

Isaiah 17:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

Analysis

'In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.' The cultivated plants initially thrive—rapid growth suggesting apparent success. But the harvest produces only a 'heap' (ned—heap of ruins) in the day of 'grief' (nachaleh—sickness) and 'desperate sorrow' (keev anush—incurable pain). Fertility cult practices seemed to work temporarily, but ultimately failed catastrophically. This illustrates false religion's pattern: initial apparent success masking ultimate futility. The contrast between morning flourishing and harvest grief emphasizes the tragic reversal—hopes dashed, efforts wasted, sorrows multiplied. Sin's wages always come due (Romans 6:23).

Historical Context

Fertility religions promised agricultural prosperity through ritualized sex acts, sacred planting, and seasonal celebrations. These seemed to 'work' in sense that crops sometimes flourished—but natural cycles and God's common grace were the actual causes. When judgment came (drought, invasion, conquest), these practices failed utterly. The promised 'harvest' of blessing became a 'heap' of ruins and sorrow. Historical records show that pagan nations consistently experienced this pattern—temporary prosperity followed by judgment and collapse. Only covenant faithfulness provides lasting security; all other foundations prove illusory.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does temporary success followed by catastrophic failure teach about false religion's deceptive nature?
2. How does the contrast between morning flourishing and harvest grief illustrate sin's ultimately disastrous consequences?
3. Why do people continue trusting false securities despite evidence they eventually fail?

Interlinear Text

בַּיּוֹם תַּעֲשֶׂה נֶעֱשֶׂה תְּשַׁגַּשׁ גַּם בְּבֹבֶן קָרֶב
In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow and in the morning
H3117 H5194 H7735 H1242

תְּשַׁגַּשׁ יְמִינְךָ תְּפַרְּחֶה זַרְעֶךָ בְּבֹבֶן יְמִינְךָ
shalt thou make thy seed to flourish shall be a heap but the harvest In the day
H2233 H6524 H5067 H7105 H3117

אֲנֹשֶׁן וְכָא בְּגַחַל הַ
of grief sorrow and of desperate
H2470 H3511 H605

Additional Cross-References

Job 4:8 (Parallel theme): Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Hosea 8:7 (Parallel theme): For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

Psalms 90:6 (Parallel theme): In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

Jeremiah 5:31 (Parallel theme): The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

Romans 2:5 (Parallel theme): But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Hosea 9:16 (Parallel theme): Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.