

Joel 3:7-17; Obad. 17-21: Battle at Valley of Jehoshaphat – end of the Palestinian conflict.
Israel's conflict with Palestinians is fully predicted to end in a final battle on His return.

Summaries of the background of both passages:

A. God rebukes the surrounding nations for their severe ill-treatment of Israel.

Obadiah is written shortly after Jerusalem's destruction in 586 BC concerning Edom (1), who takes advantage of the situation to hurt the Jews. Edomites are descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob and are related to Judah. **Obadiah 10-14** is their violence to Judah during Babylon's invasion and in **v12-13**, He especially detests the gloating and rejoicing over Judah's misfortune, even to loot and imprison them, probably to sell them as slaves. **Joel** is a contemporary of Isaiah, who used a locust plague to portray the Day of the Lord or God's judgment. Similarly, in **Joel 3** God condemns the surrounding nations for their exploits of Israel. In **Joel 3:3-6** is a review of what nearby nations such as Tyre, Sidon and Philistia (4) have done to Israel. They reckon Jews simply as lots casted (3) and for a low price, akin to a night with a harlot or for wine. Jews are scattered (2) and sold away as far as Greece (6), which in those days is the edge of the world. In **v4**, the recompense is stated to be swift and speedy; and so it may not wait until the return of Christ.

B. God's recompense to the surrounding nations has already occurred in history.

This is in fact true for Philistia is already destroyed in **Jer. 47:4** (605 BC). Likewise, in **Obad. 1-6**, God announces Edom's judgment. God will bring nations against her in battle (1). Edom will be humbled or made small and nations will despise or lose respect for her (2). The nation of Edom is genuinely well protected in the mountains but this is precisely the reason for their pride, which God is against in **v3**. Thus, regardless of impregnability, Edom will not escape His judgment (4). Their loss in **v5-6** is drastic. Unlike robbers who will not steal everything and harvesters leaving behind their gleanings, Edom is totally ransacked and even their hidden treasures will be found and removed. In **Obad. 15-16**, it is also stated that their dealings will be on their own head (as **Joel 3:4**) and that they will cease to exist. However, the descendants of Philistia, Edom and other surrounding nations are today an integral part of the Palestinian population and God predicts how they will be finally judged. Note that both **Joel 2:32 and Obad. 17** similarly mention "those who escape" (Hebrew: peletah). They are the remnant Jews who believe in the Messiah and God will use these "peletah" Jews for the final judgment below against the Palestinians.

Explaining the Passage – Joel 3:7-17 and Obad. 17-21

C. Jews are regathered and the recompense against the Palestinians continues.

God clearly predicts in **Obad 20-21** (Zarephath is in Lebanon and Sepharad in Spain) and in **Joel 3:7-8** that Jews will be aroused to return from faraway lands to recompense the evil done to them by the surrounding nations, such as deporting them to the Sabians (8), a race scattered over Arabia and Africa. It is true that after Israel's formation, they have deported many Palestinians from the land but this is in line with prophecy. Finally, in **Joel 3:9-11** is a call for the surrounding nations (11) to go into battle. In **Joel 3:12-14** these nations are gathered at the Valley of Jehoshaphat, located between Mt. Olive and Jerusalem. It harmonizes with the invasion of Jerusalem in **Zech. 12:2-4**, when Christ, together with the "peletah", destroy them on His return to Mt. Olive in **Zech. 14:3-4 (also Joel 3:16-17; Obad 17-18)**, see also the one page for Zech. 12-14). The outcome is in **Obad. 19 and Joel 3:18-21** when Israel under God will possess Palestine forever.