

Isaiah 29:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

Analysis

Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field הַלֹּא-עַזְדָּעַת מִזְעֵר וְשָׁב לְבָנָן לְכַרְמֵל (halo-od me'at miz'ar veshav Levanon lakkarmel)—in a very little while (me'at miz'ar, very little while) (Levanon, Lebanon, representing barrenness or cedar-covered mountains) becomes כַּרְמֵל (karmel, fruitful field/garden). **And the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?** וְהַכְּרָמֵל לְעָרָה (vehakarmel laya'ar yechasev)—the productive field becomes עָרָה (ya'ar, forest/wilderness).

After six woes, Isaiah pivots to eschatological reversal. God specializes in inversions: barren becomes fruitful (Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth); last becomes first; death yields life. The timeframe—'a very little while'—is prophetic perspective: soon from God's timeless vantage, even if centuries pass for humans. This announces the Messianic age when blind see, deaf hear (v. 18), poor rejoice (v. 19)—comprehensive transformation. Lebanon's cedars, symbols of pride, become farmland; farmland becomes wilderness. God reshapes reality itself.

Historical Context

Lebanon represented majesty and inaccessibility—cedar-covered mountains, source of timber for Solomon's Temple. Carmel ('orchard/garden') represented fertility. Isaiah's reversal imagery anticipates the new creation (Isaiah 65:17-25,

Revelation 21:5). Fulfillment began at Christ's first coming, continues through church age, will consummate at His return.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What 'barren' areas of your life or church need God's transforming work to make fruitful?
2. How does God's promise of coming reversal sustain faith during present difficulty?
3. What 'Lebanons' (proud strongholds) might need to become fruitful fields of humility and service?

Interlinear Text

לְבָנָן וְלִבְנָה בְּלֹא יָתֵעַ מֵעַת מֵעַת רְאֵשׁ בְּשֵׁבֶת וְשֵׁבֶת לְבָנָן וְלִבְנָה
H3844 H7725 H4213 H4592 H5750 H3808

וְפָרָתָם לְלִי עָרָה וְפָרָתָם לְלִי עָרָה יְמִשְׁבָּה: יְמִשְׁבָּה:
and the fruitful field and the fruitful field as a forest shall be esteemed
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Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 32:15 (Parallel theme): Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Matthew 19:30 (Parallel theme): But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

