

Micah 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grapegleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit.

Analysis

Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grapegleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit. Micah laments social and moral desolation using agricultural metaphor. **כִּי הִיִּתִי כָּאָסְפֵי-קָיִץ** (allai-li, "Woe is me!") expresses deep anguish. **כִּי הִיִּתִי כָּאָסְפֵי-קָיִץ** (ki hayiti khe-ospei-qayits khe-olelot batsir, "for I am as gatherings of summer fruit, as gleanings of vintage") describes arriving after harvest when fields are stripped bare.

אֵין אַשְׁקָוֹל לְאַכְלָל (ein eshkol le'ekhol, "there is no cluster to eat"). **אַשְׁקָוֹל** (eshkol) is a grape cluster. The harvest imagery depicts complete depletion—no fruit remains. **בְּכִירָה אֹתֶת נַפְשִׁי** (bikkurah ivvetah nafshi, "the early fig my soul desired"). **בְּכִירָה** (bikkurah) is the first-ripe fruit, especially prized (Hosea 9:10; Nahum 3:12). Micah's soul longs for righteous people (the "first-fruits") but finds none.

This agricultural metaphor illustrates spiritual reality: godly people have been "harvested" (removed through death, exile, or apostasy), leaving moral wasteland. Isaiah used similar imagery: "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint" (Isaiah 1:5). When righteousness disappears from society, the faithful feel isolated desolation. Paul later quoted this sentiment: "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Philippians 2:21).

Historical Context

Micah 7:1-6 depicts late 8th century BC Judah's moral collapse. The northern kingdom had fallen to Assyria (722 BC); Judah faced similar threats. Social fabric disintegrated—leaders oppressed the poor (3:1-3), prophets deceived for profit (3:5-7), courts perverted justice (7:3). Even family relationships fractured (7:6). The righteous felt isolated in a sea of corruption. This mirrors later periods: Jeremiah's era (Jeremiah 5:1-5), Ezekiel's generation (Ezekiel 22:23-31), and Paul's description of end-times apostasy (2 Timothy 3:1-5). When society's moral foundation erodes, the faithful experience profound loneliness—"first-fruits" are rare, righteousness scarce. Yet God always preserves a remnant (1 Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4-5).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond to living in a morally depleted society where righteousness seems scarce?
2. What does it mean to long for 'first-fruits' of righteousness—how do we cultivate this desire?
3. How can the faithful avoid despair when godliness appears to have vanished from the land?

Interlinear Text

כִּי יִתְּהַלֵּל אַלְלֵי

Woe

H0

H3588

H1961

כִּאָסְפִּי

is me! for I am as when they have gathered

H625

H480

בְּצִיר אֵז

כְּעַלְלָת

the summer fruits

as the grape gleanings

בְּצִיר

אֵין

אֲשֶׁר וְל

there is no cluster

H7019

H5955

H1210

H811

לְאַכְּל

בְּכֹל הַ

אֶת הַ

נַפְשִׁי

to eat

the firstripe fruit

desired

my soul

H398

H1063

H183

H5315

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 28:4 (Parallel theme): And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

Hosea 9:10 (Parallel theme): I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

Isaiah 24:13 (Parallel theme): When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleanings grapes when the vintage is done.

Isaiah 17:6 (Parallel theme): Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.