

Deuteronomy 32:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

Analysis

Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful—שָׁׁׁרְּ יְלָדֶךָ (צָרָרְ יְלָדֶךָ) uses the verb yālad, typically for childbirth, creating powerful imagery: God as both father who begets and mother who gives birth. **Unmindful** (נַשְׁׁאָל) means to neglect or forget, implying deliberate inattention, not mere forgetfulness.

Hast forgotten God that formed thee—מַהְלֵלֶךָ (נַחַלְתָּךָ) from ḥūl means to writhe in labor, again using maternal imagery. The double metaphor (father begetting, mother birthing) emphasizes both God's creative power and nurturing care. This parallels Isaiah 49:15: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child?' Yet Israel did what seemed impossible—forgot their Creator.

Historical Context

The metaphor of God as father appears throughout Deuteronomy (1:31, 8:5, 32:6), but maternal imagery is rarer, making this verse striking. The covenant at Sinai established Israel's unique identity as God's 'son' (Exodus 4:22). Forgetting their origin parallels Adam's sin—creatures denying their Creator, autonomy replacing dependence.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the combination of paternal and maternal imagery for God deepen your understanding of His creative love?
2. In what ways do you 'forget' God who formed you by living autonomously rather than dependently?

Interlinear Text

כָּזֶב	בָּרָא	תַּשְׁאַל	נִזְמַנְתָּהָי	אֱלֹהִים
Of the Rock	that begat	thee thou art unmindful	and hast forgotten	God

H6697

H3205

H7876

H7911

H410

מְחַלְלֵבָה

that formed

H2342

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 17:10 (References God): Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:

Jeremiah 2:32 (Parallel theme): Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

Psalms 106:21 (References God): They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

Deuteronomy 32:4 (References God): He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Psalms 9:17 (References God): The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

Deuteronomy 8:19 (References God): And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

Deuteronomy 6:12 (Parallel theme): Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 8:14 (References God): Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

Deuteronomy 8:11 (References God): Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

Deuteronomy 32:15 (References God): But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

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