

Deuteronomy 31:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?

Analysis

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day—covenant violation would provoke divine wrath. **And I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them**—the terrifying withdrawal of God's presence and protection. **And they shall be devoured**—by enemies and circumstances. **And many evils and troubles shall befall them**—covenant curses enumerated in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. **So that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?**—belated recognition that calamity resulted from God's absence due to their rebellion.

God's 'hidden face' is Scripture's most dreadful judgment—not annihilation but abandonment (Psalm 27:9, Isaiah 59:2). Israel would recognize consequences of forfeiting divine protection but apparently not repent adequately, since God describes their response as question rather than confession. The prophets repeatedly warned that judgment was coming, exile was inevitable, yet mercy would eventually restore remnants (Jeremiah 29:10-14). Christ experienced the ultimate 'hidden face' on the cross ('My God, why have You forsaken Me?') to ensure believers never face final abandonment.

Historical Context

Prophesied circa 1406 BC, fulfilled progressively through Israel's history. Periods of divine protection alternated with judgment—Philistine oppression, Assyrian invasion, Babylonian exile. Each demonstrated that military defeat wasn't merely geopolitical misfortune but covenant consequences. The question 'Is not God among us?' tragically echoed their presumptuous confidence before disasters (Jeremiah 7:4, Micah 3:11). Only after seventy years of exile did Judah adequately repent, and the return remained incomplete until Christ established the new covenant.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that God 'hides His face'? How is divine absence worse than direct punishment?
2. How do people recognize consequences of sin yet fail to adequately repent? What's the difference?
3. How does Christ's experience of God's hidden face on the cross guarantee believers never face ultimate abandonment?

Interlinear Text

בְּ הַוָּא בְּ וּ בְּ אֵגִים וְיַחַנְתָּה
shall be kindled Then my anger H0 against them in that day H1931
H2734 H639 H3117

וְיַעֲזַבְתָּ יָמִים וְיַחֲזַקְתָּ יָמִן מִמְּנָם הַיְמִינִי
and I will forsake them and I will hide my face H1992 H1961
H5800 H5641 H6440

לְאַכְלָה כְּבָבָר וְתַחַת מִצְאָה וְתַחַת כְּבָבָר וְתַחַת
from them and they shall be devoured come Are not these evils and many H7451 H7227
H398 H4672 H1931 H3808

וְאַצְרָה וְתַחַת אָמֵר בְּיַם וְתַחַת אָמֵר בְּיַם
and troubles them so that they will say against them in that day H1931 H3808
H6869 H559 H3117

אַלְפִי מִצְאָה וְתַחַת בְּקָרְבָּה אַלְפִי מִצְאָה וְתַחַת
upon us because our God is not among come H7130 H4672
H5921 H3588 H369 H430

בְּאַלְהָה: כְּבָבָר וְתַחַת
Are not these evils H428
H7451

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 8:17 (Parallel theme): And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

Psalms 104:29 (Parallel theme): Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

2 Chronicles 15:2 (Parallel theme): And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

Numbers 14:42 (Parallel theme): Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

Judges 6:13 (Parallel theme): And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

Isaiah 64:7 (Parallel theme): And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Psalms 30:7 (Parallel theme): LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.

Jeremiah 23:33 (Parallel theme): And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.

1 Chronicles 28:9 (References God): And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.