***Joel 3:1-16 NIV***

1. ***“In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,***
2. ***I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel, because they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.***
3. ***They cast lots for my people and traded boys for prostitutes; they sold girls for wine to drink.***
4. ***“Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done.***
5. ***For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples.***
6. ***You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland.***
7. ***“See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done.***
8. ***I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away.” The Lord has spoken.***
9. ***Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.***
10. ***Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, “I am strong!”***
11. ***Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, Lord!***
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.***
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!”***
14. ***Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.***
15. ***The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.***
16. ***The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the heavens will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.***

***Romans 12:9-21 KJV***

1. ***Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.***
2. ***Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;***
3. ***Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;***
4. ***Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;***
5. ***Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.***
6. ***Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.***
7. ***Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.***
8. ***Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.***
9. ***Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.***
10. ***If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.***
11. ***Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.***
12. ***Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.***
13. ***Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.***

***“Warning! A War is Coming!”***

***Jesus will fix it!***

***It’s amazing to me how history keeps repeating itself in the life of the African American Community. We continually go down a road of abuse, alienation, assassination, accusations, beatings, bought and sold, crushed, cursed, dehumanized, destroyed, demeaned, dissected in the media, eradicated, excluded, and faced with a choice of fight or flight in this racist nation of people. “On August 9, 2014 Michael Brown, an eighteen-year-old-citizen of St. Louis who was visiting his grandmother in Ferguson, and who had recently graduated from high school and was bound for trade school at Vatterott College this fall, was shot and killed by a police officer, sparking racial tension, riots, demonstrations, looting, and national outrage.***

***Brown was initially stopped for jaywalking. Although the police said the young black man attacked the officer and tried to grab his gun, further investigation suggests that he was unarmed and had his hands up in the air in a position of surrender. Still, the autopsy showed that Brown was shot at least six times, twice in the head. He was shot in the middle of the street in broad daylight.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This is not unlike the incident that happened in California a few years ago when Rodney King was pulled from his car by police and beaten within inches of his life. “Four officers were charged with assault with a deadly weapon and use of excessive force. Three were acquitted of all charges. The jury acquitted the fourth of assault with a deadly weapon, but failed to reach a verdict on the use of excessive force. The jury deadlocked at 8–4 in favor of acquittal at the state level. The acquittals are generally considered to have triggered the 1992 Los Angeles riots, in which 53 people were killed and over 2,000 were injured, ending only when the military was called in.”[[2]](#footnote-2)***

***I fail to see where this kind of extreme force is needed unless the person is armed and dangerous to the community as well as the police. But we have seen this kind of abuse of power not only in the police departments across the nation but in the restaurants and corporate America. They may not beat, injure or kill our people but they use low pay, harassment, and exclusion from meaningful jobs and opportunities. We are sitting on the brink of national destruction of the African American male economically and physically and it plays like a scratched record year after year, decade after decade and we seem to never be able to stop the carnage. We are stopped for walking black, we are stopped for driving while black; we are murdered because we are black; we are jailed because we are black. We are accused of all sorts of heinous crimes and actions against society and never portrayed in the media as deserving to live like human beings. There is a constant barrage of stereotypes being thrown around to portray the African American male undeserving of a fair chance at life or justice. Yes there are some of us who break the law but should we be killed; yes there are some of us on drugs, but should we be the only ones in jail; yes there are some of us that sell drugs but should we be the only ones accused of destroying the fabric of the community. No one says anything about are white counterparts who stalk and kill women in their homes; no on says anything about our white counterparts that start wars over oil and land; no one talks about the our white counterparts who ship and receive the drugs through their world imports; no one talks about the war on drugs that starts with white corporate CEO’s; it is front page news for only a day when serial killer is a white man; its only in the media of good man gone bad if a white man is caught killing his children and wife and they never dig up video of any white man they have killed to show him in a bad light in the media. It’s like it never happened at all.***

***What we have to realize here is, this is a warning a war is coming and we are not going to have to continue to riot; we are not going to have assemble peacefully; we are not going to have sit by and watch our kids and families destroyed; we are not going to have to be afraid of the police; we are not going to have mobilize an army, we are not going to have demand justice, we are not going to have to take the abuse anymore. Church I came to tell you that God is going to handle this better than we can ever handle this; God is going to do what God does best; God is in a position again to show that he is in control; God is again going to write the history of his people; God is going to be the author of this war that is about to take place.***

***Chapter three of Joel is saying to us, “Warning! Warning! A war is coming.” It is not going to be a war of the persecuted and the persecutors; it is not going to be a war of the North against the South; it is not going to be a war of white versus black; it’s not going to be a war of right or wrong; its not going to be a war of nation against nation; but it is going to be a war of God against the evils of this nation and this world.***

***As we shift our focus to the text, Joel is expressing the will of God for all nations to come out and meet him in the valley of decision. Look at what he tells them and listen closely***

1. ***Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.***
2. ***Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, “I am strong!”***
3. ***Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, Lord!***
4. ***“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.***
5. ***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!”***
6. ***Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.***
7. ***The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.***

***God is letting them know that he wants them to come out against him; he wants them to amass their army; he wants them to bring their weapons of mass destruction; he wants them to bring their chemical warfare; God wants them to show up even those who we consider the weaklings among the nation; come out you wealthy and powerful; come out you worshipers of money; come out and bring your idol gods; come out you workers of iniquity; Come out and fight The God Israel; Come out and strike a blow against the God of all creation; come out all you that are saturated in evil and take God off his throne; And see the Lord pass the final Judgment in the valley of decision.***

***People of God this is just a warning! The war in the Ukraine it’s a warning; the terrorist in Afghanistan and Iraq it’s a warning, the fall of the twin towers, it’s a warning, the bombing in Africa it’s a warning, the never ending struggle on the Gaza strip it’s a warning, the political unrest in the United States it’s a warning. The final war will be one orchestrated by God a final decision made by God’s Judgment on evil.***

***Mathew 24 says “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Oh but I know we all are thinking how shall we be at peace in a time such as this…***

***First we must rise above evil***

***The questions that are on most people’s minds are***

***“How are we, who call ourselves Christians and who sit on the sidelines of this crisis and watch it unfold, to respond?***

***How are we to conduct ourselves when faced with these situations?***

***Do we not have a biblical mandate to at least comment upon, not only, the plight of our brothers and sisters in this particular situation, but on the plight of all who suffer at the hands of their oppressors?***

***What are we to say about it from our pulpits, be they in communities who identify more with the actions of the police, or in communities where they identify primarily with those who have threatened to continue protesting until the system of unjust representation in Ferguson is finally addressed?***

***How do we advocate for all involved and support just resolution and not supporting acts of vengeance, while at the same time not abandoning God's call upon us to care for the lost and the least?”[[3]](#footnote-3)***

***We who call ourselves Christians have a protection that those who construct and deliver evil do not have. We may suffer through some things others may never have to deal with but rest assured we have a refuge in the arms of God. They may attack us economically but we can still rise up in peace; they can attack us in the courts but we can still rise up in peaceful protest; they can attack us with a militarized police force, but we can still rise up with the love of God; we may be dehumanized in the media but we can still rise above it; we may even be taken out and slaughtered in the concentration camps but we can still rise above it. There is nothing that comes against us that the protection of the Lord can’t raise us up out of. We have to be what Maya Angelou portrayed in her Poem Still I Rise***

***You may write me down in history***

***With your bitter, twisted lies,***

***You may tread me in the very dirt***

***But still, like dust, I'll rise.***

***Does my sassiness upset you?***

***Why are you beset with gloom?***

***'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells***

***Pumping in my living room.***

***Just like moons and like suns,***

***With the certainty of tides,***

***Just like hopes springing high,***

***Still I'll rise.***

***Did you want to see me broken?***

***Bowed head and lowered eyes?***

***Shoulders falling down like teardrops.***

***Weakened by my soulful cries.***

***Does my haughtiness offend you?***

***Don't you take it awful hard***

***'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines***

***Diggin' in my own back yard.***

***You may shoot me with your words,***

***You may cut me with your eyes,***

***You may kill me with your hatefulness,***

***But still, like air, I'll rise.***

***Does my sexiness upset you?***

***Does it come as a surprise***

***That I dance like I've got diamonds***

***At the meeting of my thighs?***

***Out of the huts of history's shame***

***I rise***

***Up from a past that's rooted in pain***

***I rise***

***I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,***

***Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.***

***Leaving behind nights of terror and fear***

***I rise***

***Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear***

***I rise***

***Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,***

***I am the dream and the hope of the slave.***

***I rise***

***I rise***

***I rise.***

***As Christians we cannot allow the hatred to rule our senses; we cannot allow foolishness to be our guide; we cannot decide to rebel against the masses without Gods consent; we cannot meet evil with evil and expect to rise up and be victorious. We have to meet God in the valley of decision and stay within the arc of his protection and know that he has it all under control. I must say it is hard for us to see our communities ravaged by racism and the eradication of the black male but it is more important to remember that God has the final word over all that happens here and throughout the world.***

***What better way to for us to obtain victory in this war than to stand up to our oppressors and sing praises to God. What better way to obtain resolution to this problem but to stand on the word of God and watch the devil flee; we will not have to throw one stone; we will not have to burn one building; we will not have to curse one person because Jesus reminds us in Mathew 24 “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. We have to stay where we are strong and that is under the protection of God. No weapon formed against us shall prosper; we can and will rise even though they knock us down, kill us, jail us and even try to eradicate our future.***

***Second we must “Reverse the Hate…”***

***Romans 12:9 and 10 says “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.***

***Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”***

***Back in the day when I was younger, which was not so long ago, I loved this Song by “Minnie Riperton” Called Loving you.***

***One part of the chorus says,***

***“Cause lovin' you is easy cause your beautiful.***

***and everyday of my life is filled with loving you.***

***Lovin you.i see your soul come shinin' through.***

***And everytime that we[uuuuhhhhhhh].***

***i more in love with you.***

***Although the song was written in the terms of a woman’s love for the man in her life, I do believe that love is the only way we are going to reverse the hate.***

***In Minnie’s song she said loving you I see your soul come shinning through; this means to me that, if we outshine the evil with love we will conquer the evil in the souls of many. I’m not saying that we cannot bring to light the injustice before us and in many other cities across America, I’m not saying that we shouldn’t have a righteous indignation about the killing of innocent people; I’m not saying that we should not stand outside the Governor’s office in a peaceful assembly and protest the injustice of state politics; I’m not saying we should not debate the merits or efforts of the justice system to find that these and other crimes have been committed against the African American community; but if we lead out with love there will be no need to riot or a militarized police force. If love can cover a multitude of sin can it not overpower the evil that resides in the hearts of humanity? It has been said “we have seen the various acts or devices by which national unity can be created, and the spectacle thereof, alarming though it has been, has proved that strong and effective corporate action must appeal to some motive sufficiently powerful to weld a nation into unity. Many of the appeals have been false and disastrous principles; the necessary task is to find the true foundations on which unity can be built,”[[4]](#footnote-4) and that is Love. Paul is letting us know that principle that creates and maintains us as Christians is Love. Love is the characteristic quality of all of Gods redemptive actions.***

***So we must not let our emotions cause us to act like the animals they have insinuated we are; we must not let our emotions cause us to sink down to their level of scum and impurity; we must not let our emotions cause us to be other than who God has called us to be. It is hard for me as well as others to show love for anyone or anything that causes us pain and anguish but as we look to Jesus for our answer was it not love in the face of those who hated him that drove him to the cross for our salvation; was it not love that God sent his only begotten son to suffer and die for us; was it not love that caused Jesus to raise the dead and restore sight to the blind; was it not love that cause Jesus to heal the sick and forgive the sinner. Was it not love that caused God to liberate the Hebrew slaves; was it not love that caused God to liberate our ancestors from slavery. Was it not love that caused Jesus to reach way down in the midst of our sins and call us out into reconciliation with the Father? Love is the only way we can reverse the hate.***

***When we rise above evil and reverse the hate in others and ourselves we can remain Joyful***

***Most of us are at the mercy of our moods and our uncontrollable emotions seem to overflow in most cases. If we are to lead a disciplined Christian life it much more than controlling our emotional outbursts or having the right response for all occasions; it is about having the appropriate expression of our faith. Paul says in this scripture we are to rejoice in hope; be patient in tribulation; and pray constantly. In the fruits of the spirit Paul includes hope; he is clearly saying if we reflect on time when there seems to be no hope that is a time when are faith was not strong or we had no faith at all. He is clearly relating this to a time when people did not know the fullness of God. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of thing unseen. If we have faith we have hope in a brighter day, if we have faith we have hope that God will change the outcome of tragedy to victory; if we have faith we have hope for a new day without pain and sorrow. Hope is that thing that science cannot measure and Satan cannot destroy. It is that thing that when we have a personal relationship with God then nothing can steal our joy. It is that thing that keeps the moral motives of a Christian pure. “It is an outlook on life, its opportunities, its possibilities, it demands, which is possible to those of us who see our experiences in life as a divine purpose.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Although in the book of Romans chapter 5 vs 2 Paul speaks of hope I contend he speaking more profoundly of the expectation of some kind of reward that is forthcoming but he is speaking of hope as attitude obtained by mature Christians that know and have experienced the goodness and mercy of God in their life. As mature Christians we are aware that Jesus’ sacrifice has opened up a much richer and fuller life than not have a true and purposeful relationship with him. In know this Paul is letting us know that we still have to be patient in our tribulations because joy is bound to be the outcome when we come out on the other side. Suffering can be the occasion for us to be joyful because we know that all things work for the good to them that love the Lord. Faith is no guarantee that we will not have trials and tribulations but it promises that will be strengthen and made fit for those things that God will give us when they are complete.***

***We may have to suffer through the backlash of Racism, but I still have joy; we may have to suffer through some corruption in politics; but I still have joy; we may have to suffer through some injustice, but I still have joy; we may have to cry sometimes over our murdered sons and daughters, but I still have joy; we may have to suffer some months of joblessness, but I still have joy; we may have to suffer through some economic downturns; but I still have joy; the word says weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.***

***Church don’t you get some joy out of knowing that God is your refuge?***

***Don’t you get some joy knowing God loves us so that he gave his only begotten son for our salvation?***

***Don’t you get some joy in seeing Gods might acts unfold in your life?***

***Don’t you get some joy when you know the battle is not yours but it’s the Lords?***

***Don’t you get some Joy know that vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the lord?***

***Don’t you get some joy knowing troubles don’t last always?***

***Verse 1:***

***Trouble in my way, I have to cry sometimes.***

***Trouble in my way, I have to cry sometimes.***

***I lay awake at night, but that's alright;***

***Jesus will fix it after while.***

***Verse 2:***

***Stepped, stepped in the furnace a long time ago;***

***Shadrech, Meshach and Abendigo.***

***No, they were not worried, oh, this I know;***

***they knew that Jesus will fix it after while.***

***Vamp 1:***

***Jesus, He will fix it.***

1. Gbod.org [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Wikipedia [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Interpreters Bible Vol. 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-5)