

THE JEALOUSY OF JEHOVAH
Joel 2:18-27

Intro: In our language today jealousy is a word which suggests suspicion, fear, rivalry, and usually leads to trouble. A man may be suspicious of his wife, or a man of his business partner, or in countless numbers of ways.

Sometimes jealousy is justified; often it is not.

When we come to the Word of God we find this word used a number of times as descriptive of God in His relationship with His people. We have it in our text tonight.

On the jealousy of God, cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Joshua 24:19; Nahum 1:2; Zech. 8:2.

USUALLY USED IN CONNECTION WITH IDOLATRY.

In the NT Paul speaks of jealousy in 1 Cor. 10:22; 2 Cor. 11:2.

In thinking about this word, therefore, we have to realize that there is a good and proper place for the kind of feeling and action suggested by this word, jealousy. An example would be in Isa. 9:6, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." It has the same root as our word jealous.

So, when we talk about the jealousy of God, we do mean that He will tolerate no rivals, but it also means that He is extremely zealous for the blessing, the welfare, of His people. THIS IS THE IDEA THAT IS PRESENT IN OUR TEXT.

The Lord resents anything in our lives that will keep Him from blessing us because of His great love for us, but once those barriers are removed, the waves of blessing begin to come!

Notice the expression, "Then the Lord was jealous," i.e., after repentance had manifested that His people had turned from their sins and turned toward Him.

In order to get the time in proper perspective, see also v. 28 where Joel is speaking about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "And it shall come to pass afterward . . ." JUST AS IN CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 WE HAVE AN HISTORICAL JUDGMENT SET ALONG SIDE OF A PROPHETIC JUDGMENT (THE DAY OF THE LORD), SO WHEN GOD TALKS ABOUT THE BLESSING WHICH FOLLOWS REPENTANCE, WE HAVE HISTORICAL BLESSING IN OUR TEXT, BUT THIS IS FOLLOWED BY THE PROPHECY OF FUTURE BLESSING IN 2:28ff.

Tonight we are answering the question: What did God do through His jealousy for His people when they repented of their sins as described in 2:12-17? Or, we might say, what would He do?

I. THE JEALOUSY OF GOD IN RESTORING BLESSING (Joel 2:18-26).

A. He will take away the judgment of chapter 1 (Joel 2:18).

When he does so (and cf. 1:10), then they will be "satisfied," indicating a superabundance. And, in doing so, they will no longer be "a reproach," a disgrace, "among the nations." The people of God are actually a hindrance in the world when they are out of fellowship with God.

B. He will take away the locusts (Joel 2:19).

There is no reason to make v. 20 refer to a literal army. The locusts usually come into Israel from the south, but God had brought them in from the north. This is why they are called, "the northern." But they will leave to the south (the Arabian desert), to the east (the Dead Sea), and to the west (the Mediterranean Sea). ~~The~~ stench will be in direct proportion to the damage which he has done.

C. Three messages (Joel 2:20-26). Actually v. 27 is a part of the third message, but it introduces another emphasis so will be treated separately.

1. The message to the "land" (Joel 2:21).
2. The message to the "beasts of the field" (Joel 2:22). Cf. 1:18, 20.
3. The message to the "children of Zion" (Joel 2:23-26). Twice before Zion has been mentioned. Cf. 2:1, 15. This is the center of blessing throughout the earth. It is useless to expect world peace as long as there is trouble in Jerusalem!

Notice also the expression in v. 23, "the Lord, your God." Cf. 2:13, 14, and then we come to it again in vv. 26, 27. It is Jehovah, your Elohim.

- a. It is a message of restoration. Cf. v. 25, and note the word, "years." This plague did not just last one season, but for "years." And God intended to give them such abundance in their harvests, that they would receive back everything that the locusts had taken away!

Notice "satisfied" again in v. 26 as in v. 19.

- b. It is also a message of restored fellowship. Cf. v. 23, "and rejoice in the Lord, your God." Also v. 26, "and praise the name of the Lord, your God."

God would deal "wondrously" with them, i.e., miraculously, and also uniquely because God was doing these things for no one else.

- c. It was also a message of re-assurance: "And my people shall NEVER be ashamed," i.e., they will never be disappointed in their hope or their expectation when they trust Him! Cf. Psa. 22:5; 25:2, where David says, "O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me."

But times of broken fellowship with the Lord must not be permitted to return. So we see also

II. THE JEALOUSY OF GOD IN TEACHING HIS PEOPLE (i.e., in establishing certain, basic truths in their hearts) (Joel 2:27).

"Ye shall know" means:

- 1) To come to know that which they had not really known before, and
- 2) To know it completely--so that it could never be forgotten again.

There are four truths here.

- A. The truth of God's presence: "And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel."

Cf. Psa. 46:5-7, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."

- B. The truth of God's name: ". . . that I am the Lord (Jehovah), your God (Elohim)." Her we have His unchanging character, His faithfulness, His Deity, His sovereignty, etc.

If we could only appropriate the truth that is bound up in the names of God, it would do more than anything else to establish us in our relationship with Him.

- C. The truth of God's unique position in the earth:

"none else."

Cf. 1 Cor. 8:4-6:

"As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there are gods many, and lords many), But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

What is such a statement in Joel but an indication that idolatry was one of their great problems!

- D. The truth of God's trustworthiness: "and my people shall never be ashamed" (as stated above in v. 26 as well as in v. 27).

Jeremiah asked the people of Judah, "Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" (Jer. 2:5).

- Concl: Psa. 144, esp. the last verse: 15. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

How simple the Lord has made it! And how anxious He is to bless! How JEALOUS JEHOVAH IS to pour out His blessings upon His people!

What does it require? Just walking with Him, obeying Him, loving Him--that through joys and trials we may experience the fulness of His blessings!