

Joel 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Analysis

The beasts of the field cry also unto thee (gam bahamot sadeh ta'aarog eleikha) —'Cry' (ta'aarog) means panting or longing, like a deer panting for water (Psalm 42:1 uses the same root). Animals instinctively 'cry' to their Creator when natural systems fail.

For the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness (ki yavshu afiqei mayim ve-esh akhlah ne'ot hamidbar)—Drought compounds the locust plague. Water sources (afiqei mayim, 'channels of water') dry up, eliminating the last hope for sustaining life. This echoes Amos 4:7-8's drought judgment. The repetition of 'fire devoured the pastures' (also verse 19) emphasizes totality. All creation suffers, all creation cries—anticipating the groaning of Romans 8:22 and the liberation of Revelation 21:1.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's water supply depended on seasonal rains, springs, and cisterns. Drought was catastrophic (1 Kings 17-18). Archaeological evidence shows sophisticated water systems (e.g., Hezekiah's tunnel) to combat water scarcity. Yet when God withheld rain, no technology availed—teaching dependence on divine provision.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that even animals 'cry' to God—how does this reveal universal dependence on the Creator?
2. How do ecological crises function as God's voice calling humanity to repentance?
3. When have you experienced spiritual 'drought'—dried-up water sources in prayer, Bible study, or worship—and what did God teach you?

Interlinear Text

גַּם	בְּהֵמָה	וְזֶה	שֶׁדָּה	וְגִי	אֵלֶיךָ	יְיָ	כִּי	יָבֵשׁוּ
H1571	The beasts	of the field	cry	H413	H3588	are dried up		
	H929	H7704	H6165			H3001		
אֶפְסָיְכִי			מֵי	וְאֵשׁ	אֲכָלָהּ	וְזֶה	נָא	
also unto thee for the rivers			of waters	and the fire	hath devoured	the pastures		
H650			H4325	H784	H398	H4999		
הַמִּדְבָּר:								
of the wilderness								
H4057								

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 104:21 (Parallel theme): The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

1 Kings 17:7 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Psalms 145:15 (Parallel theme): The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

Psalms 147:9 (Parallel theme): He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

Job 38:41 (Parallel theme): Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

1 Kings 18:5 (Parallel theme): And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

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