

Hosea 10:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

Analysis

The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us. Aven (Beth-aven, Bethel) high places - Israel's primary sin - will be destroyed. Thorns and thistles overgrowing altars shows complete desolation and agricultural curse (Genesis 3:18). The terrified cry Cover us, Fall on us expresses desperate desire to escape judgment. Jesus quotes this (Luke 23:30) about Jerusalem's destruction. Revelation 6:16 applies it to final judgment. Better to die under falling mountains than face God's wrath. Only Christ bears wrath for believers.

Historical Context

Assyrian conquest destroyed northern shrines. Archaeological evidence shows abandoned cult sites from this period. Thorns overgrowing altars fulfilled the prophecy - desolation replacing worship. The cry to mountains appears multiple times in Scripture, always indicating extreme terror before judgment. Jesus's quotation shows pattern continuing. Modern application: those rejecting Christ will ultimately cry for anything to escape His wrath. Yet nothing shields from divine judgment except Christ Himself, who bore it for believers (Romans 8:1).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the desperate cry to mountains to fall and cover demonstrate about the terror of facing God's unmediated wrath?
2. How should this imagery drive me to Christ as only refuge from coming judgment?

Interlinear Text

בְּמַזְבְּחוֹתָם עַל הַרְבָּה וְאַיִלְלָה וְעַשְׂרֵה וְעַל אֶשְׁמָדָה
shall be destroyed The high places also of Aven the sin of Israel the thorn
H8045 H1116 H206 H2403 H3478 H6975

וְאָמַר וְיִדְרֹךְ רַעַת יְמִינָה וְעַל הַרְבָּה וְעַל אֶשְׁמָדָה
and the thistle shall come up on their altars and they shall say
H1863 H5927 H5921 H4196 H559

לְקָרִים נַפְלָה וְעַל גְּבֻעָה וְעַל הַרְבָּה וְעַל אֶשְׁמָדָה
to the mountains Cover us and to the hills Fall
H2022 H3680 H1389 H5307 H5921

Additional Cross-References

Luke 23:30 (Parallel theme): Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Revelation 6:16 (Parallel theme): And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Isaiah 2:19 (Parallel theme): And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Hosea 9:6 (Parallel theme): For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

Isaiah 32:13 (Parallel theme): Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

Amos 8:14 (Sin): They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

Isaiah 34:13 (Parallel theme): And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.

Deuteronomy 9:21 (Sin): And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

1 Kings 13:34 (Sin): And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

1 Kings 14:16 (Sin): And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.