

Prayer

The feast day of your birth resembles You, Lord
Because it brings joy to all humanity.
Old people and infants alike enjoy your day.
Your day is celebrated
from generation to generation.
Kings and emperors may pass away,
And the festivals to commemorate them soon lapse.
But your festival
will be remembered until the end of time.
Your day is a means and a pledge of peace.
At Your birth heaven and earth were reconciled,
Since you came from heaven to earth on that day
You forgave our sins and wiped away our guilt.
You gave us so many gifts on the day of your birth:
A treasure chest of spiritual medicines for the sick;
Spiritual light for the blind;
The cup of salvation for the thirsty;
The bread of life for the hungry.
In the winter when trees are bare,
You give us the most succulent spiritual fruit.
In the frost when the earth is barren,
You bring new hope to our souls.
In December when seeds are hidden in the soil,
The staff of life springs forth from the virgin womb
(St. Ephraim the Syrian (AD 306-373))

Bible passage: Isaiah 5:7-12.

Verse 7 -

Play on words that sound similar in Hebrew; justice & bloodshed, and righteousness & help.
(See also Mt. 21:33-46, Mk. 12:1-12, Lk. 20:9-19).

Verse 8 -

Woe to greedy landowners. 'Woe' being a forewarning of impending judgement.
Yet it is a broad application to all those who take more than they need while others suffer.
(See also Lev. 25:23, 2 Chron. 26:10)

Verse 9 -This is the pronounced judgement: the houses will be vacant, the land unproductive, the property deteriorating.

Verse 10 -

The effort isn't bringing results. Using a ten kilo bag of seeds to sew a crop that produces only one kilo in return.
(See also Deut. 28:38-39).

Verse 11 -

All the early rising is only to pursue more 'fun' or self-interest.
(See also Ecc. 10:16).

Verse 12 -

Imagine being so blinded by your own life, that you couldn't even see beauty around you? Many people are there right now.
(See also Amos 4:1-3, 6:6-7 as confirmation of this type of behaviour being of the Israelites at the time).

So easy to get caught up... one thing after another... it starts small
But that's how to plan... big rocks in first, then the smaller rocks, then sand, then water...

What're your big rocks going to be? Health, family, God?

What're the small rocks? Work, career, savings?

What's the sand? The daily tasks, the minutiae, incidentals?

What's the water? The life giving, life **defining** things... will you actively plan for that?

Prayer

Let the just rejoice,
for their justifier is born.
Let the sick and infirm rejoice,
For their saviour is born.
Let the captives rejoice,
For their Redeemer is born.
Let slaves rejoice,
for their Master is born.
Let free men rejoice,
For their Liberator is born.
Let All Christians rejoice,
For Jesus Christ is born.
(St. Augustine of Hippo - AD 354-440)