

Joel 3:17 – The One Real God

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Barnes, Calvin, Armstrong, Geneva, Trapp, Poole, JFB, Gill, Eclectic, Clarke, Henry, Delitzsch, INT?

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: **The one real God** sent the Jews into captivity for 70 years. And **this one real God brought them out from captivity when he was ready**. He **told them he would do so beforehand**. He told them **when he would bring them out**. And he told them **how he would bring them out** (by destroying their enemies).

That would have been enough to prove he was the one real God. But there was more to come. He told them **what he would do for them after he brought them out**. This would prove beyond doubt he was the true God.

This last point is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

The Real God is Yahweh

The Real God lives in his church

The Real God makes his people holy

The Real God protects his people

Our goals are: You will be reminded you serve the one real God so you can courageously face threats and punishments from those who hate you, as well as rescue those who are worshiping false gods by pointing them to the real God.

The Real God is Yahweh

17 "So you shall know that **I am the LORD** your God, **Dwelling in Zion** My holy mountain. Then **Jerusalem shall be holy**, and **no aliens shall ever pass** through her again."

1. After Yahweh would destroy the Babylonians and their evil friends and save the Jews by his powerful arm, the Jews would be reassured the Lord (Yahweh) was God – their God.

They would see God overthrow the nations – great nations, many nations, with their many weapons, with their large armies.

So this was more than a promise they would know in their heads; this was an experience they would have in their lives.

2. That knowledge in their heads and experience in their lives would confirm this one real God and his people were in a covenant relationship.

This is why God used his **covenant name, Yahweh**. The people would know who he was!

3. Even pagans would have to admit Jehovah was the real God of heaven and earth when he promised and fulfilled his promise.

4. Lessons:

a. God does not have a master/slave relationship with his people. It is a covenant relationship – a close relationship. He saves you **through your faith in Jesus Christ**, your Covenant Keeper. Jesus Christ lived for you (crediting you with righteousness), and he died for you (crediting you with holiness). You received these gifts by faith. Then you were adopted and loved. There is no other way to be saved. This means your relationship in him was not by virtue of being born or by being baptized or being a member of the church. Your relationship is by means of Jesus.

b. All the other gods are pretensions, made by the influence of demons. None of those gods can take away your sins. None has Yahweh's righteous standards. They are fakes. So avoid close relationships with those who reject the one real God. You have different goals in life and you have two different destinations, you to heaven, they to hell!

c. Many people would be offended if you say their god is not the real God but a demonic pretense. You might even lose friends if you speak that way. Some people are so angry they **will use the state to force you to be silent.** And corrupt politicians, pandering for votes, are willing to **criminalize your speech as "hate speech."** The threat is increasing in Canada. But **God knows you don't hate** those who worship false gods. **It is from love that you speak** (you don't speak to put someone down), and **you want that person to come to know and love the real God and receive his benefits.**

The Real God lives in his church

1. God would be the Jews' God and he would stay close to his people; he would not be distant from them.

God had adopted the Jews as his children, gave them a heavenly home, and deposited his covenant with them.

He then designated Mt Zion as his sanctuary, a picture of that heavenly city – his home.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

God never withdrew or hid himself from his people. He was always accessible. God simply punished them for a while.

Psalms 134:3 The LORD who made heaven and earth **bless you from Zion!**

They were away from home, but they were never way from their Helper – their God!

2. God's presence among his people satisfied their needs, their longing for comfort.

Psalms 119:57 **You are my portion, O LORD;** I have said that I would keep Your words.

“Portion” is often used to describe a **sufficient amount of food**, but it is used in a general way to describe adequate **provisions for all of life, including provisions of land, and provisions for the soul.**

Lamentations 3:24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

Look at another general way it was used...when Abram was fearing for his life. God saved Abram's life from Chedorlaomer.

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your **exceedingly great reward.**"

3. Lessons:

a. Yahweh's presence among you, the redeemed through Jesus, means he is watching you and you are never alone.

Psalms 2:6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

More, he delights to be with you. Yes, God screams at your enemies, but not at you. He truly loves you.

b. If you want to get close to God, go where he dwells and stay there. Of course God is everywhere and you can have a personal relationship with him. But if you have God as your Father, you must have the church as your mother. She will nourish you and discipline you. She will guide you in truth. This was the context of the passage. The Jews were longing to go back to Zion, to the temple, to sacrifices, and to instruction! How could she sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

c. Don't look for a perfect church. You won't find it. New Horizon is not perfect. Her pastor and elders aren't perfect. You aren't perfect either. Join the church and receive the means of grace.

The Real God makes his people holy

1. God would be his people's God, he would stay close to them, and he would purify his people and restore their worship.

2. God provided the means by which Judah would be made holy or sanctified – cleaned out.

This would not be a magical thing. This would not be a financial thing. This would not be a moral thing. They would confess their sins through Jesus Christ and God would forgive their sins. Earlier, they abandoned the Sabbath Day and worship and they ignored the widows, orphans, and foreigners. Both of these sins were grounded in covetousness, wanting their own pleasure and profit, but God would forgive them when they called to him.

And they would be able to sing what Isaiah prophesied:

Isaiah 26:1 In that day **this song will be sung in the land of Judah**: "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

3. This holiness in Judah would never be perfected in them, but it would be real. This was what God said before captivity.

Isaiah 4:3 And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in **Jerusalem will be called holy** — everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 14:20 In **that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses**. The pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, **every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts...**

God even warned the Jews to keep his church clean afterwards and not to join back with those foreign pagans.

Ezekiel 44:9 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "**No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary**, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.

4. The New Jerusalem, the church that is coming in today, will be holy too, even with its many weaknesses.

Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and **showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God**, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

5. Lessons:

a. Are you allowing God to work in your life to make you holy? When you do, there **will be proper praising of God**. God doesn't want praises from those with unclean hearts.

b. God wants his church to be holy and be a pure bride for his Son. Ephesians 5:27...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

c. Holiness must spread to the world. The only way this will be done is through the preaching of the Holy Gospel! Are you helping and praying for this? This is what the world needs and Christ is the only way to become holy.

The Real God protects his people

1. God would be his people's, he would stay close to them, he would purify them and restore worship, and he would also protect them from their various enemies.

He had promised this before. The Jews would have borders again!

Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and **the unclean shall no longer come to you.**

2. That protection God would give was described in a unique way: No one shall pass through her.

Nahum 1:15 Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, Perform your vows. For **the wicked one shall no more pass through you;** He is utterly cut off.

They will not be able to pass through and bring strange rites, worship, or doctrines. No one would lure them with covetousness and obsession with wealth, which took them from God in the first place!

Isaiah 35:8 A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. **The unclean shall not pass over it,** but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.

Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be **full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.**

3. This protection of God's people was essential because when they received peace they would glorify God!

Psalms 1:3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; **And whatever he does shall prosper.**

4. Lessons:

a. God wants to protect his church today. Her enemies are real! They are bent on doing her harm.

Revelation 22:15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

And her enemies are not just outside. Her enemies are inside and they are those who spread false doctrines.

Jude 1:12 These are **spots in your love feasts,** while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are **clouds without water,**

carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; ¹⁶ These are **grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people** to gain advantage.

b. When God protects his church, she is able then to bring glory to the Savior. Her worries are gone!

Conclusion:

The Jews knew the one real God, Yahweh. He would **live among the people** because of Jesus. He would **make his church holy** through Jesus. He would **protect his people through Jesus**, the undefeatable King.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord:

1. Thank Yahweh who has revealed himself to you. You weren't looking for him, but he looked for you and opened up your mind to receive what Jesus did for you. He then showers you with many blessings.

2. Work to introduce this one real God to the world. If you would recommend a good plumber to others because of the job he did, should you be willing to recommend and promote the one who did so much more for you...for free? (As long as you know him first!)

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you may have another god or you have made yourself god. But neither you nor any other god can save you. Only Yahweh can save you. Talk to him. Ask him to change you, take away the heart of stone, and replace it with heart of flesh. He will do it if you ask.