

Verse 1? This return from captivity could refer to the joy of deliverance that was experienced by the Jews in the first few months or years after the return from Babylon in 537 B. C. The happiness that they experienced at that time was so intense that they were scarcely able to believe that all that had happened to them was real.

God sometimes bestows His blessings in ways that are surprising and that cause His people to be overcome with joy. Compare Acts 12: 14; Luke 24: 41; Eph. 3: 20.

“Zion” was the temple mount. Sometimes it is used to describe the people of God in the Old Testament. It is also used of the New Testament church? 1 Pet. 2: 6.

There was great joy at **Creation**?Job 38: 7. At the **Coming of Christ**?Matt. 2: 10. At the **Resurrection of Christ**?Matt. 28: 8. At the **Ascension of Christ**?Luke 24: 52. At the **Conversion of the Gentiles**?Acts 15: 3.

The **Ultimate Joy** will be when we are glorified and in the immediate presence of God?Psalm 16: 11.

Joy is good for us?Nehemiah 8: 10. God has commanded us to rejoice in Him?Phil. 4: 4.

There is a wonderful description of the children of Israel when they were delivered from captivity. This is only a foretaste of how we feel when we are delivered from spiritual bondage, and ultimately when we have been delivered from our sinful natures and are admitted into the glorious presence of God. Isaiah 35:10, "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The One Who had rescued them from captivity was the Lord. [When this word is in small capitals in the KJV in the Old Testament, it refers to Jehovah, the Covenant God of Israel.]

Verse 2?Even the heathen recognized that the God of Israel had done something remarkable for His people. John Gill says about this: “it was taken notice of by the Chaldeans, among whom they had been captives, and by all the nations round about: and it was wonderful to them, that Cyrus, an Heathen prince, of his own motion and will, should at once, and without any price or reward, let them go, and send them into their own country to rebuild their temple; and with them the vessels of the Lord's house, that had been taken away by the king of Babylon; and order men to help them, with gold and silver, and goods and cattle...”

Verse 3?William Gadsby the English Particular Baptist preacher used this wonderful verse for the text of a sermon “The Great Things God Has Done For His People” on Sept. 13, 1838. His sermon had three parts to it:

- 1 Who the “us” is?The elect of God.
- 2 Some of the “great things” that God has done:
Salvation.
Spiritual blessings.
Natural blessings.
- 3 These blessing make us **glad**.

Verse 4? This is a prayer for further deliverance. The Lord can do this even when circumstances make

it seem there is no possible way He can do so. The following quotation from H. C. Leupold sheds light on this verse: 'In the South Land... are many *wadis*, stream beds that are dry eleven months out of twelve and apparently unable to produce even a trickle of water. When, however, the rainy season comes, they fill up quickly and often become raging torrents. So completely can the Lord change the status of His people. See Isaiah 41: 18.

Verse 5? Sometimes the people would "sow in tears" because things were so dry it seemed that their seed would not germinate and produce plants. However, when the unexpected rains came, the sadness was turned into gladness. Even when things look dark we must sow in **fervent prayer** and in **dedicated obedient service**. See Hosea 10: 12.

Verse 6? This verse amplifies the thought of verse 5. A man is sowing, patiently plodding along, but grieving over the apparent hopelessness of it all. Now, after the unexpected harvest, he is now bearing the sheaves that have grown from the seeds that were sown in faith. He is jubilant and rejoicing. Leupold closes out his commentary on this encouraging psalm by writing: "With that happy outcome the psalm closes by admonishing Israel and all people of God at all times faithfully to perform their given tasks and to wait for the Lord's blessing which will surely not be wanting." Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Psalms 30:5, "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."