

Jeremiah 12:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

Analysis

This verse intensifies desolation: 'They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me.' The Hebrew shemamah (הַמְמַמָּה, desolation) appears twice, emphasizing completeness. The land 'mourns to me' (avelah alay)—addressing God with its grief. 'The whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.' 'No man layeth to heart' (ein ish sam al-lev) means no one considers, reflects, takes seriously. The devastation could have been prevented by heart-attention to prophetic warning. Spiritual obliviousness produced physical desolation.

Historical Context

The personification of land mourning reflects ancient Near Eastern concepts of land/deity relationships. But in Israel's case, the land itself was YHWH's possession, given to Israel conditionally. When conditions were violated, the land 'mourned' under resulting curse. The failure to 'lay to heart' echoes 5:21 ('have eyes but see not, ears but hear not') and anticipates Jesus' similar lament (Matthew 13:14-15).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the land's 'mourning unto God' suggest about creation's relationship to its Creator?
2. How does failure to 'lay to heart' prophetic warning connect to eventual devastation?

Interlinear Text

נָשָׁה	שָׁמַת	הַ	לְשָׁמַת	הַ	אָבֵל	הַ	עַל	וּ	שָׁמַת	הַ	עַל	וּ	נָשָׁה	שָׁמַת	הַ
They have made	it desolate		it mourneth				H5921		and being desolate				H6213		
H7760		H8076		H56					H8077						
כָּל			בְּאַרְצָה		אֵין	כִּי			אֵין	כִּי	בְּאַרְצָה		עַל	שָׁמַת	הַ
H3605	unto me the whole land	H776	H3588	H369					H376		because no man	They have made	H5921		
												H7760			
לְבָבְךָ															
it to heart															
H3820															

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 42:25 (Parallel theme): Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

Jeremiah 23:10 (Parallel theme): For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

Jeremiah 14:2 (Parallel theme): Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.