

Joel 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

Analysis

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree" describes agricultural devastation. The vine and fig tree symbolized peace, prosperity, and covenant blessing throughout Scripture (1 Kings 4:25, Micah 4:4, Zechariah 3:10). Their destruction signals covenant curse—God removing blessings promised for obedience (Deuteronomy 28:30, 39). The phrase "made it clean bare" uses Hebrew *chasap* (strip off, bare) indicating total defoliation. "The branches thereof are made white" describes bare, bleached branches after locusts stripped all foliage—an image of death and desolation. This devastation illustrates covenant theology: God blesses obedience, judges disobedience. The Reformed understanding emphasizes that these temporal judgments typologically point to eternal realities. As locusts physically devastated the land, so sin spiritually devastates souls. Yet as God later promises restoration (2:25), He ultimately provides eschatological restoration through Christ.

Historical Context

Vines and figs were primary crops in ancient Israel, requiring years to mature. Their destruction meant years of lost productivity and food shortage. God's covenant with Israel explicitly connected agricultural prosperity to obedience (Leviticus 26:3-5, Deuteronomy 28:1-14) and agricultural disaster to disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-24, 38-40). The prophets frequently used agricultural imagery

to communicate spiritual realities—barren land symbolizing spiritual barrenness, fruitful land representing covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God claims ownership ("my vine," "my fig tree") while judging His people's enjoyment of them?
2. How do temporal losses serve as warnings about eternal spiritual realities?

Interlinear Text

שׁ ה	גִּפְנִי	לְשָׁמָּה	וּתְאֵנָתִי	לְקַצֹּץ ה	בְּשָׁפָה	בְּשָׁפָה
He hath laid	my vine	waste	my fig tree	and barked	bare	bare
H7760	H1612	H8047	H8384	H7111	H2834	H2834
וְהִשָּׁל יְהוָה	הֵלֶבֶת יֵנּוּ	שְׂרֵיטֵיהֶם				
and cast it away	thereof are made white	the branches				
H7993	H3835	H8299				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:6 (Parallel theme): And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Amos 4:9 (Parallel theme): I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Joel 1:12 (Parallel theme): 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.

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