

Psalms 90:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

Analysis

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. This verse completes the grass metaphor begun in verse 5, compressing an entire lifecycle into a single day. The parallelism between morning and evening, flourishing and withering, growth and cutting down emphasizes the shocking brevity of human life from God's eternal perspective. What seems like a lifetime to us is but a day to Him.

"In the morning it flourisheth" (בָּבֹקֶר יִצִּיץ/baboqer yatzitz) uses tzutz (to bloom, blossom, sparkle, flourish). Morning represents youth, vigor, potential, hope—life at its freshest and most promising. The grass blooms beautifully, full of vitality and color. Similarly, young people flourish with energy, health, dreams, and apparent limitless future. Morning symbolizes beginning, promise, and vibrant life.

"And groweth up" (וַעֲלָאֵף/vechalaf) means to sprout up, spring forth, grow. The grass doesn't merely exist but actively grows, reaching upward, expanding, developing. This captures life's dynamic quality—not static being but active becoming, growth, development, striving. Human life in its prime appears to be progressing, building, achieving, moving forward.

"In the evening it is cut down" (לָעֶרֶב יִמּוֹלֵל/la'erev yemolel) introduces the shocking reversal. Erev (evening) represents old age, decline, life's end. Molel means to cut off, circumcise, wither away. The verb suggests both external cutting (like harvesting) and internal withering. Evening brings not gentle fading but decisive

cutting—death comes as harvest, severing life from its source. What flourished at morning is cut down by evening.

"And withereth" (וַיֵּבֶשׁ/veyavesh) from yavesh (to dry up, wither, be ashamed) emphasizes complete loss of vitality. The grass that was green, moist, alive becomes brown, dry, dead. All moisture, color, and life drain away. This represents death's totality—not partial diminishment but complete cessation of vitality, leaving only dried husk of what was once alive.

Historical Context

The single-day lifecycle compresses human experience from God's perspective (v.4—a thousand years as yesterday). While humans experience decades, from divine vantage our entire life is but one day: morning birth/youth, midday prime, evening old age/death. This relativizes human achievement and pride—all our building, striving, and accomplishing happens in one brief day before evening comes.

The cutting metaphor reflects agricultural reality. Farmers harvested grain by cutting stalks, gathering them for threshing. The harvest represented both blessing (provision) and ending (plants died). In Scripture, harvest often symbolizes divine judgment (Joel 3:13, Matthew 13:30, Revelation 14:15-16). God harvests each generation, gathering them from earth to face judgment.

Jesus used similar imagery: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 6:30). The grass exists today, is burned tomorrow—emphasizing transience and God's greater care for people than grass. Yet the underlying reality remains: grass (and humans) are temporary.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does compressing life into a single day (morning to evening) change your perspective on how you spend your time and energy?
2. What is the relationship between life's 'morning' flourishing and 'evening' withering, and how should awareness of evening affect morning priorities?
3. How can believers maintain hope and purpose while acknowledging that we flourish briefly then wither—what gives human life lasting significance despite its brevity?

Interlinear Text

בִּבְקֹר	וְצִיץ	וְקָמַל	לָעֶרֶב	יִמּוּל
In the morning	it flourisheth	and groweth up	in the evening	it is cut down
H1242	H6692	H2498	H6153	H4135
וְיָבֵשׁ:				
and withereth				
H3001				

Additional Cross-References

Job 14:2 (Parallel theme): He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

Psalms 92:7 (Parallel theme): When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:

Matthew 6:30 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

James 1:11 (Parallel theme): For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

