

Joel 2:18-22 – Sunshine Beyond the Cloud!

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Geneva, JFB, Poole, Armstrong, Delitzsch, Barnes, Henry, Trapp, Clarke, Gill, Calvin, INT, Expositor
Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: We commonly say, “Beyond every dark cloud is a silver lining.” But after the Jews experienced 70 years of darkness in captivity, they would not see a silver lining, they would see a golden lining, and not just a golden lining, they would see a golden kingdom, and not just a golden kingdom in one place, that golden kingdom would spread throughout the world...and not just a golden kingdom that would spread throughout the world, but a golden kingdom that would last forever!

You will hear about the beginnings of Judah’s golden future beyond their dark times.

Our headings are:

God’s Passion for his People

God’s Punishment for his People’s Enemies

God’s Provision for his People’s Future

Our goals are: That you must never despair when things are bad, even if it is your sin that caused it, for God is always gracious to those who are his children in Christ Jesus.

God’s Passion for his people

18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And pity His people.

1. After captivity the Lord would have great passion for his repentant people.

“Zealous” is used here in the sense of being “jealous,” but a good jealousy. God has good jealousy or passion.

Zechariah 8:2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.'

2. That passion would cause Yahweh to have pity on his bride.

He wanted his adulterous bride to petition him for forgiveness and he longed to take her back. Love made the difference. The Jews weren’t better than others. They were just loved! God couldn’t stand to see the bride suffer anymore.

19 The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

3. That passion that God caused God to pity his bride, then led to refreshed promises to them.

God promised them:

a. Food and drink for their existence and enjoyment. Fresh olive oil was put on everything and in everything! It was used as medicine and for beauty products. Wine made the heart glad. They had enough grains for their breads and cakes. This food and drink would satisfy the Jews!

b. The Jews would not be a reproach before the nations. The Jews would not be mocked by their neighbors because their God abandoned them as before. Consider what God had done previously to Israel when God caused them shame!

Hosea 2:10 Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall deliver her from My hand.

4. God called the Jews to pay special attention to his passion, pity, and provision, so he said, “Behold!”

This was said before captivity...even before the land was eaten bare by real locusts and the military locusts, before the dark clouds came.

5. Lessons:

a. God has passion for you, his church, even when you fall into sin, even for a long time. He will reconcile the church as David was reconciled to him, as Peter was reconciled, and as the Publican was reconciled.

b. You must have passion for the Lord and his church as he has for you. Use the light of the Gospel to guide your path and to speak of the Light of the Word to lead men out of darkness and translate them into the kingdom of light. See what the shepherds saw that dark night 2000 years ago! Run and announce it like they did! Save the world from spiritual slavery!

c. But here is a warning: Even though the Jews were restored to the Lord after captivity, they forgot his passion for them and became complacent again. They started to look and act like the world. Money became their god. Being estranged from God, they sold themselves to Caesar and sat on his lap as the Scarlet Harlot. She betrayed the Bridegroom! God had enough! Caesar shamed her and plundered her. Caesar even put his own image in the temple, mocking her covenant God.

So this is a relevant warning today: If the church continues to be complacent and look and act like the world, selling herself to the world, God will have no use for her. (He wants a devoted bride.) He will move from passion to punishment!

God's Punishment of his people's enemies

20 "But I will remove far from you the **northern army**, And will **drive him away into a barren and desolate land**, With his **face toward the eastern sea** And his **back toward the western sea**; His stench will come up, And **his foul odor will rise**, Because he has done monstrous things."

1. God's passion for his people would cause him to remove Babylon's foot from his bride's neck and drive them into oblivion!

Jeremiah confirmed the enemies would come from the north, confirming it would be the Babylonians.

They would come facing The (Mediterranean) Sea, but they would leave with their tails facing The Sea and their faces facing the Dead Sea. In other words, they would be running away. It is a picture of victory.

2. God would make the Babylonians a stench to Judah and the surrounding nations because of the terrible things they would do.

They would capture, punish, and spread God's covenant people around the world.

Why did God speak of stench here! "Stench" was used because locusts are known for producing quite a stench. (Many records confirm the stench locusts leave behind.) **So the Lord used the literal stench of real locusts for the figurative stench of the military locusts.** God always cuts off his people's enemies. **We even sing about it.**

Psalms 12:3 **May the LORD cut off all flattering lips,** And the tongue that speaks proud things, Look specifically at the language of how God would humble Babylon.

Daniel 7:4 "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. **I watched till its wings were plucked off;** and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

3. The destruction of the great enemy of God's people allowed the kingdom of God to be restored!

4. Lessons:

a. Most people today don't see the destruction of the wicked as a victory for the church, but it is. The destruction of Pharaoh was liberation for Israel. The destruction of Babylon was liberation for Judah. The destruction of the Devil on the cross was liberation for sinners. The cross gave freedom, prosperity, and opportunity to expand.

b. Judgment on the wicked is exactly what Christians in the Middle East, or North Korea, or Central and Northern Africa are desiring now. Pray for it. **Sing about it.** Destruction of the wicked will give them their new day.

God's Provisions for his people's future

21 **Fear not,** O land; **Be glad** and **rejoice,** For **the LORD** has done **marvelous things!**

1. God's people did not need to fear, but rejoice and be glad, as they would march on after captivity to build Christ's church.

They would have seen the strong hand of God in bringing the great "untouchable" Babylonian empire to its knees. No one could have seen this happening, but God was saying it would happen...long, long before -before Babylon was an empire!

And since the Jews knew and loved God...fear of the Babylonians and all other future enemies had to go!

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; **but perfect love casts out fear,** because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

2. What are the details of some of the wonderful things God did for the Jews?

God destroyed the Babylonian army (which fell because of their mis-treatment of the Jews), using **the Medo-Persian emperor Cyrus.** **God then caused Cyrus, to urge the Jews to go back and rebuild the temple and restore worship.**

Psalms 126:2 Then **our mouth was filled with laughter,** And our **tongue with singing.** Then they said among the nations, "**The LORD has done great things for them.**" **3** The LORD has done great things for us, And we are glad.

Look at what God said to the Jews after they returned from the Babylonian captivity.

Zechariah 8:12 'For **the seed shall be prosperous,** The **vine shall give its fruit,** The **ground shall give her increase,** And the **heavens shall give their dew** — I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these.

The locusts were devastating, but joy and gladness would come. Physical and spiritual blessings would follow!

3. But notice this was the work of Yahweh, Covenant God.

So this presupposes a relationship with God, a relationship that can only exist because of Jesus Christ.

The Jews were looking forward to the coming of Jesus and on that basis, they were saved spiritually and from Babylon.

22 **Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;** For the **open pastures are springing up,** And the **tree bears its fruit;** The **fig tree** and **the vine** yield their strength.

4. God's people would even provide for the wild animals, which before had cried out to him for mercy when they saw judgment.

The animals would not have to wander away for pasture...or die of thirst and become buzzard food!
Psalms 104:27 These all wait for You, That You may give them their food in due season.
28 What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good.
Further, Judah would get showers of rain for the crops to grow and the cattle to get fat.

5. God's people would have an abundance of food as the trees would start to bear again and the grains would be planted.

God would provide meat for the Jews to eat and they would have animals to sacrifice on God's altar.
(Of course God wasn't really talking to the animals, but to the Jews.)

God would revive the fig trees – pointing to security, as figs could be dried and stored for years.

God would revive the vines, pointing to joy and happiness, for that is what came from drinking the wine. Not only would the vine provide joy, but it would do so plentifully. This is why “the vines would yield their strength!”

6. Lessons:

a. The Lord can easily turn your weeping into rejoicing if you confess your sins to him, individually or as a nation. If he saved the animals who cried to him, surely he would do it for his covenant children – as their covenant God.

b. The Lord's ultimate provisions were not about giving food and other necessities, nor was it about the destruction of their enemy – their greatest enemy being the Devil. The ultimate provision was salvation and sanctification. You need weapons! You need strength.

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward That **I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;**
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

The Holy Spirit being poured out from heaven on all flesh equipped men in a special way to do God's kingdom work and spread the message of salvation! Also, you have his Word, his sacraments, his church, Christian discipline, money, safety, ability to speak, and freedom to travel! The future is bright!

c. You have at least 6000 years of God's prophecies coming true to confirm his Word. Do you know he holds the future? Really know? Are you then moving forward to promote salvation in Jesus Christ?

Conclusion:

This prophecy was written before the Babylonian captivity. **The Lord knew the Jews would not repent before captivity...**and he would have to send them into captivity for 70 years...and then **he would bring them out because they would repent** and see the new day...the glorious day...with the golden sunrise. God would show his **passion for his people** and destroy Babylon. They would **return to Jerusalem, rebuild the temple, restore worship, and read themselves for the golden kingdom** that was coming! Then **he would provide** everything they needed to do the work of establishing his kingdom and promoting worship throughout the world. And remember, **the greatest enemy he would destroy was the Devil.**

Brother and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Thank God for his love for you, his chaining of the Devil (and restriction of anyone else than stand in his people's way), and his abundant provision for your body and soul, and his guarantee that one day he will come in the bright shining clouds and take you to be with him to heaven forever.

2. Don't worry when things get bad, even if the days are dark because of complacency in the church. Don't worry about those who are attacking the church and seem to be winning. Drop on your knees, confess your sins and the sins of your family, church, and state, and **look to the one sitting at the Father's right hand,** the one who has power to lead you out of darkness and take you back to **building his church with his provisions.**

Finally, if you are in darkness of sin and despair, there is a way out. In the light of God's Word, learn of your sin and the free salvation offered to all who call on God. Sincerely ask him for his salvation. He will save you because Jesus died in the place of sinners.