

Micah 7:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.

Analysis

Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate (vehayetah ha'arets lishmamah, **אַתָּה שְׁמַמָּה בָּאָרֶץ לֹא**). The particle "notwithstanding" signals contrast: despite promises of restoration (vv. 11-12), judgment must first come. Shemamah (**שְׁמַמָּה**, "desolation") describes utter devastation—empty, ruined land. This was fulfilled in Judah's Babylonian conquest (586 BC) and the subsequent 70-year desolation (Jeremiah 25:11).

Because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings (al-yosheveha mipperi ma'aleyhem, **עַל-שְׁבֵיחַ מִפְרִי מַעַלְלֵיכֶם**). The causation is explicit: the land's desolation results from inhabitants' sins. Peri (**פְּרִי**, "fruit") indicates consequences—sin produces judgment as fruit comes from a tree. Ma'al (**מַעַל**, "deeds/practices") refers to habitual actions, particularly covenant violations. This demonstrates the biblical principle of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8).

The verse teaches that restoration comes through judgment, not bypassing it. Israel couldn't avoid exile's consequences simply by hearing comforting promises. Sin must be addressed; discipline must be endured. Yet judgment isn't final—beyond desolation lies restoration (vv. 14-15). This pattern applies spiritually: genuine restoration requires genuine repentance and acceptance of discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11). Christ bore the ultimate desolation (Matthew 27:46) so we could receive restoration.

Historical Context

Judah experienced progressive desolation: Assyrian invasion (701 BC) devastated much of the land; Babylonian campaigns (605, 597, 586 BC) climaxed in Jerusalem's destruction and 70 years of exile. The land literally became desolate—population deported, cities ruined, agriculture ceased. This fulfilled prophetic warnings (Leviticus 26:31-35; Deuteronomy 28:49-52). Yet desolation wasn't permanent. After 70 years, God restored a remnant (Ezra 1-2). The principle: covenant violation produces judgment, but God's covenant faithfulness ensures eventual restoration. This anticipates Christ who bore curse for our sins (Galatians 3:13), making permanent restoration possible.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the necessity of desolation before restoration challenge modern desires for 'cheap grace' without genuine repentance?
2. What does the 'fruit of their doings' principle teach about personal and corporate responsibility for sin's consequences?
3. How does Christ's bearing of ultimate desolation (the cross) provide hope beyond our own desolations?

Interlinear Text

וְיִמְתַּחַת	בְּאֶרֶץ	לְשָׁמֶן הַ	עַל
H1961		Notwithstanding the land	shall be desolate
	H776		H8077
וְיִשְׁבּוּ	מִפְרַץ	מִעַלְלִיכֶם:	
because of them that dwell	therein for the fruit	of their doings	
H3427	H6529	H4611	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 25:11 (Parallel theme): And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 17:10 (Parallel theme): I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org