

Ezekiel 6:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,

Analysis

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God commands Ezekiel to "set thy face" (sim panekha, שִׁמְפָנֵךְ) toward "the mountains of Israel"—a posture of confrontation and judgment. The title "Son of man" (ben-adam, בֶן-אָדָם) appears over 90 times in Ezekiel, emphasizing the prophet's humanity in contrast to God's divinity. Mortal man becomes mouthpiece for eternal God, highlighting the graciousness of divine condescension in using human instruments.

"Mountains of Israel" represents the entire land, using synecdoche (part for whole). Mountains held religious significance—high places where idolatrous worship occurred (verse 3). By addressing the land itself, God emphasizes that creation bears witness to covenant violation and will participate in judgment (Romans 8:19-22). The command to "prophesy against them" reverses the mountains' intended purpose—they should evoke praise for the Creator (Psalm 148:9) but instead provoke judgment due to idolatry practiced there.

This personification of creation as recipient of prophetic word appears throughout Scripture (Isaiah 1:2; Micah 6:1-2). Heaven and earth testify as covenant witnesses, witnessing Israel's unfaithfulness. The created order, which should glorify God through humanity's stewardship, instead suffers degradation through human sin. This points toward new creation where redeemed humanity and restored creation together glorify God (Revelation 21-22).

Historical Context

The 'mountains of Israel' hosted numerous high places (bamot) where syncretistic worship flourished. Archaeological excavations have uncovered these elevated cultic sites throughout the hill country of Israel and Judah, featuring altars, standing stones, and offering platforms. Despite repeated efforts by reforming kings to eliminate them (Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:4; Josiah in 2 Kings 23:8), high places persistently recurred.

These mountain shrines originally served Yahweh worship but increasingly incorporated Canaanite practices—fertility rites, Asherah poles, and offerings to Baal. The natural beauty and elevation of mountaintops attracted worship, but corrupted worship contaminated what God created good. The mountains themselves became defiled by the abominations committed on them, warranting divine judgment.

For the exiles in flat Mesopotamia, hearing about Israel's mountains would evoke homesickness and national identity. Yet Ezekiel's message challenges nostalgia—those beloved mountains hosted covenant violations that brought exile. The land they longed for had been polluted by their own idolatry. Only after judgment purified the high places could restoration occur.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does God addressing creation itself teach about the cosmic scope of sin and judgment?

2. How does the title 'Son of man' emphasize both humanity's weakness and God's grace in using human instruments?
3. In what ways do beautiful natural settings become occasions for sin when used for false worship?

Interlinear Text

בָּן	וּ	אָדָם	אָדָם	שָׁם	פָּנָיְךָ	אֶל	כְּרָנָן	וְ	יְהִיאָה	לִשְׂרָאֵל
Son	of man	set	thy face				toward the mountains		of Israel	
H1121	H120	H7760	H6440				H2022		H3478	

אַלְיָמִם: וְהַנִּבְאֵת
and prophecy H413
H5012

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 19:9 (References Israel): And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 34:14 (References Israel): I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 25:2 (Prophecy): Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them;

Ezekiel 33:28 (References Israel): For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

Ezekiel 37:22 (References Israel): And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

Ezekiel 35:12 (References Israel): And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume.

Ezekiel 13:17 (Prophecy): Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them,

Ezekiel 21:2 (Prophecy): Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,

Ezekiel 36:1 (Prophecy): Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:

Ezekiel 20:46 (Prophecy): Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field;