

Nahum 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

Analysis

This verse depicts divine theophany—God's visible manifestation in creation. 'He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry' (go'er bayam vayabbishehu) recalls God's power over chaos waters demonstrated at creation, the Red Sea crossing, and Jordan's parting. God's mere rebuke dries up seas and rivers, showing absolute sovereignty over nature's most powerful forces. This isn't poetic exaggeration but theological truth: the Creator commands His creation. The drying of Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon's flower refers to three regions famous for fertility and lush vegetation. Bashan (east of Jordan) was renowned for rich pastures and oak forests. Carmel (coastal mountain range) and Lebanon (northern mountains) were celebrated for cedars and abundant growth. If God's presence withers these symbols of natural abundance, how much more will it devastate Nineveh's artificial pride? The imagery emphasizes that no earthly power or natural strength can resist God when He comes in judgment. Those who trust in military might, geographic advantages, or material resources will find them useless before the living God.

Historical Context

This theophanic language would have resonated powerfully with Judah, who had experienced God's power over water in their national history. The Red Sea deliverance (Exodus 14) and Jordan crossing (Joshua 3) were foundational memories proving God's control over natural forces. The drying of fertile regions

would have been particularly striking to an agricultural society depending on rain and crops. Assyria had conquered these very regions—Bashan, Carmel, Lebanon—yet God's power exceeds even the famous fertility of these lands. The verse assures Judah that the same God who delivered them from Egypt will deliver them from Assyria. No human empire, regardless of military might or territorial expanse, can withstand the God who commands creation itself.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's power over nature (demonstrated in miracles and creation) provide assurance of His power over human kingdoms?
2. What modern 'Bashans, Carmels, and Lebanons'—sources of security and abundance—might we trust instead of God?
3. How should remembering God's past acts of deliverance strengthen faith during current trials?

Interlinear Text

גֹּעַר	בַּיָּם	וַיִּבֶשׂ הוּא	וְכָל	הַנָּהָר וְהַ	הַחֵר יבֶּ
He rebuketh	the sea	and drieth up	all	the rivers	and maketh it dry
H1605	H3220	H3001	H3605	H5104	H2717
אֶמְלֵל:	בָּשָׁן	וְכַרְמֵל	וּפְּחֹ	לְבָנוֹן	אֶמְלֵל:
languisheth	Bashan	and Carmel	and the flower	of Lebanon	languisheth
H535	H1316	H3760	H6525	H3844	H535

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 33:9 (Parallel theme): The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

Psalms 106:9 (Parallel theme): He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

Psalms 104:7 (Parallel theme): At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

Isaiah 51:10 (Parallel theme): Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

Isaiah 44:27 (Parallel theme): That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

Psalms 114:5 (Parallel theme): What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

Psalms 74:15 (Parallel theme): Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.

Psalms 114:3 (Parallel theme): The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

Matthew 8:26 (Parallel theme): And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Amos 1:2 (Parallel theme): And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.