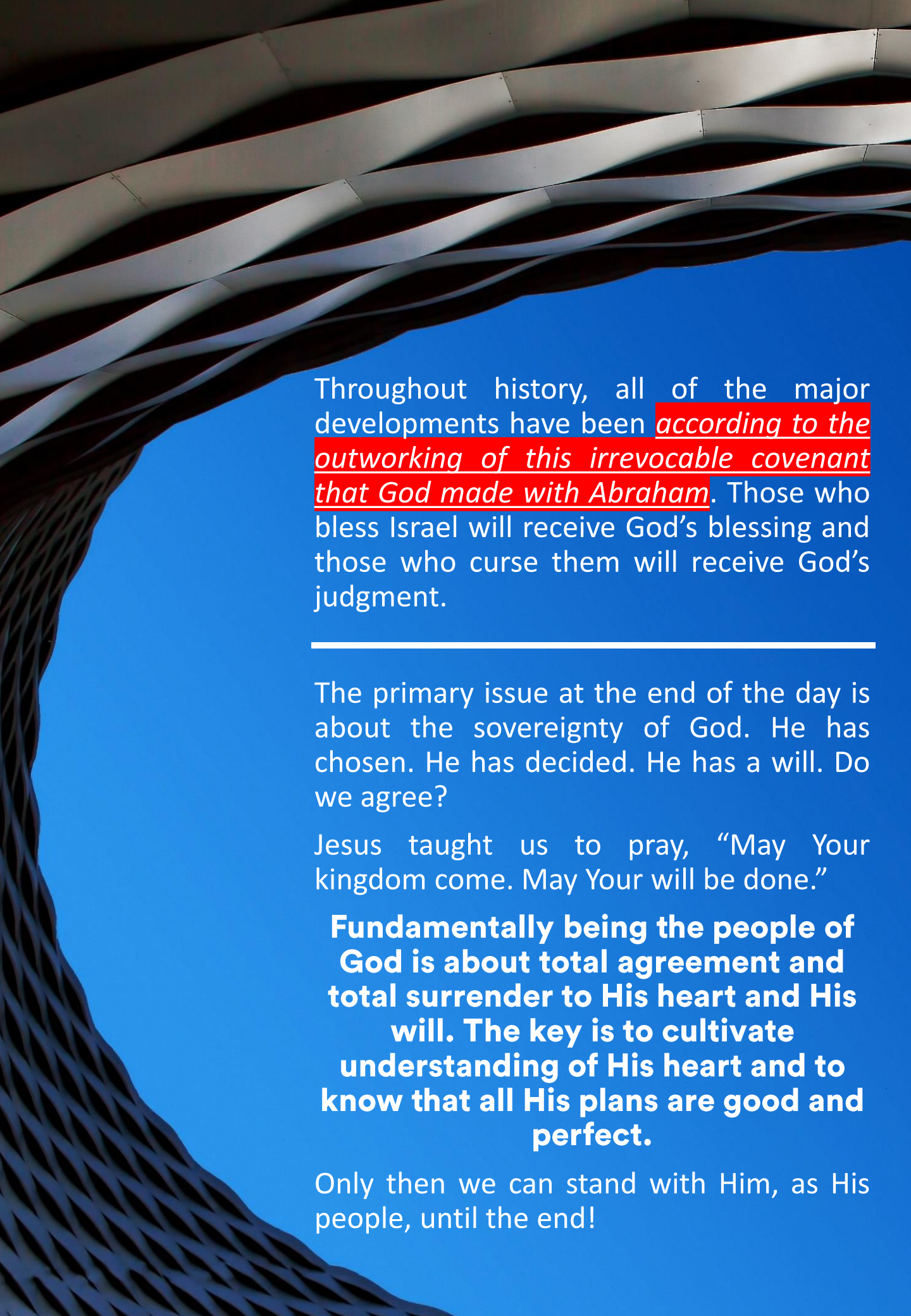


This covenant was where the whole plan of salvation began to take form. Before time began, Israel was chosen of God as the people through whom the Messiah would come.



But when God made the covenant with Abraham, He brought His plan into time and space.

This covenant underpins the entire course of history. The people of Israel are the heirs of that covenant and we as Gentiles are grafted into it.



Throughout history, all of the major developments have been according to the outworking of this irrevocable covenant that God made with Abraham. Those who bless Israel will receive God's blessing and those who curse them will receive God's judgment.

The primary issue at the end of the day is about the sovereignty of God. He has chosen. He has decided. He has a will. Do we agree?

Jesus taught us to pray, "May Your kingdom come. May Your will be done."

Fundamentally being the people of God is about total agreement and total surrender to His heart and His will. The key is to cultivate understanding of His heart and to know that all His plans are good and perfect.

Only then we can stand with Him, as His people, until the end!



Readings and Prayers for the week

Readings for Week 50

Read Genesis chapters 12 and 15 to understand about the covenant God made with Abraham. Ask God to show you how the covenant of God will affect the whole of history especially that of Israel and the world at the End of the Age.

Prayers for Week 50

Using Ephesians 1:17, pray for ourselves and the Church for the revelation of the sovereign God who makes covenant with His people. How would the knowledge of these aspects of God affect how you live and how you pray in relation to Israel?