

Psalm 129:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:

Analysis

The judgment continues with agricultural metaphor: 'Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up.' The comparison to 'grass upon housetops' describes something that appears to thrive briefly but has no sustaining root. Ancient flat roofs could sprout grass from windblown seeds, but shallow soil meant quick withering. The phrase 'withereth afore it groweth up' emphasizes premature death - before reaching maturity or producing fruit. This pictures enemies' apparent success as temporary and superficial. They may appear strong initially, but lacking deep roots, they quickly perish. The imagery promises that opposition to Zion, though sometimes appearing successful, will ultimately fail and disappear without accomplishing its purpose.

Historical Context

The housetop grass imagery was common in ancient Palestine where flat roofs could accumulate soil and sprout temporary vegetation. The metaphor appears elsewhere (2 Kings 19:26; Isaiah 37:27) to describe enemies' futility. The image would be immediately understood by agricultural society familiar with the difference between rooted and rootless plants.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does housetop grass effectively illustrate the temporary nature of wicked opposition?
2. What does it mean to wither 'afore it groweth up' - what is lost when something dies prematurely?
3. How does this image comfort believers facing apparently successful opposition?
4. In what ways do evil systems and opponents appear successful but lack sustaining roots?
5. How does this metaphor relate to Jesus' parable about seed, soil, and withering (Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21)?

Interlinear Text

שְׁלָמָה שְׁלָמָה שְׁלָמָה
! הִיא כְּחָצֵיר גַּג וְתָמֵד שְׁלָמָה
H1961 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops afore it groweth up
H2682 H1406 H6927 H8025

וְתָמֵד:

which withereth

H3001

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 37:2 (Parallel theme): For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.