

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

בַּתְּפַתְּאָתְּ הַבָּשָׂר אָמַל לָהּ רַמְּמָה גַּם
The vine are withered and the fig tree languisheth the pomegranate H1571
H1612 H3001 H8384 H535 H7416

תְּפַתְּמָה רַמְּמָה כָּל עַצְּמָה שְׂדָה
tree the palm tree also and the apple tree even all the trees of the field H7704
H8558 H8598 H3605 H6086

בַּתְּפַתְּאָתְּ הַבָּשָׂר שְׁשָׂרָה מִן בְּנֵי אָדָם
are withered are withered because joy from the sons of men H120
H3001 H3588 H8342 H4480 H1121

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.