

Streams in the Desert — Harvest of Joy



With Thanksgiving
 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” *Phil 4:6-7*

Introduction: After 70 years in captivity the people of God start the return trip to Zion. It’s like a dream! And when you and I are set free from the bondage of sin and death and the [captivity] of this world—it is cause for giving thanks.

A. A **Dream** Comes True :1-3 **Thankful for Salvation**

1. When we realize what God has done for us by His grace we can hardly believe it—it’s like a dream :1
2. This is a call to thanksgiving :2
3. Even the nations [*goyim*] recognized the mighty works of God. :2
4. At last the people ‘own the joy’ :3

B. A **Desert** Blooms :4 **Thankful for Sanctification**

1. Like the Negev that was arid and barren, so were the spiritual lives of the people.
2. The wilderness would blossom after the seasonal rains just as we blossom as the Spirit rains down (*or in and through*) us. *Acts 1:8; John 7:37-39*
3. This may also be a metaphor of a coming harvest of souls that starts as a trickle and soon is a roaring river.

C. A **Door** is Opened :5-6 **Thankful for the Harvest**

1. Once the river of verse :4 starts to flow—it is a sign of future abundance.
2. The Israelites had to rebuild the land so they could live in it. It was a painfully slow process of replanting the fields, growing the livestock and building shelter.
3. As we have been saved by grace—we must take the message of the gospel using the ‘river of living water’ [*the Holy Spirit John 7:37-39*] as our source of power and life—and sow into the lives of those around us. [*See also Matt 13:1-9; 18-23 Parable of the Sower*]
4. We need to have the same burden for ‘restoring’ [*saving*] the lost that the Israelites had for restoring the land.
5. Tears turn to thanksgiving and joy when the harvest is brought in. :6

Psalm 126 *NKJV*

:1 **A Song of Ascents.**

When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.

: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.

:4 Bring back our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the South [*Negev*].

:5 Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

:6 He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Psalm 126 *NLT*

:1 **A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.**

When the LORD brought back His exiles to Jerusalem, it was like a dream!

:2 We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, "What amazing things the LORD has done for them."

:3 Yes, the LORD has done amazing things for us! What joy!

:4 Restore our fortunes, LORD, as streams renew the desert.

:5 Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy.

:6 They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.