

# **Rooted in God's Earth: Trees in Scripture**



## **SESSION 4**

### **The Cedars of Lebanon (Ezekiel 31)**

**Monday 15 July 2024**

# Rooted in God's Earth: Trees in Scripture



God of creation,  
we thank you that we are  
rooted in your earth together.  
Help us to recognise and  
rejoice in the inter-  
connectedness of all that has  
lived and all that will live.  
In our encounters with  
scripture, help us to listen for  
what your Spirit is saying, and  
inspire us with your love.  
Amen.



## EZIEKIEL 31

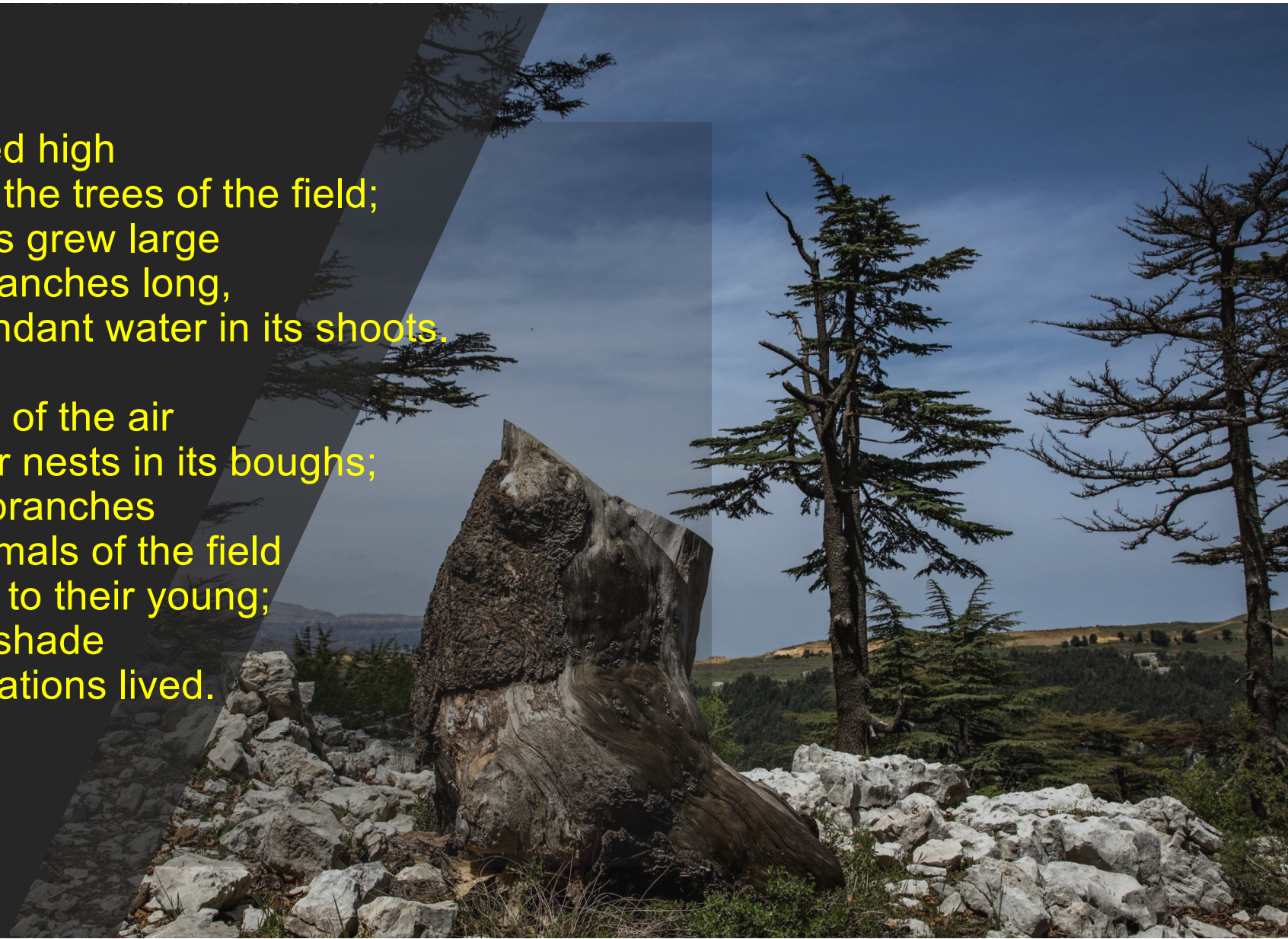
- <sup>3</sup> Consider ... a cedar of Lebanon,  
with fair branches and forest shade,  
and of great height,  
its top among the clouds.
- <sup>4</sup> The waters nourished it,  
the deep made it grow tall,  
making its rivers flow  
around the place where it was planted,  
sending forth its streams  
to all the trees of the field.





<sup>5</sup> So it towered high  
above all the trees of the field;  
its boughs grew large  
and its branches long,  
from abundant water in its shoots.

<sup>6</sup> All the birds of the air  
made their nests in its boughs;  
under its branches  
all the animals of the field  
gave birth to their young;  
and in its shade  
all great nations lived.

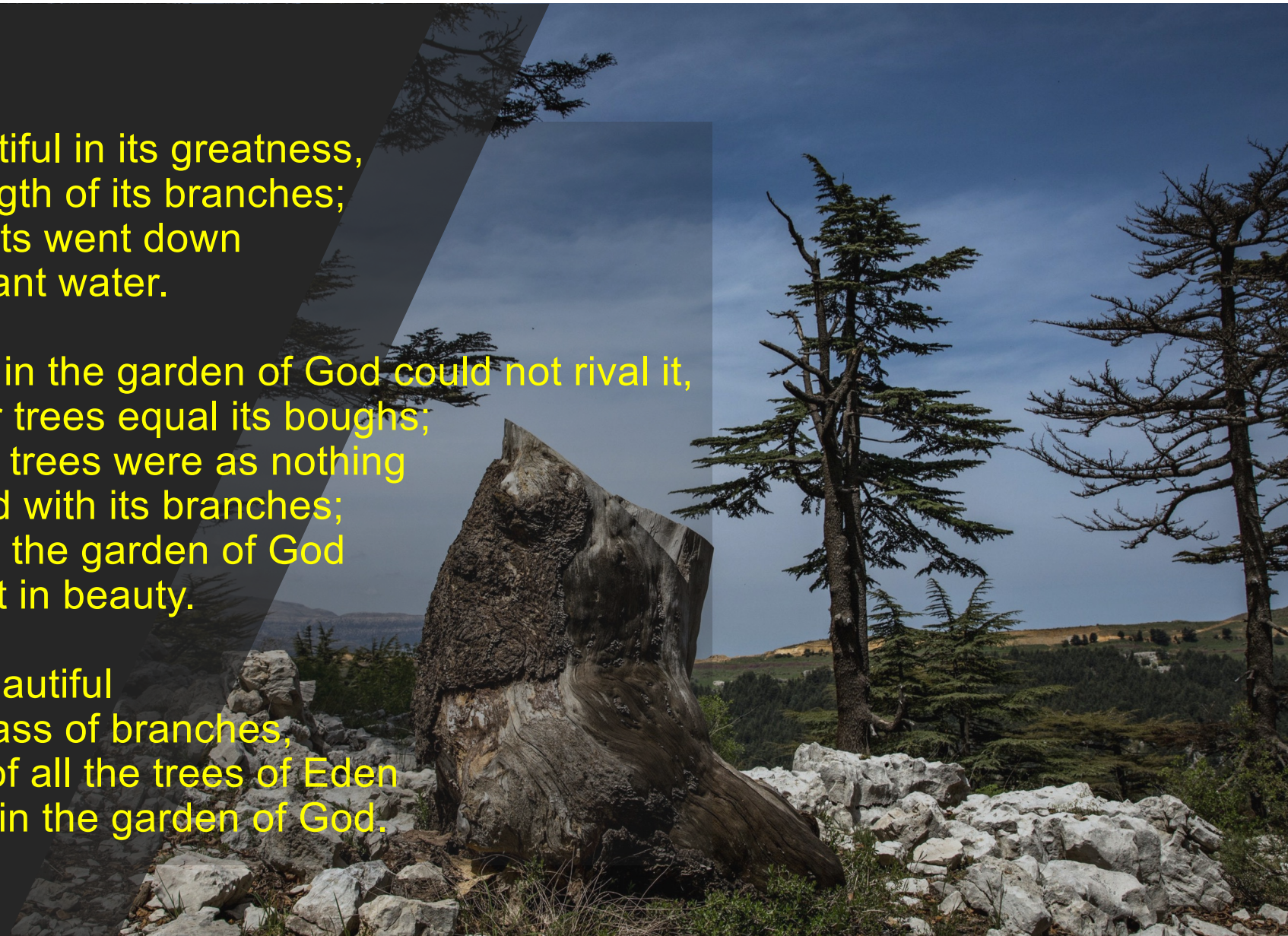




<sup>7</sup> It was beautiful in its greatness,  
in the length of its branches;  
for its roots went down  
to abundant water.

<sup>8</sup> The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it,  
nor the fir trees equal its boughs;  
the plane trees were as nothing  
compared with its branches;  
no tree in the garden of God  
was like it in beauty.

<sup>9</sup> I made it beautiful  
with its mass of branches,  
the envy of all the trees of Eden  
that were in the garden of God.



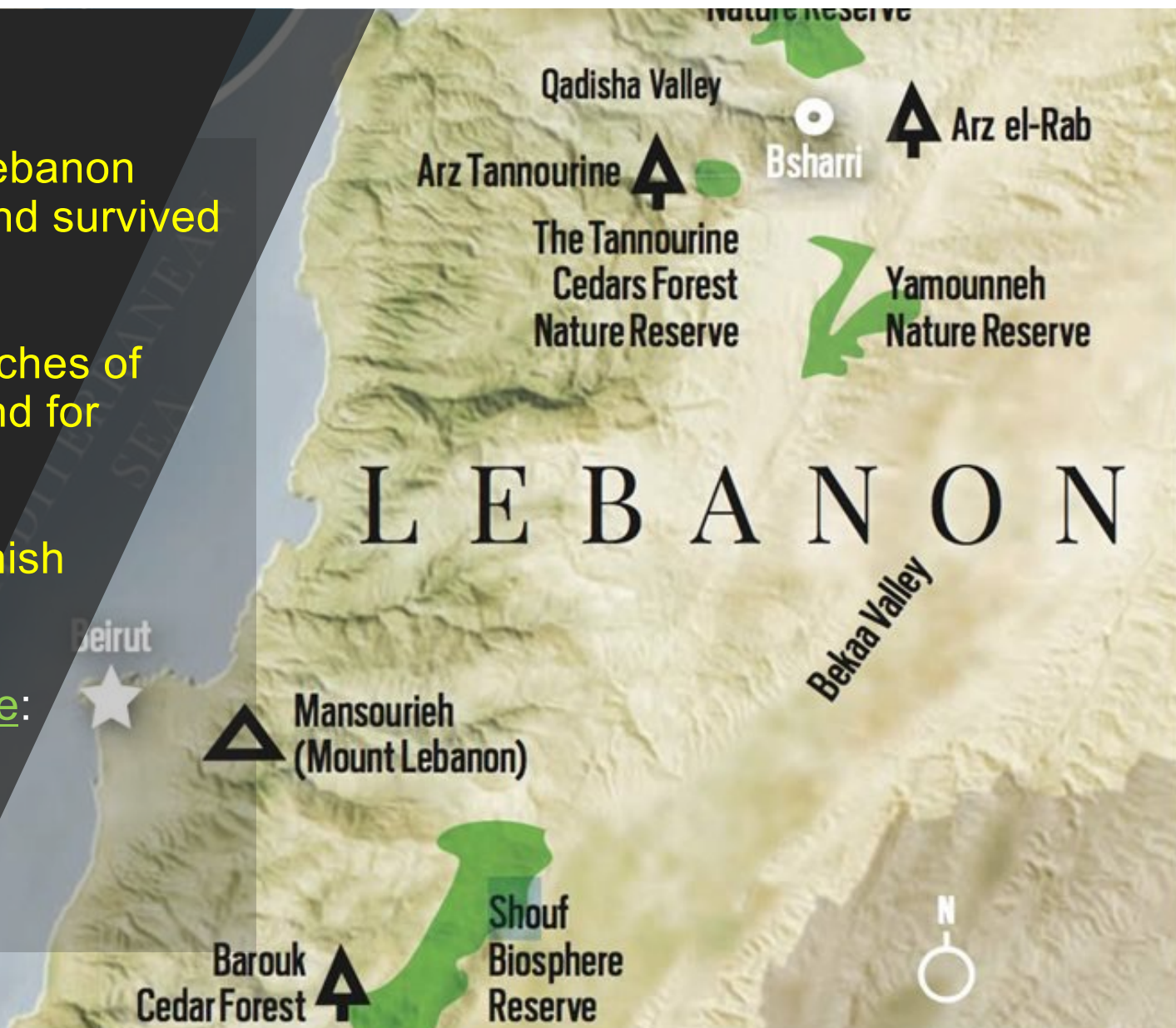


The ancient cedars of Lebanon have outlived empires and survived modern wars.

Clinging to shrinking patches of territory, these trees stand for Lebanon's resilience.

Could climate change finish them off?

(Click the media link [here](#):  
New York Times,  
July 2018)





# Cedar trees in the Bible

Cedars in Scripture are a picture of a faith that is growing, resilient, and deeply rooted; trees speak of life flourishing in community.

Isaiah 41:19-20 “I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; ... the cypress, the plane and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.





# Cedar trees in the Bible

Ezekiel 31:3-5 Compares the strength of a people to 'a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a forest-like shade, a high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs... its stature was exalted above all the trees of the field; and its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long.'



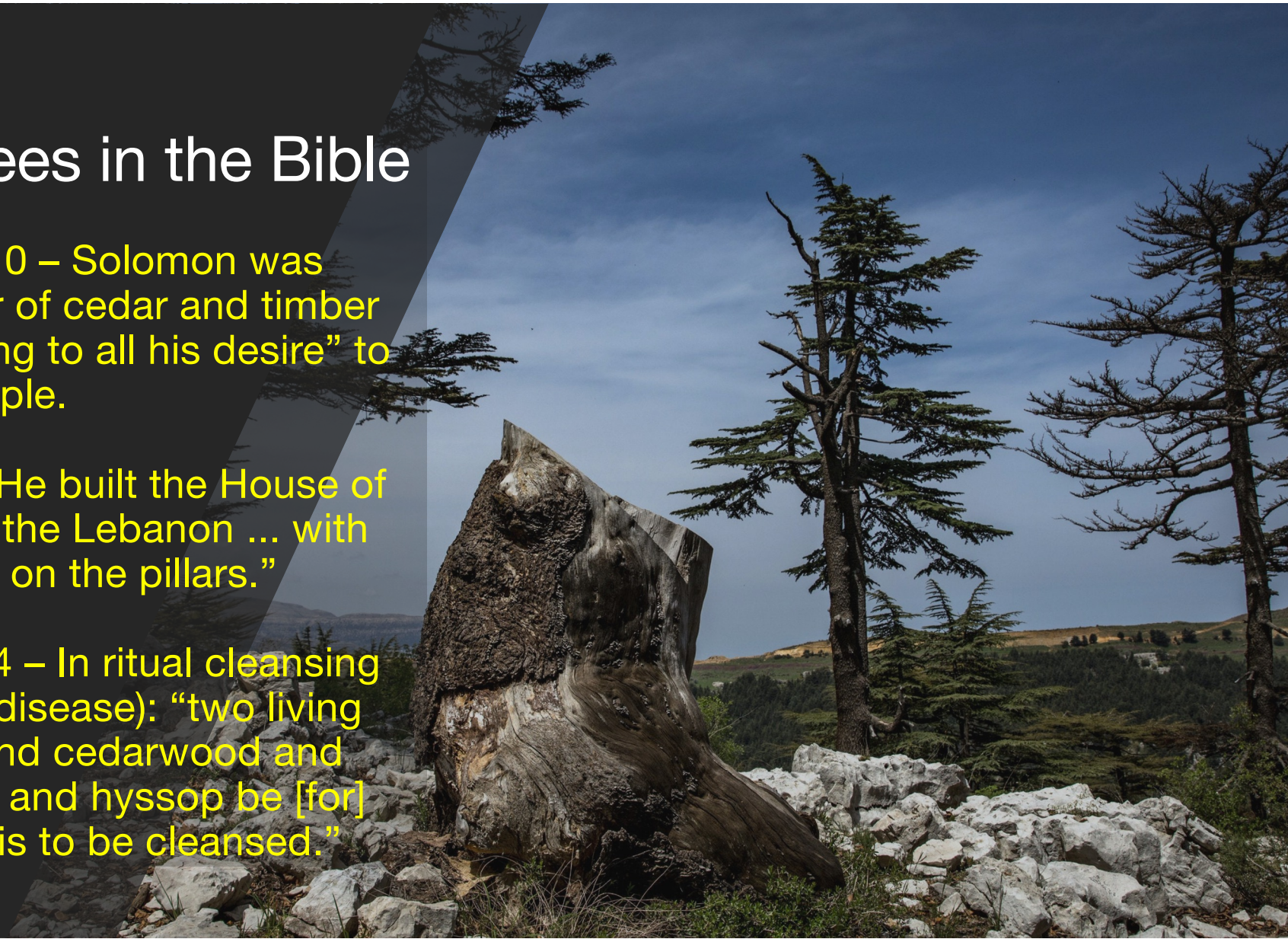


# Cedar trees in the Bible

1 Kings 5:6-10 – Solomon was given “timber of cedar and timber of fir according to all his desire” to build the temple.

1 Kings 7:2 “He built the House of the Forest of the Lebanon ... with cedar beams on the pillars.”

Leviticus 14:4 – In ritual cleansing (e.g., of skin disease): “two living clean birds and cedarwood and crimson yarn and hyssop be [for] the one who is to be cleansed.”



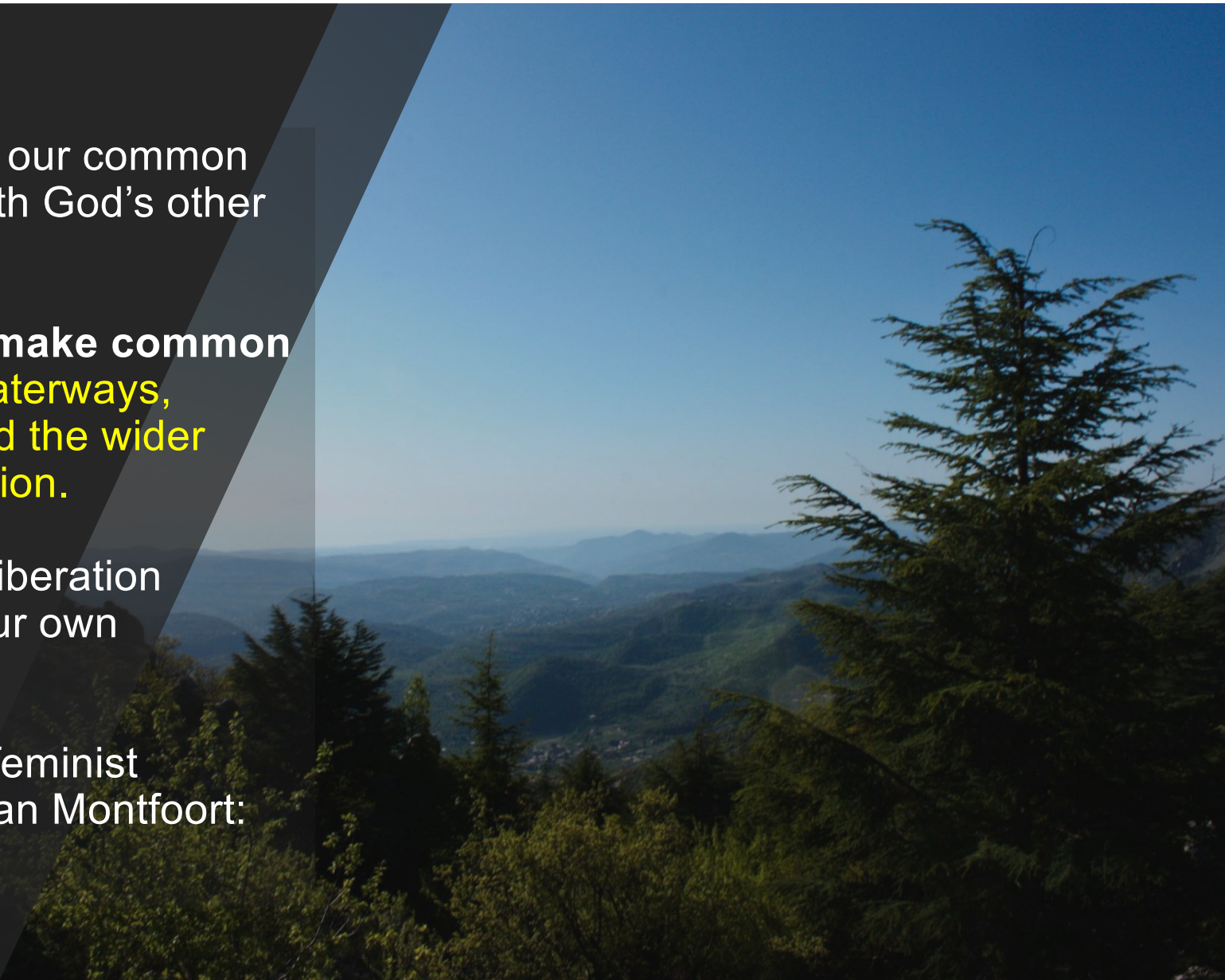


A theology of trees: our common flourishing along with God's other creaturely life.

**We can choose to make common cause with land, waterways, deserts, forests, and the wider body of God's creation.**

This is not just the liberation of the plane, it is our own liberation.

So says the Dutch feminist theologian, Trees van Montfoort:





“We have to relinquish the illusion that we exceed all other creatures and are able to control the earth. ... This does not just entail loss. It is also a liberation, because we don't have to be in command any longer: we can take pleasure in other creatures and in ourselves.”

Trees van Montfort (2022) *Green Theology: An Eco-Feminist Perspective*.





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