

Isaiah 40:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Analysis

This verse employs dramatic topographical language to depict the removal of obstacles to God's coming. The leveling of mountains and valleys symbolizes the removal of all impediments—human pride (mountains) and despair (valleys)—that prevent encounter with God. John the Baptist applied this verse to his ministry of spiritual preparation for Messiah's coming (Luke 3:4-5).

Historical Context

Ancient royal roads were literally prepared by leveling terrain before a monarch's arrival. This imagery would resonate powerfully with exiles anticipating their return journey from Babylon through wilderness terrain.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What mountains of pride or valleys of despair need leveling in your life to prepare for God's work?

2. How does God's coming require preparation of the heart, not just external reformation?

Interlinear Text

כָּל H3605	גֵּיא H1516	יִנָּשׂ א H5375	וְכָל H3605	הָר H2022	וְגִבֵּעַ ה H1389
	Every valley	shall be exalted		and every mountain	and hill
	יִשָּׁפַּ לּו H8213	וְהָרָה H1961	וְהַעֲקֹב H6121	לְמִישׁ וּר H4334	
	shall be made low	and the crooked		shall be made straight	
	וְהָרָכָס יִם H7406	לְבָקָעָה: H1237			
	and the rough places	plain			

Additional Cross-References

Luke 3:5 (Creation): Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

Ezekiel 21:26 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.

Luke 18:14 (Parallel theme): I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Isaiah 45:2 (Parallel theme): I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

Ezekiel 17:24 (Creation): And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the

green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it.

Isaiah 42:11 (Parallel theme): Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

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