

Isaiah 33:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

Analysis

The earth mourneth and languisheth (אָרֶץ אַמְלֵלָה אָרֶץ, aval umlelah arets)—the אָרֶץ (erets, earth, land) mourns (אָבַל, aval) and languishes (אַמְלָל, umlal, withers, fades). **Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down** (הֶחְפִּיר לְבָנוֹן קָמַל, hechpir Levanon qamal)—לְבָנוֹן (Levanon, Lebanon) is ashamed (חָפַר, chafer, dried up, ashamed) and withered (קָמַל, qamal). **Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits** (הָיָה כְעֵרְבָה הַשָּׂרֹן וְנָעַר בָּשָׁן וְכַרְמֶל, hayah kha'aravah haSharon veno'er Bashan veKharmel).

The devastation extends to nature itself—famous fertile regions become wasteland. Lebanon's cedars (symbol of strength and beauty), Sharon's rose gardens (Song of Solomon 2:1), Bashan's oak forests, and Carmel's vineyards all wither. This isn't merely metaphorical—invading armies destroyed agriculture, cut forests for siege works, burned fields. Romans 8:22 says creation 'groaneth and travaileth in pain together'—nature suffers from human sin and war. Hosea 4:3: 'Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish.'

Historical Context

Ancient armies devastated countryside systematically—destroying crops, cutting orchards, burning fields to starve besieged cities. Deuteronomy 20:19-20 forbade cutting fruit trees during siege, but pagan armies showed no such restraint. Assyrian reliefs depict soldiers cutting down trees and destroying agriculture.

Lebanon's cedars, Sharon's flowers, Bashan's oaks, Carmel's fruit—all regional glories—suffered. Archaeological and historical evidence confirms widespread 8th-century BC agricultural devastation in these regions.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does environmental devastation reflect and amplify human conflict and sin?
2. What does it mean that even nature 'mourns' when humans reject God and oppress others?
3. How should awareness of creation's groaning affect stewardship and peacemaking?

Interlinear Text

אֲבַל לִ	אֲמִלְלָהּ	אֶרֶץ	הָחֹפֹר יִר	לְבָנוֹן וְ	קָמַל לִ
mourneth	and languisheth	The earth	is ashamed	Lebanon	and hewn down
H56	H535	H776	H2659	H3844	H7060
הִיא הִ	הַשָּׂרֹן	כְּעֵרְבָה הִ	וְנָעַר	בָּשָׁן וְ	וְכַרְמֶל:
H1961	Sharon	is like a wilderness	shake off	and Bashan	and Carmel
	H8289	H6160	H5287	H1316	H3760

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 35:2 (Parallel theme): It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

Isaiah 65:10 (Parallel theme): And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

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.

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