

Joel 3:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

Analysis

So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain (viydata'tem ki ani YHWH Eloheikhem shochen be-Tsion har qodshi)—The knowledge of God (da'at) is experiential, not merely intellectual. Israel will know YHWH through His acts of judgment and salvation. God 'dwelling' (shochen) in Zion establishes His real presence—not distant, but enthroned among His people (Psalm 132:13-14).

Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more (ve-hayeta Yerushalayim qodesh ve-zarim lo ya'avru vah od)—'Holy' (qodesh) means set apart, sacred. 'Strangers' (zarim) are foreigners, often hostile invaders. The promise anticipates eschatological purity (Revelation 21:27: 'there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth'). Isaiah 52:1 and Nahum 1:15 contain parallel promises of a holy, unviolated Jerusalem.

Historical Context

Jerusalem was repeatedly invaded: by Babylonians (586 BC), Greeks (168 BC), Romans (AD 70, 135). Joel's prophecy awaits ultimate fulfillment in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2), where God dwells eternally with His people, and no unclean thing enters. The church, as God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), is becoming that holy dwelling.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'know' God experientially versus merely knowing about Him?
2. How does God's promise to dwell in Zion (His people) comfort believers facing hostility or spiritual attack?
3. In what sense is the church the 'holy' Jerusalem where 'no strangers pass through'—protected from ultimate defilement?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| וַיֵּדְעוּתָם | אֲנִי יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֶיךָ | שָׁכֵן | |
| So shall ye know | that I am the LORD | your God | dwelling | |
| H3045 | H3068 | H430 | H7931 | |
| בְּצִיּוֹן | הָהָר | קֹדֶשׁ | יְרוּשָׁלַיִם | קֹדֶשׁ |
| in Zion | mountain | be holy | then shall Jerusalem | be holy |
| H6726 | H2022 | H6944 | H3389 | H6944 |
| וְלֹא | יַעֲבֹרוּ | בָּהּ | עוֹד: | |
| and there shall no strangers | pass through | | | |
| H2114 | H5674 | H0 | H5750 | |

Additional Cross-References

Joel 2:27 (References God): And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Isaiah 52:1 (Holy): Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Nahum 1:15 (Parallel theme): Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

Revelation 21:27 (Parallel theme): And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Isaiah 4:3 (Holy): And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

Jeremiah 31:23 (Holy): Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.

Joel 3:21 (References Lord): For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.