

Psalms 80:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

Analysis

She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. This verse describes Israel's maximal territorial extent, using geographical boundaries to depict the vine's spread. "She sent out her boughs unto the sea" (teshalach getsireha ad-yam, תִּשְׁלַח קִצְיֶהָ אֶדְיָם) refers to the Mediterranean Sea (western boundary), while "her branches unto the river" (ve'el-nahar yoneqoteha, וְאֶל-נָהָר יוֹנֵקוֹתֶיהָ) refers to the Euphrates River (northeastern boundary). These boundaries correspond to Abrahamic covenant promises (Genesis 15:18) and descriptions of Solomon's kingdom (1 Kings 4:21, 24).

"Boughs" (getsir, קִצְיֶהָ) literally means "cut-off shoots" or branches, while "branches" (yoneqot, יוֹנֵקוֹת) are tender shoots or suckers. The parallel terms emphasize comprehensive expansion—not just main trunk but all extensions reaching maximum covenant boundaries. The vine didn't merely survive but aggressively extended, filling all available space. The verbs suggest active growth and reaching, not passive spreading—Israel actively fulfilled its mandate to possess the land.

The geographical specificity grounds the vineyard metaphor in political-territorial reality: this isn't merely spiritual flourishing but actual dominion over promised land. God's covenant included land possession (Genesis 12:1, 7; 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 1:7-8), and this verse celebrates covenant fulfillment under David-Solomon. The subsequent devastation (verses 12-13) is therefore not just

agricultural disaster but covenant crisis—the land is being lost, suggesting covenant is failing.

Historical Context

Israel's territorial extent reached from Mediterranean to Euphrates only briefly, during David and Solomon's reigns (approximately 1010-930 BC). After Solomon's death, the kingdom divided (930 BC), and the northern territory progressively lost ground to Aramean, then Assyrian powers. By 722 BC, Assyria had conquered all northern territory. The psalm's nostalgia for this brief golden age reflects later recognition that only divine blessing could have produced such extensive influence. Prophets promised restoration would ultimately exceed even Solomonic glory (Isaiah 11:10-16; Ezekiel 47:13-23).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How should Christians understand covenant promises that had specific historical-territorial fulfillment for Israel but spiritual application for the church?
2. What is the relationship between maximal blessing/expansion and subsequent decline—does success make covenant people vulnerable to pride and apostasy?
3. How can believers maintain hope for restored fruitfulness when current circumstances fall far short of past glory or potential promise?

Interlinear Text

תִּשְׁלַח	קִצִּיֶּהָ	עַד	יָם	וְאֶל	נָהָר
She sent out	her boughs	H5704	unto the sea	H413	unto the river
H7971	H7105		H3220		H5104
וְנִקְוֹתֶיהָ:					
and her branches					
H3127					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 72:8 (Parallel theme): He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.