

Isaiah 1:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,
and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have
chosen.

Analysis

The indictment against desiring 'oaks' and 'gardens' references Canaanite fertility cult worship conducted under sacred trees and in gardens (cf. Isaiah 65:3; Hosea 4:13). Idolatry always involves misplaced desire—seeking from created things what only the Creator provides. Shame will replace illicit pleasure, as idols fail their devotees. This anticipates Paul's theology that disordered worship stems from exchanging God's glory for images (Romans 1:23), resulting in futility and judgment.

Historical Context

Despite Mosaic prohibition, Israelites syncretized Yahweh worship with Canaanite practices, including sacred groves and fertility rites. Archaeology confirms widespread high place worship in Iron Age Judah.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What modern 'oaks' and 'gardens'—created things we desire above God—tempt us toward idolatry?
2. How does the shame of disappointed idolatry contrast with the satisfaction found in God alone?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	יִבְשׁוּ	מֵאֵילֵי יָם	אֲשֶׁר	חֲמַדְתֶּם
H3588	For they shall be ashamed	of the oaks	H834	which ye have desired
	H954	H352		H2530
וְתִחְפָּזוּ	מִהֶגֶן זֹת	אֲשֶׁר	בְּחַרְתֶּם:	
and ye shall be confounded	for the gardens	H834	that ye have chosen	
H2659	H1593		H977	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 57:5 (Parallel theme): Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

Isaiah 66:17 (Parallel theme): They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 65:3 (Parallel theme): A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

Ezekiel 16:63 (Parallel theme): That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

Hosea 4:13 (Parallel theme): They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

