

Joel 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness
from the house of our God?

Analysis

Is not the meat cut off before our eyes (halo okhel nikhrat le'neghed enenu)—The rhetorical question demands acknowledgment of obvious devastation. 'Meat' (okhel, literally 'food') includes all agricultural sustenance, not just animal flesh. The locust plague has destroyed the grain offerings.

Yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God (simchah ve-gil mibeit Elohenu)—No grain means no offerings, and no offerings means no temple celebrations. The Hebrew terms simchah (joy) and gil (gladness/exultation) describe the festal worship commanded in Deuteronomy 16:14-15. When material sustenance fails, worship itself becomes impossible—revealing Israel's dependence on God's provision for both physical and spiritual life. This anticipated the devastation of 586 BC when the temple was destroyed.

Historical Context

Joel likely prophesied during the Persian period (post-exilic, c. 400 BC) or possibly during Joash's reign (835-796 BC). The locust plague was both literal and symbolic, foreshadowing later judgment. The temple stood, but its worship required agricultural prosperity—which locusts decimated.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the loss of 'joy and gladness' from worship reveal your dependence on circumstances versus the condition of your heart?
2. What does it mean when natural disasters disrupt religious observance—is it mere misfortune or divine speech?
3. How do material blessings enable spiritual worship, and what happens when they're removed?

Interlinear Text

וְהָלַךְ	וְגָד	עֵינֵי יְהוָה	אֵל כָּל	נִכְרָת	מִבֵּית
H3808	H5048	before our eyes	Is not the meat	cut off	from the house
		H5869	H400	H3772	H1004
יְהוָה	שִׂמְחָה	וְגִיל:			
of our God	yea joy	and gladness			
H430	H8057	H1524			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 43:4 (References God): Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.