

Joel 2:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

Analysis

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice (Hebrew *al-tir'i adamah gili vesimchi*)—after addressing people (2:12-17) and announcing God's response (2:18-20), Joel now speaks to the land itself. The personification continues from 1:10 where "the land mourneth." The command *al-tir'i* (אֲלֵתִירָאֵי, "fear not") addresses the land as feminine, fitting Hebrew grammar where *adamah* (אֲדָמָה, land/soil/ground) is feminine. The dual command *gili vesimchi* (גְּלִי וְשִׁמְחִי, "be glad and rejoice") uses two Hebrew words for joy, intensifying the emotion. The same soil that mourned under curse now rejoices under blessing.

For the LORD will do great things (Hebrew *ki-higdil YHWH la'asot*, פִּיהִגְדִּיל יְהִיָּה לְעֲשׂוֹת)—the phrase echoes verse 20's description of the northern army that "hath done great things." The contrast is deliberate: while the enemy did great evil, Yahweh will do great good. The verb *gadal* (גָּדַל) means to be great, grow, magnify. God will magnify His works of restoration, demonstrating His power and faithfulness. This anticipates Mary's Magnificat: "He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name" (Luke 1:49).

This verse establishes that creation participates in redemption. Romans 8:19-22 develops this theology: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Creation groans under sin's curse but will rejoice in redemption's consummation. Just as Adam's sin brought curse on the ground (Genesis 3:17-18), Christ's

redemption will restore creation itself (Revelation 22:3: "And there shall be no more curse").

Historical Context

Personifying land reflects ancient Hebrew thought where creation and humanity are interconnected. Genesis 4:10 describes Abel's blood crying from the ground; Leviticus 18:25, 28 warns that the land vomits out inhabitants who defile it; Numbers 35:33 says blood defiles the land. This worldview contrasts with modern Western dualism separating spiritual and physical realms. Scripture presents an integrated cosmology where human sin affects creation, and human redemption involves creation's restoration. Joel's call for the land to rejoice anticipates prophetic visions where mountains sing, trees clap their hands, and rivers rejoice at God's coming (Psalm 96:11-13, 98:7-9, Isaiah 55:12).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the land's participation in mourning and rejoicing challenge modern disconnection between spirituality and physical creation?
2. What does it mean that God will do "great things"—how should this shape your expectations of His power and faithfulness?
3. How should believers steward creation in light of its future redemption and participation in God's glory?

Interlinear Text

וְיִתְהַגֵּד יְלִילָה תְּרִיאָה אֲלֹהִים
H408 Fear not O land be glad and rejoice H3588 great things for the LORD
H3372 H127 H1523 H8055 H1431 H3068

לְעֵשׂוֹת:

will do
H6213

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 54:4 (Parallel theme): Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

1 Samuel 12:16 (References Lord): Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

Isaiah 35:1 (Parallel theme): The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Jeremiah 33:3 (Parallel theme): Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Joel 2:20 (Parallel theme): But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

1 Samuel 12:24 (References Lord): Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

Zechariah 8:15 (Parallel theme): So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.

Deuteronomy 4:32 (Parallel theme): For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?

Psalms 98:8 (Parallel theme): Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together

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