



# 1:00 PM Tanach Tour of Israel - Emek Yehoshaphat: The Valley of Judgment Day

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*The program is sponsored by Sarena and David Koschitzky, in memory of Riva Koschitzky z"l*

*This session is dedicated by Dalia and Farokh Hakimi  
in memory of Dalia's parents Fredda Grosser z"l and Samuel Grosser z"l*

*This session is dedicated by Tova and Allan Gutenberg in honour of the wonderful work the Beit Midrash does*

*This session is dedicated by Shoshanna Schapira, Lea and Yaakov Hollander and Orly and Leslie Reich  
in loving memory of our dear mother, Hadassah Bat Avraham a"h, on her 4th yahrtzeit 26 Tevet*

Some links

Battlefields: Valleys of Elah, Ayalon <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=11144>

Book of Failure: Yehoshaphat <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/940622/>

The Book of Yoel <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=2658>

Prophets of Repentance: Yoel <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/863015/>

1. From a map by Tamar Yardeni, featured on Hebrew Wikipedia



2. Letter of Nachmanides to his son, 13<sup>th</sup> century Israel

I ascended to the Mount of Olives, facing the Temple Mount and near it. There is nothing between them but the Valley of Yehoshaphat. There, facing the Temple Mount, I read my verses with great weeping...

### Unpacking our question

3. Biblical valley battles include:

- |                          |                                 |                  |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| • The Valley of the King | Four kings vs. Five kings       | Genesis 14       |
| • The Valley of Jezre'el | Midian and allies invade Israel | Judges 6         |
| • The Valley of Elah     | Philistine attack               | Samuel I 17      |
| • The Valley of Rephaim  | Philistine attack               | Samuel II 5      |
| • The Valley of Berachah | Amon and Moav invade Israel     | Chronicles II 20 |

4. Prof. Yechezkel Kauffmann, *Toldot ha'Emunah ha'Yisraelit* VII pg. 345

The nations do not ascend against Jerusalem as in the visions of Isaiah, Michah and Zechariah. Certainly, there is no resemblance between Yoel's vision and the vision of Gog and Magog in Yechezkel... They do not besiege Jerusalem, they do not attack the cities of Judea. They are gathered to the Valley of Yehoshaphat, which is certainly a visionary place. They come as though for war, but a kind of spirit brings them to the "Valley of Yehoshaphat" – the Gd of Justice. There Gd sits to judge them. This is Yoel's new vision: Gd does not appear as a military commander or a warrior on the day of battle.

### When is Judgment Day in the Valley of Yehoshaphat?

5. Chronicles II 20:1-3, 14-17, 20-22, 25-26 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

After that, Moabites, Ammonites, together with some Ammonim, came against Jehoshaphat to wage war. The report was brought to Jehoshaphat: "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Aram, and is now in Hazazon-tamar"—that is, Ein-gedi. Jehoshaphat was afraid; he decided to resort to the Lord and proclaimed a fast for all Judah...

Then in the midst of the congregation the spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah son of Benaiah son of Jeiel son of Mattaniah the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, and he said, "Give heed, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat; thus said the Lord to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed by this great multitude, for the battle is Gd's, not yours. March down against them tomorrow as they come up by the Ascent of Ziz; you will find them at the end of the wadi in the direction of the wilderness of Jeruel. It is not for you to fight this battle; stand by, wait, and witness your deliverance by the Lord, O Judah and Jerusalem; do not fear or be dismayed; go forth to meet them tomorrow and the Lord will be with you.'"...

Early the next morning they arose and went forth to the wilderness of Tekoa. As they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: Trust firmly in the Lord your Gd and you will stand firm; trust firmly in His prophets and you will succeed." After taking counsel with the people, he stationed singers to the Lord extolling the One majestic in holiness as they went forth ahead of the vanguard, saying, "Praise the Lord, for His steadfast love is eternal." As they began their joyous shouts and hymns, the Lord set ambushes for the men of Ammon, Moab, and the hill country of Seir, who were marching against Judah, and they were routed...

Jehoshaphat and his army came to take the booty, and found an abundance of goods, corpses, and precious objects, which they pillaged, more than they could carry off. For three days they were taking booty, there was so much of it. On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Blessing—for there they blessed the Lord; that is why that place is called the Valley of Blessing to this day.

6. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century Spain), Commentary to Yoel 4:2

This was the war when Moav, Amon and Seir, a massive force, united. And Yehoshaphat had from Judah and Benjamin... And the Valley of Yehoshaphat is the Valley of Blessing, for Yehoshaphat named it thus.

7. Don Isaac Abarbanel (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Iberian Peninsula), Commentary to Yoel 4:2

Perhaps the valley was called thus because Yehoshaphat performed some recorded deed there. More likely it is because of the joint name – "Yehoshaphat" hints to judgment (*shaphat*) of Gd, and because His justice is deep they called it the Valley of Yehoshaphat.

8. The War of Gog and Magog

Ezekiel 39

9. Don Isaac Abarbanel (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Iberian Peninsula), Commentary to Yoel 4:1

For the blessed Cause of causes will place in the hearts of Rome and her kings to travel and conquer the beloved land, for their eyes and heart are always there, and all of them have upheld and accepted that Jerusalem is the house of Gd and the gate of Heaven. And certainly within their view that this is where Yeshu of Nazareth is buried, and all of their longing is toward that land. Especially as they already gathered strength and ruled it on two other occasions...

And because of this Yishmael will gather from Babylon and the eastern lands and come upon the Christians for war to avenge the spilled blood of their brothers and to take the sacred land from their hands...

10. Joel 3 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

After that, I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; Your sons and daughters shall prophesy; Your old men shall dream dreams, And your young men shall see visions. I will even pour out My spirit Upon male and female slaves in those days. Before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes, I will set portents in the sky and on earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke; The sun shall turn into darkness And the moon into blood. But everyone who invokes the name of the Lord shall escape; for there shall be a remnant on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the Lord promised. Anyone who invokes the Lord will be among the survivors.

11. Joel 4 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

For lo! in those days And in that time, When I restore the fortune Of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will contend with them over My very own people, Israel, which they scattered among the nations for they divided My land among themselves and cast lots over My people; and they bartered a boy for a *zonah*, and sold a girl for wine, which they drank. What is this you are doing to Me, O Tyre, Sidon, and all the districts of Philistia? Are you requiting Me for something I have done, or are you doing something for My benefit? Quick as a flash, I will pay you back; for you have taken My gold and My silver, and have carried off My precious treasures to your palaces; and you have sold the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem to the Ionians, so that you have removed them far away from their homeland. Behold, I will rouse them to leave the place you have sold them to, and I will pay you back: I will deliver your sons and daughters into the hands of the people of Judah, and they will sell them into captivity to a distant nation—for the Lord has spoken.

Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for battle! Arouse the warriors, let all the fighters come and draw near! Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears. Let even the weakling say, "I am strong." Rouse yourselves and come, all you nations come together from round about. There bring down Your warriors, O Lord! Let the nations rouse themselves and march up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit in judgment over all the nations round about.

Swing the sickle, for the crop is ripe; come and tread, for the winepress is full, the vats are overflowing! For great is their wickedness. Multitudes upon multitudes in the Valley of Decision! For the day of the Lord is at hand in the Valley of Decision. Sun and moon are darkened, and stars withdraw their brightness. And the Lord will roar from Zion, and shout aloud from Jerusalem, so that heaven and earth tremble. But the Lord will be a shelter to His people, A refuge to the children of Israel. And you shall know that I the Lord your Gd dwell in Zion, My holy mount. And Jerusalem shall be holy; nevermore shall strangers pass through it.

So why is this in a valley?

12. Talmud, Nedarim 55a

A person who renders himself like a wilderness, open to all [i.e. humble], is given Torah as a gift.

13. Mishnah, Shabbat 1:1

If the pauper stands outside and the homeowner inside, and the pauper extends his hand inward and places in the hand of the homeowner, or takes from it and removes it, then the pauper is liable and the homeowner is exempt.

14. Psalms 130:1

From the depths, I cry out to you, O Gd!

15. Amos 5:18-19

Woe, those who desire the Day of Gd. What is the Day of Gd to you? It will be darkness, not light! Like one who flees a lion and encounters a bear, and he comes home and leans his hand on the wall and is bitten by a snake!

Review Questions

1> Where is the Valley of Yehoshaphat?

2> What biblical battles occur in valleys?

3> According to Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, when was the Judgment in the Valley of Yehoshaphat?

4> According to most traditional commentators, when is the Judgment in the Valley of Yehoshaphat?

5> Within the view that the Judgment is in a Messianic time, what is the sin of the nations?

6> Why does that Judgment take place in a valley, and what lesson can we learn from it?