

Salinity Prayer

Many areas of Australia are devastated by rising water tables bringing long-buried salt with them. In the past, water tables were kept low by tree and scrub cover. After land clearance for cropping or livestock, the water table rises. Salt poisons the land not only for agriculture but also for most native vegetation. Salinity in townsites damages buildings, as salty water gets into building foundations and crystals form, destroying roads, parks and housing. Runoff from land affected by salinity causes big increases in salt levels in creeks and rivers, threatening those ecosystems as well. Tree-planting of salt-tolerant species around affected areas is the main way to stop salinity spreading, but reversing it completely is beyond our current technology and is likely to take more than one lifetime. Go to <http://www.csiro.au/resources/Salinity-Factsheet.html> for more information.

Biblical references: Psalm 60, Psalm 107

O God, the land suffers
because of our foolishness.
We felled trees, cleared scrub,
planted crops, grazed sheep and cattle,
and planned to feed the hungry with everything we grew.
But the salt has risen with the groundwater,
poisoning plants, damaging buildings,
destroying livelihoods, threatening communities.
Forgive us, we pray,
for the harm we have done
in ignorance, carelessness or greed.
Teach us to mend the damage,
and to take better care of the fragile, fruitful earth
that you have entrusted to us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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