

Joel 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Analysis

"The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered" catalogs comprehensive agricultural devastation. Every fruit tree fails. The final clause is devastating: "because joy is withered away from the sons of men." The Hebrew *chabash* (withered/dried up) used for trees now describes human joy—when God withdraws blessings, joy disappears. This teaches that true joy depends on God's favor, not circumstances. Fallen humanity seeks joy in creation (food, drink, pleasure) rather than Creator. When God removes these secondary goods, He exposes the bankruptcy of idolatry—created things cannot satisfy. Only God Himself brings lasting joy (Psalm 16:11, John 15:11).

Historical Context

The listed trees—vine, fig, pomegranate, palm, apple—were Israel's primary fruit sources, each with symbolic significance. The vine represented Israel (Psalm 80:8-16, Isaiah 5:1-7), the fig tree peace and prosperity (1 Kings 4:25), the pomegranate and palm abundance. Their collective failure symbolized comprehensive covenant curse. This imagery would have been viscerally powerful to an agricultural society whose survival depended on these crops.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Where do you seek joy—in God Himself or in gifts He provides?
2. How does loss of temporal blessings reveal whether your faith rests in God or His benefits?

Interlinear Text

הַגֶּפֶן	הָבַיִשׁ	וְהַתְּאֵנָה	אֲמֵלָלָהּ	רִמּוֹן	גַּם
The vine	are withered	and the fig tree	languisheth	the pomegranate	H1571
H1612	H3001	H8384	H535	H7416	
תְּמָר	וְתַפְּחִי	כָּל	עֵץ	הַשָּׂדֶה	
tree the palm tree	also and the apple tree	H3605	even all the trees	of the field	
H8558	H8598		H6086	H7704	
הָבַיִשׁ	כִּי	הָבַיִשׁ	שֶׁשׁוֹן	מִן	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
are withered	H3588	are withered	because joy	H4480	from the sons of men
H3001		H3001	H8342	H1121	H120

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 24:11 (Parallel theme): There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

Isaiah 16:10 (Parallel theme): And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.

Joel 1:16 (Parallel theme): Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

Joel 1:10 (Parallel theme): The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

Song of Solomon 2:3: As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Isaiah 9:3 (Parallel theme): Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

Psalms 92:12 (Parallel theme): The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Psalms 4:7 (Parallel theme): Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

Jeremiah 48:33 (Parallel theme): And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting.

Jeremiah 48:3 (Parallel theme): A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction.