

Jeremiah 8:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Analysis

God responds to the people's questions with His own: 'Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?' The Hebrew *hikh'isuni* (הַקְרִיבוּנִי) indicates deliberate provocation, not accidental offense. 'Graven images' (*pesilim*, פְּסִילִים) are carved idols; 'strange vanities' (*havlei nekhar*, הַבְּלִי נְכָר) are foreign empty things—pagan deities from neighboring nations. The people ask why God abandoned Zion; God asks why they abandoned Him for worthless substitutes. The harvest imagery follows: 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' *qatsir* (קָצֵר, harvest) and *qayits* (קַיִץ, summer) represent the agricultural seasons. When harvest and summer fruit-gathering end without producing adequate food, famine is certain. The window for salvation has closed.

Historical Context

Palestine's agricultural calendar featured grain harvest in spring (April-June) and fruit harvest in late summer (August-September). If these seasons failed, the following year brought starvation. The metaphor applied spiritually: opportunities for repentance had passed like seasons, and judgment was now inevitable. This verse is often quoted to express missed opportunities for salvation, though the original context addresses national judgment rather than individual conversion.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do God's counter-questions redirect the people's theological complaints back to their own responsibility?
2. What spiritual 'harvest seasons' have we experienced, and have we responded appropriately?

Interlinear Text

לֹא אָמַת חֵן כִּי לְהַבְּרִיא בְּקָצְרָה יְמִינָה
is past The harvest is ended the summer H587 H3808
H5674 H7105 H3615 H7019

נוֹשָׁעָנוּ:

and we are not saved

H3467

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:5 (Parallel theme): He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

Luke 13:25 (Parallel theme): When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: