

What is the significance of Lebanon in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Lebanon-in-the-Bible.htm>

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Mentioned only in the Old Testament, Lebanon is best known for its trees and mountain range. The Bible mentions Lebanon 71 times, but only in reference to its natural features and not as a specific state or nation. Significantly, Lebanon means “white,” undoubtedly a reference to the country’s white, snow-capped mountain range (see Jeremiah 18:14). The nation of Lebanon was known for its natural resources and beauty.

Scripture includes Lebanon as being within the Promised Land. Moses and Joshua both mention Lebanon when talking about the Promised Land and its boundaries (Deuteronomy 1:7; 3:25; Joshua 1:4). This correlates with Deuteronomy 11:24, which states, “Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea.” Later, when Joshua led the conquests to take parts of the Promised Land, the valley of Lebanon was included as one of the regions that was taken (Joshua 12:7).

Home to famed forests and a beautiful mountain range, Lebanon was a source of valuable lumber for the Israelites. The cedar tree of Lebanon, which is featured on the modern flag of Lebanon, was prized because of its high-quality, fragrant timber. Solomon used cedar trees from Lebanon in the construction of the temple, as well as in the building of his palace, which was called “the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon” (1 Kings 5:5-6; 7:1-3). To collect the massive amount of lumber needed for the temple and palace, 30,000 Israelite men were conscripted and sent to Lebanon for one month at a time (1 Kings 5:13-14). Hiram, king of Tyre, had his workers cut the trees, haul the logs to the sea, and float them to a place where Solomon’s men could collect them (1 Kings 5:8-9).

The trees of Lebanon serve as powerful symbols in the Bible. Because the forests of Lebanon were flourishing and abundant, the trees were often used as a symbol of Israel thriving or “blossoming” as a result of God’s blessing (Psalm 92:12; Hosea 14:5-7). The imagery of Lebanon flourishing is used by the psalmist to teach God’s greatness in creation: “The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted” (Psalm 104:16). When God declared judgment on Assyria, He compared that powerful nation to the lofty trees of Lebanon. But God promised Assyria’s downfall:

“See, the Lord, the Lord Almighty,
will lop off the boughs with great power.

The lofty trees will be felled,
the tall ones will be brought low.

He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax;

Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One” (Isaiah 10:33-34; cf. Ezekiel 31:3-17).

Lebanon also is significant because it is mentioned in reference to the future millennial kingdom. When Jesus returns after the tribulation, He will set up His kingdom and rule for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4). Jerusalem is promised restoration: “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet” (Isaiah 60:13). Lebanon’s natural resources have been valued for thousands of years, and they will again be contributing beauty and richness in the future millennial kingdom.