

Hosea 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

Analysis

Ecological judgment: 'Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.' Human sin produces cosmic consequences. The land 'mourns' (לָבַד, *aval*—dries up, withers), all inhabitants 'languish' (לָלַחַד, *umlal*—grow weak, fade), and creation itself suffers. This echoes curse language (Leviticus 26:19-20, Deuteronomy 28:18,23-24) where covenant violation affects fertility and abundance. Remarkably, even sea creatures ('fishes') are impacted, suggesting total environmental collapse. This demonstrates interconnectedness of sin's effects: human rebellion against God damages all creation (Romans 8:20-22). The fallen world groans awaiting redemption through Christ, who will reconcile all things (Colossians 1:20) and make all creation new (Revelation 21:5).

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's agrarian economy meant environmental disaster equaled economic collapse. When the land 'mourned,' people starved. This wasn't mere metaphor but literal description of drought, pestilence, and ecological devastation as covenant curse consequences. Archaeological evidence shows 8th century BC climate challenges in the Levant. Hosea interprets these as divine judgment, not mere

weather. The inclusion of sea fish (unusual in Hebrew Bible) may reflect Mediterranean fishing industry collapse or hyperbolic emphasis on totality of judgment. This demonstrates Hebrew theology's holistic view: spiritual unfaithfulness manifests in material suffering because God governs all reality.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding creation's suffering as consequence of human sin affect your view of environmental degradation and stewardship?
2. What does it mean that Christ's redemption extends to all creation, not merely human souls?

Interlinear Text

עַל H5921	יָנוּן H3651	תִּתְאֵב ל H56	הָאָרֶץ H776	וְאִמָּלַל H535	כָּל H3605
		mourn	Therefore shall the land	therein shall languish	
	וְכָל H3427	אִישׁ בְּ H0	בְּחַיֵּת H2416	הַשָּׂדֶה H7704	וְעִם H5775
	and every one that dwelleth		with the beasts	of the field	and with the fowls
הַשָּׁמַיִם H8064	וְגַם H1571	דִּגְיָ H1709	הַיָּם H3220	וְאֶסְפוֹ H622	
of heaven		yea the fishes	of the sea	also shall be taken away	

Additional Cross-References

Zephaniah 1:3 (Parallel theme): I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.

Nahum 1:4 (Parallel theme): He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

Jeremiah 12:4 (Parallel theme): How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

Amos 5:16 (Parallel theme): Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.

Ezekiel 38:20 (Parallel theme): So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

Jeremiah 4:25 (Parallel theme): I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.