

# Isaiah 28:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

## Analysis

**And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.** Continuing the flower imagery from verse 1, Isaiah adds a second metaphor: **the hasty fruit before the summer** (bikkurah betereṃ qayits, בִּכּוּרָה בְּטֶרֶם קַיִץ, first-ripe fig before summer harvest). Early figs appearing before the main harvest were prized delicacies, eagerly devoured immediately upon discovery. The phrase **which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up** depicts someone spotting the fig, grabbing it, and consuming it instantly—all one swift action.

Applied to Samaria, this means Assyria will devour the city as quickly as someone eats a rare early fig—no resistance, no delay, complete consumption. What Ephraim considered their glorious beauty, their enemies will consume greedily. Micah 7:1 similarly laments the scarcity of early figs representing righteous people. Jesus cursed a fruitless fig tree (Matthew 21:19), and used fig imagery for Israel's judgment (Luke 13:6-9). The double metaphor (fading flower + devoured fig) emphasizes both transience and total loss.

## Historical Context

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Samaria's conquest fulfilled this precisely. After three-year siege (2 Kings 17:5), the city fell and was quickly absorbed into the Assyrian Empire. Unlike Judah which experienced multiple invasions but survived, Northern Israel was consumed entirely—ten tribes scattered, never restored as a nation. Assyria 'ate up' this prize eagerly. For the church, this warns against trusting in external glories (buildings, numbers, prestige) that can be quickly lost. Only what's built on Christ endures (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What does the 'hasty fruit' imagery teach about how quickly human glories can be consumed and lost?
2. How should awareness of life's transience affect believers' priorities and investments?
3. What are you building that will last beyond this life, versus temporary 'early figs' that will be quickly consumed?

## Interlinear Text

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אֶשׁ רַ תְּפָאֶרֶת וּ	צִיָּצַ תּ וְהָ יָתָה	נִבֵּל	צָבִי		
H834	H1961				
beauty	flower	shall be a fading	And the glorious		
H8597	H6733	H5034	H6643		
בֶּטֶרָם	רֹאשׁ	שְׁמֵן יַם	בְּכֹכָה	עַל	
H2962					
and as the hasty fruit	which is on the head	valley	of the fat		
H1061	H7218	H1516	H8081		
בְּעוֹדָהּ	אֶשׁ רַ	הָרָאָה	הָרָאָה	קִיץ	
H5750	H834				
upon it seeth	upon it seeth	before the summer			
H7200	H7200	H7019			
יִבְלַעְנָהּ:	בְּכַפּוֹ				
H1104	H3709				
he eateth it up	while it is yet in his hand				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Nahum 3:12** (Parallel theme): All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater.

**Micah 7:1** (Parallel theme): Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grapegleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit.

**Isaiah 28:1** (Glory): Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

**Hosea 6:4** (Parallel theme): O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.