

Joel 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers,
for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the
field is perished.

Analysis

"Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers" commands farmers to lament. The Hebrew *bosh* (ashamed) indicates confusion, disappointment, and recognition of failure. Farmers who worked diligently now face total crop failure—not due to laziness but divine judgment. "For the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished" lists staple grains destroyed. Wheat and barley provided bread—the staff of life. Their loss meant famine. This teaches that human labor, however diligent, cannot succeed apart from God's blessing (Psalm 127:1-2). The Reformed doctrine of providence affirms God's active governance over all events, including weather, harvests, and economic outcomes. Success isn't automatic reward for effort—it's gift from God who causes growth (1 Corinthians 3:7).

Historical Context

Ancient agriculture depended entirely on rainfall, soil fertility, and absence of pests—all beyond human control. A locust plague could devastate years of labor in hours. The covenant explicitly linked agricultural prosperity to obedience (Leviticus 26:3-5, Deuteronomy 28:1-14) and failure to disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-24). This wasn't mechanical cause-effect but covenantal relationship—God blesses faithfulness, withdraws blessing from rebellion.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that success depends on God's blessing, not just hard work, combat both pride and despair?
2. In what ways do modern people presume control over outcomes that ultimately depend on divine providence?

Interlinear Text

הֵב יִשׁוּ H954	אֲכָרִים O ye husbandmen H406	הִיל יִלּוּ howl H3213	כָּרְמֵי יִם O ye vinedressers H3755	עַל H5921	חֲטָה for the wheat H2406
וְעַל H5921	שְׂעֵרֶה and for the barley H8184	כִּי H3588	אֲבִד is perished H6	קִצְ יִר because the harvest H7105	שָׂדֶה: of the field H7704

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 17:11 (Parallel theme): 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.

Jeremiah 9:12 (Parallel theme): Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?