

Jeremiah 40:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.

Analysis

The detail that returnees 'gathered wine and summer fruits very much' demonstrates the fulfillment of Gedaliah's promise that cooperation with Babylon would bring prosperity (verse 10). The abundance ('very much') shows God's blessing on obedience to His revealed will through Jeremiah. This agricultural success wasn't merely pragmatic outcome but theological vindication: those who accepted God's disciplinary judgment and worked within it experienced His provision, while those who had resisted ended up destroyed or exiled. The emphasis on productivity serves multiple purposes: it showed life could continue meaningfully under Babylonian governance; it provided economic stability necessary for community restoration; and it demonstrated that God's blessing wasn't withheld merely because political circumstances were less than ideal. This abundance contrasts sharply with the famine that plagued Jerusalem during the siege (Jeremiah 38:9, 52:6), showing that submission to God's purposes brings sustenance while resistance brings deprivation. The verse also establishes the material prosperity that made Judah attractive to those plotting against Gedaliah—Ishmael's conspiracy (41:1-3) wasn't merely political but also economic opportunism, seeking to control a territory that was recovering productivity. True prosperity comes through aligning with God's purposes, not merely through favorable circumstances.

Historical Context

The successful harvest of 'wine and summer fruits very much' in late 586 BC represented remarkable recovery given that Jerusalem's siege and destruction had occurred just weeks or months earlier. Summer fruits (qayits) included figs, dates, and grapes—crops from established orchards and vineyards rather than annual plantings. This indicates that areas outside Jerusalem (where most fighting concentrated) maintained agricultural infrastructure relatively intact. The abundance also suggests the previous year's agricultural cycle had proceeded normally in rural areas, meaning farmers outside Jerusalem had continued working despite the siege. Wine production required not just harvested grapes but also time for processing and fermentation, indicating longer-term stability expectations. The prosperity attracted envy and attention from neighboring powers like Ammon (whose king Baalis would instigate Gedaliah's assassination, 40:14), who saw a recovering Judah as either threat or opportunity for plunder. This brief economic recovery demonstrates how quickly agricultural societies can rebound when security and governance provide minimal stability. Archaeological surveys of Judean sites from this period show that while Jerusalem lay devastated, surrounding towns and rural areas maintained habitation and agricultural activity, consistent with this verse's depiction.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse illustrate the principle that obedience to God's will—even in difficult circumstances—opens paths to His blessing?
2. What does the contrast between abundance under Gedaliah's governance and famine during Jerusalem's rebellious siege teach about consequences of opposing versus accepting God's discipline?

3. In what ways can material prosperity become a spiritual danger rather than blessing, as suggested by how this abundance attracted violent conspirators?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּשׁוּ בוֹ	כָּל	הַיְּהוּדִים	מִכָּל	הַמְּקוֹמוֹת	אֶשְׁרֵי
returned out	H3605	Even all the Jews	H3605	of all places	H834
H7725		H3064		H4725	
נִדְחוּ	שָׁם	וַיָּבֹאוּ	אֶרֶץ	יְהוּדָה	אֶל
whither they were driven	H8033	and came	to the land	of Judah	H413
H5080		H935	H776	H3063	H1436
הַמִּצְפָּה	וַיֵּאָסְפוּ	יַיִן	וְפֵרוֹת	הַרְבֵּה	מְאֹד:
unto Mizpah	and gathered	wine	and summer fruits	much	very
H4708	H622	H3196	H7019	H7235	H3966

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 43:5 (Parallel theme): But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;